

Beyond Fuelling The Dragon: Locating African Agency in Africa-China Relations

by

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Abstract

The growing presence and influence of China across the African continent has attracted considerable local and international attention and even controversy. On the one hand, the burgeoning ‘China in Africa’ literature tends to focus on pessimistic assertions about the exploitative aspects of the engagement, and China is frequently represented as a twenty-first century (neo)colonial power that is plundering Africa's natural resources while corrupt, or at best passive, African leaders fuel the metaphorical dragon. On the other hand, more optimistic claims about China’s engagement focus on notions of mutual benefits, lack of explicit and burdensome conditionalities, and the economic development opportunities presented by such engagement. What such polarising representations often ignore are questions of African agency and, specifically, the diverse factors that account for the growth in African state interactions with China, and how diverse African actors respond to Chinese engagement. Drawing on a critical African political economy perspective placed into productive engagement with postcolonial approaches and subaltern studies, I investigate the intensification of Africa-China linkages and focus on African agency in Africa-China relations. Specifically, this dissertation draws on the case of Ghana to interrogate the factors that drive Ghana’s growing economic relations with China. It explores ways in which Ghanaian actors and institutions engage, shape, negotiate, accommodate, and resist Chinese actors’ involvement in Ghana.

Data for this project were collected during extensive fieldwork in Ghana and China. Interviews were conducted with state and non-state actors including government officials, civil society organisations, traders, chiefs, and community opinion leaders. As well, the dissertation draws on archival research and critical discourse analysis of key

policy documents, speeches and media reports on Africa-China and Ghana-China relations. These data provide insights into the historical and contemporary dynamics of China's presence in Ghana's economy and the agentic responses it has engendered.

The study finds that the intensifying engagements with China can be attributed to complex factors and motivations. The study also finds that Ghanaian state and non-state actors are often willing partners to Chinese actors and exhibit considerable autonomy and influence in their engagement with China. This finding challenges the popular view of Chinese dominance in engagement with African actors.

Drawing on the concept of African agency, the dissertation uncovers how both Ghanaian state and non-state actors attempt to shape and influence their relations with China for their own economic and political ends. Through an examination of the labour politics of Chinese projects and Ghanaian workers, the politics of parliamentary scrutiny, oppositional activities of traders' associations and other civil society actors, the study shows how Ghanaian actors exert agency. Findings from these case studies suggest that Chinese corporate behaviour often is met with assertive local and national responses, which often minimise potentially negative impacts of Chinese enterprises and state interests in Ghana. This finding challenges the dominant view of a 'China' and Chinese entities that are always capable of imposing themselves on African actors who wield no autonomy, influence or leverage. Instead of domination and imposition, the case studies show dynamic interactions, influence, resistance and different forces that shape the terms of Ghanaian and Chinese interactions.

Finally, through an investigation of how marginalised local communities attempt to resist the appropriation of their lands by transnational Chinese actors, the study shows

how local resistance elicits state response to deal with perceived threats to the environment, safety and security. While negotiations and resistance in Ghana point to evidence of agency, they also point to much more. They reflect real oppositional politics borne out of struggle against marginalisation, inequality and injustice embedded in historical, local and global context of dispossession and accumulation, domination and exploitation, and poverty in the midst of wealth.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Isaac Odoom. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board under the Project Name “The Political Economy of Ghana-China Development and Energy Relations”, and ID: Pro00031303 on June 15, 2012.

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Dedication

For Gifty and Joy Ayeko Odoom

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This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118: 23-24).

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAPSO	Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity organization
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ALRN	African Labour Research Network
ARPS	Aboriginal Right Protection Society
ASM	Artisanal and Small-scale Mining
AU	African Union
BAPOA	Buenos Aires Plan of Action
BPA	Bui Power Authority
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAPE	Critical African Political Economy
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CBMWU	Construction and Building Materials Workers Union
CDB	Chinese Development Bank
CNOOC	Chinese National Offshore Oil Companies
CPP	Convention People’s Party
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECG	Electricity Company of Ghana
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Council
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GNPC	Ghana National Petroleum Company
GRA	Ghana Revenue Authority
GUTA	Ghana Union of Traders’ Association
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
ISI	Import Industrialisation Strategy

IWASS	Institute of West Asian and African Studies
LIBOR	London Interbank Offered Rate
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LRPI	Labour Research and Policy Institute
MFA	Master Facility Agreement
MOTI	Ministries of Trade and Industry
NAM	Non Aligned Movement
NANTS	National Association of Nigerian Traders
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NLC	National Liberation Council
NOC	National Oil Companies
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
NUTAG	Nigerian Union of Traders Association in Ghana
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Development
PDA	Preventive Detention Act
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PP	Progress Party
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
PRC	People Republic of China
RGD	Registrar General's Department
SAPs	Structural Adjustments Programs
SMC	Supreme Military Council
SMEs	Small and Medium Scale Enterprises
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SSC	South-South Cooperation
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
TOR	Tema Oil Refinery

TUC	Trades Union Congress
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
VRA	Volta River Authority
WAGP	West African Gas Pipeline
WB	World Bank
WC	Washington Consensus
WWII	World War Two

Chapter 1

Bringing ‘Africa’ into the Debate: An Introduction to Africa-China Relations

The story of Africa’s relations with China is ultimately an African story. It is up to Africa to write the plot ...Through their engagements with China, African governments and populations are pushing back against narratives of a passive continent; *we should be paying attention to these voices*.

(Caestus Juma, 2015: 188 (my emphasis))

Introduction

No topic of Africa’s international relations in contemporary times has captured the attention of both popular and academic audiences more than its relations with China. The growing literature on contemporary Africa-China relations continues to enrich our knowledge of Chinese objectives and strategies in Africa.¹ However, the question of why African states ‘embrace’ Chinese development intervention or the factors that account for the increase in African countries’ interaction with China receive less attention in popular analyses. Furthermore, while Africa-China engagements are certainly a two-way relationship, most of the ‘China in Africa’ analyses have focused primarily on Chinese foreign policy practices and its implications on Africa and the international community. Few studies have focused on the responses of African actors and institutions in their engagement with Chinese actors, leading to an oversimplified debate of whether Chinese interventions in Africa are simply good or bad (for exceptions see Mohan and Lampert 2013; Corkin 2013; Axelsson 2012; Gadzala 2015).

This dissertation examines the growing strategic relations between Ghana and China within a broader framework of contemporary relations between China and African states. The

¹ The “China in Africa” theme is well documented and has been widely covered in the news media, online publications, academic journals, business publications, and scholarly books. Since the 3rd Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing in 2006, a book is published on the subject every year. The growing list of publication has led ‘watchers’ to create online blogs that keep track of publications on the subject. See for example; David Shinn’s blog: <http://davidshinn.blogspot.ca/> and Deborah Brautigam’s the *Real Story*: <http://www.chinaafricarealstory.com/>

dissertation first investigates the factors that drive Ghana's growing relations with China in contemporary times. As will be shown in this study, Ghana-China relations are not new: being the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain political independence, Ghana established official diplomatic relations with China in July 1960. However, economic and political relations between Ghana and China have soared in the last decade with China becoming Ghana's single largest trading economy. What factors accounts for the growing economic linkage between Ghana and China? This dissertation explores the driving forces on the Ghana side of the Ghana-China interactions, all the while challenging the popular view of Chinese dominance in its engagement with African nations.

Second, I interrogate ways in which Ghanaian actors and institutions engage, shape, accommodate, and resist Chinese involvement in Ghana. As noted, while China's growing role in Africa continues to receive increasing attention in the media and academic circles, very few scholarly studies have empirically analysed Africa-China relations as a vibrant, two-way dynamic in which African actors express agency or exercise considerable leverage in their engagement with Chinese actors. Drawing on a conceptual framework of African Agency (Brown 2012, Brown and Harman 2013, Tiekou 2013; Wight 1999), this study argues that African actors are capable of acting strategically in their interaction with Chinese actors. The dissertation focuses on Ghana-China relations to demonstrate how both Ghanaian state and non-state actors increasingly attempt to shape and influence their relations with China for their own economic and political ends.

Africa's international relations and, for that matter, its development landscape is undergoing unprecedented transformation in a manner unseen since the Cold War. These changes are impacting Africa's geostrategic and political importance on the world stage. As well, this transformation has been boosted by a shift in the international balance of power and especially by the rise of emerging economies. The increasing engagement in Africa of emerging economies, particularly Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), presents both significant challenges and opportunities for African development. Among these countries, China, the largest and most powerful of this group and the second largest economy in the world, is leading the on-going transformation of the African development landscape.

Africa-China linkages span centuries. However, China's commercial and political interest in Africa in recent times is, by any measure, much more significant. In 2009, China passed the United States as Africa's largest trading partner, with trade ballooning from a mere \$200 million in 2000 to \$220 billion in 2014. While 3 to 4 percent of China's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) went to Africa in 2013, less than 1 percent of the United States' FDI went to the continent that same year (Gadzala 2015: xvi). China surpassed the World Bank in terms of the volume of lending to developing countries, including African nations, in 2011. The slowdown in China's economy since 2014 has had some downward effect on its investment in Africa. Nonetheless, in December 2015 Chinese President Xi Jinping stunned his African allies and international analysts at the sixth Ministerial Conference and second Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa with a pledge of a staggering \$60 billion US dollars in development assistance (grants, loans, credit and preferential financing) over the next three years. This amount represents a tripling of the financial commitment China made to Africa at the previous FOCAC Summit in Beijing in 2012.

China now has established 50 embassies in the 54 African countries,² and has built Confucius Institutes to promote Chinese language and culture in over 30 African cities. Since 2000, not a single year passes without multiple high-level official visits between China and various African countries. Africa-China cooperation has expanded from agriculture, mining and construction to intensive processing of resource products, industrial manufacturing, finance, commercial logistics and real estate.³ Across Africa, it is widely acknowledged that China's investment is influencing directions in infrastructure development, economic growth, global integration, and world politics in general.⁴ Similarly, China's own economic development—and consequently even its political stability—depends more than ever on economic and political links with Africa.

The rapidly growing relations between China and African states are being met with mixed reactions. Some observers praise Beijing for its massive investment in Africa's infrastructure; for its provision of soft loans and debt relief to many African countries; and for serving as 'alternative' market opportunity for African economies (Van der Wath 2004; Darper 2006; Shinn and Eisenman 2005; He 2007; Sautman & Hairong, 2007; Xu, 2008; Moyo 2009; Amoah 2014). In contrast, others point to the downside of these investments. They express fear

² Three African countries (Burkina Faso, Sao Tome and Principe, Swaziland) have diplomatic ties with Taiwan and not China. In March 2016 Gambia re-established diplomatic relations with Beijing. China had suspended relations with Gambia in 1995 after the latter established relations with Taiwan. The resumption of diplomatic relations comes after Gambia agreed to the 'one China' principle as a prerequisite for relations with China, having ended relations with Taiwan in 2013. See "China, Gambia resume diplomatic ties" ECNS.CN available at <http://www.ecns.cn/2016/03-18/203371.shtml> accessed March 24, 2016

³ See "China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation, White paper, Information Office of the State Council, China" available at <http://osf.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/China-Africa-Economic-and-Trade-Cooperation-2013-white-paper.pdf> accessed on March 3, 2015

⁴ China is one of many foreign actors deepening their involvement in Africa. While China's commercial and political activities in Africa has skyrocketed, other emerging economies such as Brazil, India and Turkey continue to double their commercial and political engagement with the continent (See Fantu and Obi eds.2010). Moreover, when it comes to trade and investment, China does not lead in most categories: it is one of the many. For example, the United States leads in annual foreign direct investment (FDI), with a contribution of 6.3% of Africa's total \$54 billion FDI inflow against China's 4.5%. Furthermore, while an unprecedented increase in China's commercial interest on the continent present opportunities for economic growth it does not automatically lead to changes in the structural foundations of Africa's raw material producing economies.

of the implication of China's flooding African markets with mass produced cheap products such as footwear and textiles (Taylor 2007; Alden 2005); of China buttressing the power of authoritarian leaders, stunting democratisation efforts on the continent, for example in Zimbabwe, Sudan and Angola (Obi 2010; Vines and Campos 2010); and of China's 'scramble' for African resources (oil, land, etc.) being fundamentally not very different from an earlier era as these relations disproportionately benefit China, Chinese industries, workers, and investors (Manji and Marks, 2007; Tull, 2006; Alden, 2007; de Oliveira, 2008; Meidan, 2006; Rotberg, 2008; Taylor, 2007; French, 2014 among others).

The debate on Africa-China engagement has also been intensified by the sensationalist reportage of the Western press (such as in the *Economist*, which called China 'The new colonialists' in its March 15, 2008 edition) and of think tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations, as well as viewpoints of leading Western officials, such as former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In a 2011 trip to East African countries of Zambia, Tanzania and Ethiopia, Secretary Clinton warned that China's involvement in Africa is bolstering repressive regimes, such as those in Sudan and Zimbabwe, flooding African markets with cheap products and thereby weakening local manufacturing, and undermining international efforts to promote good governance in Africa (Clinton, 2011; for further discussion on this issue see Odoom, 2011).

While the growing literature on contemporary Africa-China relations continues to enrich our knowledge of Chinese foreign policy practices in Africa and their implications, it has nonetheless done little to expand our understanding of the processes at play and the driving factors on the African side of the engagement. In other words, less attention has been paid to the equally important questions relating to the responses of African actors and institutions in their engagement with Chinese actors and institutions, resulting in often reductionist understandings

of the relationship, and an oversimplified debate of whether Chinese practices in Africa are good or bad.

The growing 'China in Africa' literature often presents Africa-China relations as one in which Chinese actors dominate the agenda and act in coordinated ways (see for example Ramo 2004; Fishman 2005; Halper 2010). As Mawdsley (2008) has shown, the 'China in Africa' narrative and Western media coverage of China's present-day involvement in Africa is replete with stories of domination and predatory relationship. While this type of coverage is gradually changing, and it is the case that aspects of Africa-China relations are asymmetrical, the focus on 'China in Africa' brings about images of one-way domination, of a twenty-first century Chinese colonialist vociferously plundering Africa's natural resources under the watch of a passive, unsuspecting African only good at fuelling the metaphorical dragon. Consider, for example, the cover image of Adama Gaye's popular 2006 book, *China and Africa: The Dragon and the Ostrich* (Figure 1). The book's cover depicts a fire spitting Chinese dragon angrily targeting Africa; Africa is represented as a helpless ostrich, with its head buried in the sand ignoring the dragon's onslaught, with two Africans turning their back in panic. Such representations are common and often project a single case as representative of the entire experience of 'China' in 'Africa'.

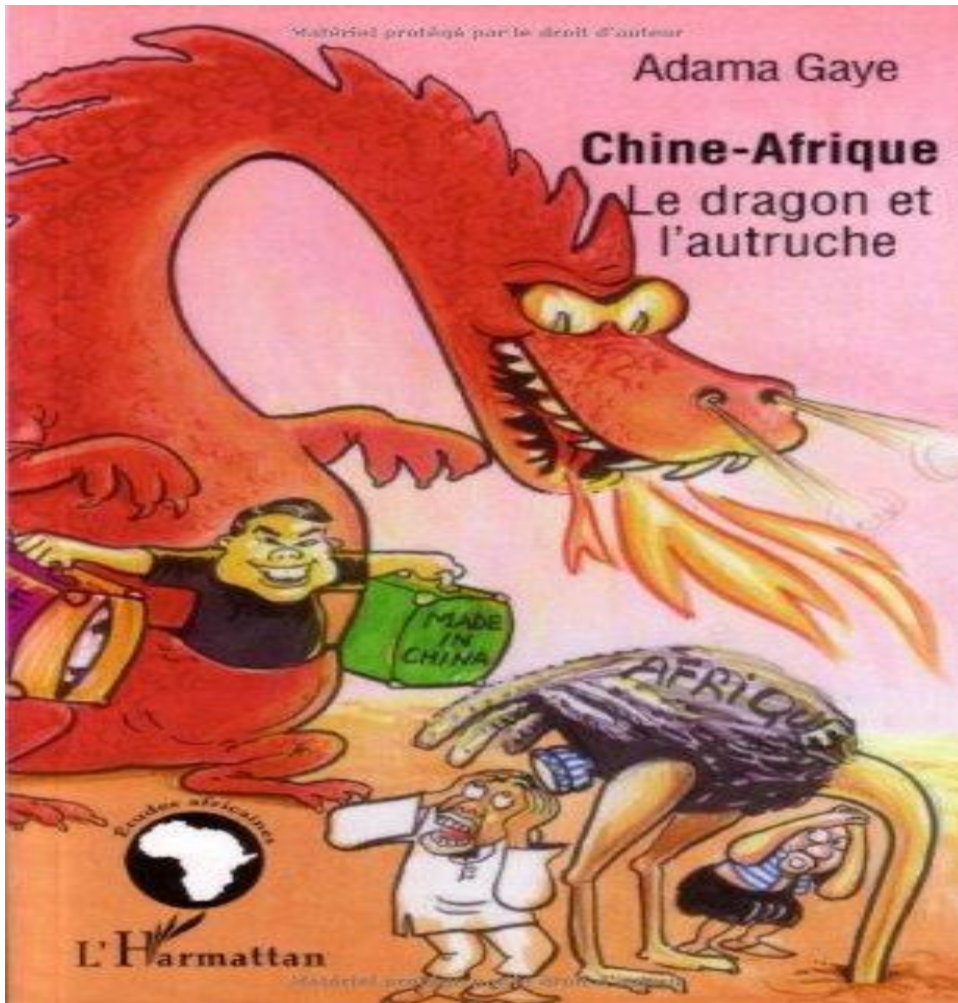


Figure 1: Cover picture of Adama Gaye's *China and Africa: The Dragon and the Ostrich* (2006).

Few analyses have approached Africa-China engagements as a two-way relationship in which both sides have considerable influence, adjusting to policy initiatives and popular perceptions emanating from each other (see Mohan and Lampert 2013; Axelsson 2012; Corkin 2013; Gadzala 2015). By focusing predominantly on the nature and objectives of China's foreign practices in Africa and its implications, most analysts characterize China as the driving force with less attention paid to the role of African agency, especially beyond the level of state elites. Even when 'Africa' is acknowledged in these engagements, it is often treated as an entity that is acted upon rather than one that wields any form of leverage on its own. This omission or denial

of African agency means African voices are muted, repeating the age-old assumption that Africans lack meaningful agency; a presumption reminiscent of early post-independence debates about dependency where African developments were almost exclusively explained in terms of external capitalism (Ley, 1996).

The focus on Chinese practices without a corresponding engagement with the African side of the story is an illusion that needs to be challenged. Africa-China relations are best understood as an interaction rather than domination. In fact, the persistent gaze on foreign actors' engagement in Africa without corresponding attention to the African side of the relationship has partly resulted in the overwhelming anticipation of how foreign intervention and involvement could 'rescue' Africa. The point here is that the question of Africa's development is not China's issue any more than it is American's or France's; it is properly an African issue that requires or should involve responsible African agents.⁵

This study addresses the gap in the literature described above. I will explore the extent to which Africa-China relations are mediated by local socio-economic conditions and political and social agency. I problematise the initial assumption of African passivity that has coloured the study of Africa-China relations in contemporary times. Africa and its people are not helpless victims: they are active. The real questions are: who is active, where, how and why? Thus, while some scholars now attempt to 'uncover', or 'reinsert' African agency in the Africa-China relations, it is even more crucial to move beyond the tendency to homogenize or reify African agency outside of particular contexts and identities (see Mohan and Lampert, 2013; Corkin 2013). This study argues that the space for African agency vary significantly, thus placing

⁵ This is not to suggest that Africa's development will not benefit from its engagement with external support. The point being emphasized here is that no one could be an agent of change in Africa more than the Africans themselves.

African society and politics at the heart of any understanding of Africa-China relations (Mohan and Lampert, 2013).

This dissertation also responds to and builds on the emerging focus on “African agency,” which often does not differentiate among African actors. Emerging scholarship analysing African agency (Corkin 2013; Axelsson 2012; Tieku 2013) has studied what African states and their political and economic elites are doing (or not) in their relations with foreign interlocutors. Some of the emerging accounts focus predominantly on state elites and largely assume that African elites welcome China as a way to avoid democratic reforms, and that they embrace Chinese investments to enrich themselves, hold on to power and insulate themselves from their subjects (see Corkin, 2013; Taylor 2015a). While in some cases this may not be far from the truth, African agency can be exercised for many purposes and it comes in several forms for different actors (Gadzala 2015). Sartman (2015), for example, has argued that through ‘racialisation’ Zambian state elites exercise agency in their engagement with China for political gains. Similarly, in her insightful work on China-Angola relations, Lucy Corkin (2013) examined the role of agency of Angolan elites in the management of credit lines from China’s EximBank. Her study reveals how Angolan elites negotiate their relationship with Chinese actors to bolster their political capital and hold on to power.

Corkin argues that Angolan political elites exercise agency largely because of the politics of extraversion where (Angolan) elites expropriate resources provided by external actors in order to maintain or consolidate their hold on political power and gain legitimacy. This so called ‘manufactured legitimacy’, according to Corkin, relates to the very makeup of African states which merely gain their legitimacy (and status) from international recognition and not domestic acceptance (Corkin 2013: 166). Corkin’s conclusion on the purposes and use of agency by Angolan elites reminds us of the well-explored issue of ‘extraversion’ in which African regimes

draw resources from the international arena to bolster their domestic positions (see Bayart 1993; Clapham 1996; Taylor 2010). Her observation about elites agency enacted through the role of African leaders takes on a slightly different dimension and moves us into the politics of African agents themselves and the state-society milieu. Indeed, in order for Africanists to understand the politics of the state of Africa, the concepts of extraversion and neo-patrimonialism have largely become the standard tool of analysis (see Callaghy 1984; Sandbrook 1985; Callaghy 1987; Crook 1989; Bayart 1993; Bratton and van de walle 1994; Chabal 1994; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Tangri 1999; Chabal and Daloz 1999). This body of research and Corkin's conclusions point to the diversity of African agency and also highlight the fact that, not surprisingly, African agency is always for a purpose and for someone. While Corkin's observation about elite agency suggests that analysis of African agency requires a careful engagement with the political strategies, relationships and purposes of political actors, it should not preclude us from interrogating African agency even if such agency is confined to both internal and external pressures. We must approach the question of agency critically in order to understand the mechanisms that drive Africa's relations with China, and acquaint ourselves with the prevailing structures within which African agency manifests.

There is also the need to widen the focus of the lens in order to capture other forms of agency that can easily be missed when we gaze only on state elites. A shortfall in the 'China in Africa' narrative is that analysts have somehow bypassed the experiences of everyday Africans, except to highlight the fact that they have been consigned to receiving a raw deal. While some of these stories of subordination can be found across Africa today, they only represent a piece of the whole story.

This dissertation focuses on African agency to show how both state and non-state actors attempt to shape and influence their relations with Chinese actors. As will be shown in the

subsequent chapters, sometimes these attempts do not yield the intended outcomes fully, and when successful they tend to favour some groups over others. The complexity of these dynamics is rarely, if ever, accounted for in most analyses. To claim that the realities of Africa's relations with China are a reflection of the economic, social and political processes in Africa is to state the obvious, yet less attention has been paid to the domestic complexities of African states. Most analysts do not move beyond a vague preoccupation with "China's foray in Africa." The lack of rigorous examination of the domestic mechanisms and structures that condition Africa's relations with China is preposterous given the fact that African politics, economics and social dynamics largely condition and inform relations with China. A more critical comprehensive examination of these realities is therefore necessary if we are to deepen our understanding of the evolving partnership between African states and China.

This study engages the 'China in Africa' debate through an investigation of Ghana-China relations to assess the availability, capacity and willingness of Ghanaian actors and institutions to engage China. The rationale for selecting Ghana is discussed further below suffice to say that Ghana is a long-standing friend of China and the first independent sub-Saharan African country to establish relations with China in 1960; Ghana is a multi-party democracy and clearly one of Africa's most stable democracies; Ghana is heavily aid-dependent and has been a darling of the Bretton Woods Institutions; Ghana has recently started producing oil in commercial quantities and runs a trade deficit with China. These and other reasons discussed throughout the study make Ghana a revealing case to assess the ability of African democracies to negotiate their engagement with China and to examine how Beijing's so called development model 'travels' and how it manifests itself through interaction with African institutions and actors. As the study seeks to examine the dynamics of Ghana-China relations within the broader framework of Africa-China

relations, it is envisaged that the Ghana case study will likely inform the larger picture of China's relations with democracies in Africa.

Research Questions

This dissertation is driven by two interrelated questions. The first question is as follows: *What factors account for Ghana's rising political and economic relations with China?* This question complicates the popular notion that African state elites engage China out of personal, self-interest. Most analyses of Africa-China relations do not empirically and sufficiently address the question of why African states embrace Chinese investments. This dissertation takes as a point of departure the soaring economic relations between Ghana and China to understand the major factors and conditions that drive the Ghana-China engagement. Ghana-China relations have soared in recent years. In 2014, bilateral trade between the two countries reached US\$4billion and China's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to Ghana reached US\$1.11billion the same year, accounting for 65.7 percent of the total FDI to Ghana.⁶ By 2015 Ghana-China trade had exceeded \$5 billion.⁷ Chinese enterprises are investing in different sectors of Ghana's economy. If ideological motivations were the main forces shaping China's interests in Ghana in the 1960s and 1970s, what new factors drive Ghana-China relations in contemporary times? As Chapter Three will demonstrate, Ghana's engagement with Beijing in the last decade can be attributed to complex national priorities such as infrastructure development and other economic imperatives.

⁶ See Ghanaweb: "China-Ghana trade yields US 4billion" available at <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/China-Ghana-trade-yields-US-4-billion-340278> accessed March 19, 2015

⁷ See Myjoyonline: "Ghana-China Trade Exceeds 5 billion" available at <http://www.myjoyonline.com/business/2015/July-4th/ghana-china-trade-exceeds-5-billion.php> accessed July 4, 2015

The second and related question this dissertation sets out to answer is: *What roles (if any) do Ghanaian officials, civil society and individuals play in Ghana's growing engagement with China?* Put differently: *How do Ghanaian officials and publics respond/react to Chinese engagement?* This question, in particular, speaks to the theme of Ghanaian agency. To address this question I investigate the ways in which Ghanaian actors and institutions permit and control Chinese involvement in Ghana. As noted earlier, much of the 'China in Africa' literature tends to focus on sceptical assertions about the exploitative aspects of Chinese engagement and optimistic claims about the opportunities presented by it. Consequently, the distinct ways that Africa's diverse actors perceive and react to Chinese engagement is given less attention. Focusing on Ghanaian influence in Ghana-China engagement, I argue that Ghanaian actors wield considerable influence in their engagement. This assertion of Ghanaian agency challenges the assumption of studies that appear to borrow from the logic of early dependency theory⁸ and presents African nations as stooges, subject to the demands of a dominant and exploitative China, which merely benefits at Africa's expense. Drawing on a holistic understanding of agency both within and below the state, the study seeks to open a starting point for the analysis of Ghana's relations with China that departs from dominant approaches in the literature. Thus, rather than asking how Chinese actors determine Ghanaian realities, this study asks, to what extent and in what ways do Ghanaian actors permit, resist and influence Chinese involvement in Ghana?

⁸ This is not to suggest that all dependency theorists share the same views. Indeed there are points of serious disagreements among the various strains of dependency theorists, and that there is no one unified theory of dependency. The point being made here is that by focusing and explaining realities in Africa solely as a consequence of external domination early dependency thought indirectly muted real agency of African state and non-state actors, rendering Africa as merely a victim of global powers.

By exploring these two interrelated questions, this study aims to show that it is critical to understand the factors that condition Ghana-China engagement, and to engage critically with the strategic responses and the voices of Ghanaian government and civil society actors.

Overview of Theoretical framework

My research is informed by a critical African political economy (CAPE) perspective that is grounded in tracing and critiquing both the historical and contemporary development relations between Africa and its foreign interlocutors. I adopt a critical African political economy approach informed by critical development and postcolonial theories. My approach allows me to examine discourses and strategies on African development to account for the continent's position in the global economy and its relations with both traditional and 'new partners'. I take insight from a growing body of work within the field of critical development and postcolonial studies and especially a critical African political economy that analyze knowledge-power calculations embedded in development relations, discourse and interventions in Africa. The works of critical African political economy scholars such as Ake (1985), (1996); Adesina (2004), (2006); Leys (1994); Arrighi (2002); Owusu, (2006); Boafo-Arthur (1999); Smith (2003), (2006); and Abrahamsen (2000) are particularly relevant. These scholars problematize rather than take as given the prevailing unequal economic, social and political realities that Africans face in the global economy. They trace and critique both the historical and contemporary relations between Africa and external actors, thereby offering critical insight into the complexities, power relations and transformations embedded in those relations. For CAPE scholars, social forces and relations of power and knowledge underlie discourses of development and development relations.

For years "development discourses have produced the African continent in specific, contradictory and problematic ways as evident in the language of both 'African crisis' and

‘African tragedy,’” in the process denying the heterogeneity and complexities of African people and reducing them to a set of core deficiencies (Smith 2006: 7; Andreasson, 2005). This study calls for the need to recognise that contemporary African development conditions are not natural but are “the outcome of specific processes in specific settings” (Chabal, cited in Smith 2006: 10). We need to pay attention to the global economic and political processes that have, over the years, ‘constituted’ Africa’s political economy. Critical political economy analysis infused with a postcolonial perspective contextualizes and historicizes postcolonial development relations; it also helps to recognise differences between African polities and presents an avenue for interrogating the agency of African political and social actors.

My approach takes as a point of departure China’s ‘renewed’ development intervention in Africa to interrogate Africa’s postcolonial development relations. This approach in many ways draws on the postcolonial analysis of development relations to argue that ideas of ‘development’ based on certain interpretations of reality, history, and relations require identification of whom is less developed (and the society in which they live), as well as who can prescribe and deliver ideas about modernity, progress, morality and civility (Kothari, 2006:13). This development paradigm is a product of global history understood as a relationship mainly between two main poles: Western societies (global North) on the one side and non-Western countries (global South) on the other. Indeed this relationship has undergone severe changes over several years particularly following decolonisation. Nevertheless, the development paradigm itself is a result of precisely these processes and hence reflects historical continuities as well as important ruptures (Six, 2009: 1103).

The development paradigm, which is the conceptual framework of economic and political development cooperation today, is in crisis and facing challenges from two related dimensions. The first challenge comes from current global economic transformation as a result of the rise of

emerging economies (such as China, India and Brazil) as alternative poles in the world economy and their influence on the economic context in which other global South countries act (Six, 2009: 1104). These on-going transformations are also affecting the West's economic relations with the global South. The second dimension is the normative one, which relates to the first: while the development paradigm provides the conceptual framework for economic and political relations, it is also a set of normative discourses that define hegemonic interpretation of terms such as 'development' and 'partnership'. As I will show in Chapter Three, the dominance and legitimacy of these discourses as well as the actors and practices of development are now questioned by the rise of new development actors such as China on the 'donor' side, as well as the normative discourses they employ.

I pursue a political economy perspective that sees Chinese interests in Africa as not substantially different from those of other Western countries. As I will show in Chapter Five, Chinese transnational corporations in Ghana/Africa are market-driven. I argue that whether or not the development benefits of Chinese state enterprises and private investments in Africa can be effectively realised rests with the agency of African actors. Beijing's rhetoric and practices of development intervention in Africa at times raise many more questions about development and development relations than they answer. However, Beijing's development practices push for new ways of understanding which do not reproduce the centrality of Western ways of 'creating' the world. Neither does China seek to directly impose an ideological agenda of its own on Africa. This interpretation begets two questions: to what extent do the rhetoric and practices of China's development intervention differ from Western interventions in Africa? How should contemporary Africa-China development relations be analyzed within existing global economy? In Chapter Three, I develop that conceptual framework necessary for understanding Africa-China relations that is rooted in a historical and contextualised understanding of 'South-South'

relations and provides the space for the analysis of African agency in Africa-China development relations.

In its development cooperation with African countries, China exhibits some difference in its practices and therefore is generally perceived as different from the Western powers (Six 2009). However, we should be open to interrogating ways in which China exercises hegemony in its development intervention (Power, Mohan and Tan-Mullins 2012). Postcolonial scholars such as Mbembe (2001), Bhabha (1994) and Spivak (1988) will be central to my discussion, since they have examined the coloniser/colonised relationship and shown how the so-called ‘colonised,’ even from an apparent subordinate position, can render the relationship dialogical. This postcolonial lens presents the space to analyse the agency of the supposed ‘colonised’ and helps us move beyond concepts of Africa as a victim of global powers, whether of China or otherwise.

In exploring growing relations between Africa and China, specifically China’s (foreign) policy practices and Africa’s political economy, my work is also situated at the disciplinary intersection of International Relations (IR) and political economy. While insight from IR is pertinent for this study, this dissertation analyses a region whose treatment in the discipline of IR has been marginal (Brown 2012). A critical survey of the mainstream IR theories will reveal a gap in the treatment of some of the central issues of this research. For instance, while the question of ‘agency versus structure’ has received attention in IR, the conventional interpretation and articulation of the agency/structure *problematique* in IR largely focuses on the way in which marginalised, poor and weak African nations are acted upon by great powers and international institutions (cf. see Brown 2012). My research critiques this view by drawing on a growing body of scholarship that makes the case for studying Africa’s international relations from the point of view of agency (Brown 2012; Brown and Harman 2013; Beswick and Hammerstad 2013;

Gewald, Jan-Bart, Rijk van Dijk, and Mirjam de Bruijn, 2007; Chabal 2014; Tiekou 2013). I draw on the structure/agency scholarship in IR and, in particular, the works of Wight (1999) and Brown (2012) to advance a framework for understanding African agency within and beyond the state. Wight's multilayer treatment of agency avoids an artificial separation between agency and structure. His discussion on agency provides the space to account for the various actors and institutions as well as the structural context in the daily interaction between African political actors and their Chinese counterparts.

Lastly, my approach for locating avenues of agency and resistance in Africa-China relations draws on work in subaltern studies. Gayatri Spivak's (1988) pioneering work, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" led to a consideration about how subaltern groups, including women, peasants and racial minorities in the global South, are able to express themselves, although at times they may not be heard, given the hegemony of Western knowledges and the coloniality of power/knowledge. While acknowledging constraints that the subaltern faced, Spivak admonishes the postcolonial critic to take account of these constraints and find ways to challenge domination, including their own analytical lens. This approach intersects with the growing body of work on 'resistance from below' and civic agency (see Scott 1985; Willem 2010; Oriola 2013; Lefkowitz, 2007; McCulloch, 2005; Obadare 2014) and informs my treatment of the question of agency and resistance. I conceptualise resistance as a tool for the expression of political and social agency in Ghana-China relations. This approach offers a broader framework that covers more diverse actors, including the postcolonial state, civil society and ordinary citizens, and ultimately accounts for the dialogical ways in which Ghanaian actors contend, reproduce and even collaborate with Chinese actors.

Ultimately, this study takes a bottom-up approach to the question of African agency. It does so in two principal ways. First, rather than being bogged down with the theoretical

structure/agency debate, my dissertation uses theoretically informed empirical studies to further our understanding of how African agency takes shape in specific conditions and under particular constraints. The existence and nature of agency is not merely assumed. Rather, it is explored through a rich empirical analysis. Second, the study does not take for granted that agency is something that only pertains to state elites. While I examine how the Ghanaian state, through its policy elites, broker deals with its Chinese counterparts, two of my case studies explore the possibilities for agency enacted by those on the bottom rungs of power hierarchies within Ghanaian economy. Can the resistance practices of local residents whose rivers and farmlands are destroyed by the activities of Chinese miners be described as agency? And what do we gain in our understanding from studying marginalised groups or non-state actors from an agency perspective? The answers provided in this study give insight into the dynamics of everyday interaction between Ghanaian actors, Chinese government and transnational actors.

Methodology of the Study

This study employs a qualitative research strategy to empirically investigate evolving Ghana-China relations. Qualitative methods, Devine (2002: 197) argues, is a generic term that refers to a range of techniques including observation, participant observation, intensive individual interviews and focus group interviews that seek to understand the experiences and practices of key respondents and to locate them in context. Qualitative research allows for inquiry into what is not known (Stake, 2010). It also provides a framework for understanding a usually single phenomenon at a deeper and more detailed level.

Given the objectives of this research and the lack of adequate micro level empirical research on this topic, this study will adopt a case study approach. Creswell (2007: 73) defines a case study approach as a process wherein “the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or

multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes.” The case study method is particularly useful for this research for a number of reasons. Case study is a useful research methodology when trying to discern the ‘how’ and/or ‘why’ certain events or things occur (Yin, 2003). In particular, case studies are valuable when trying to analyse contemporary events, emergent phenomena and situations when relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated. The strength of the case study also lies in the range of evidence that can be extracted from multiple data sources (e.g. interviews, archival documents, and print media).

Some scholars including George and Bennett (2004) have warned about the problem of lack of representation in case studies. One could argue that a single case does not adequately address the complexity of the “Africa-China” relationship. I agree to some extent, although it should be added that logistically multiple in-depth case studies are difficult to undertake consistently. Although the objective of this research will be met with the use of a single country case study (with multiple within country case studies), in some instances I have supplemented the primary data with materials from other cases for comparison purposes.

Why focus on Ghana?

The Ghana case study provides a useful basis for various discussions on China’s role and influence as well as African reception. China’s economic engagement with Ghana is fundamental as well as strategic for a number of reasons. First, being the first country to achieve political independence in the sub region, Ghana was a beacon of anti-colonial struggle in West Africa and Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first President, welcomed Chinese support in that struggle for independence. As a long-standing ally, Ghana was a supporter of the PRC in its conflict against India in 1962 (Chau, 2007). Importantly, China’s bid to re-enter the United Nations was

strongly supported and campaigned for by Ghana in the 1970s. These gestures saw in return attempts on China's part to nurture the relationship with grants and technical assistance to Ghana including the construction of the National Theatre, an edifice that stands in the centre of Accra and a few miles from where Nkrumah declared Ghana's political independence from the British in 1957. Crucially, Ghana's close relationship with China is evident in the fact that in 1966 its first President was overthrown in Ghana while on an official visit in Beijing.

Second, reflecting shifting focus in Africa-China relations from ideological considerations to economic and cultural cooperation, in the last decade, the relationship between Ghana and China has moved from simply a diplomatic one to include the engagement of various economic sectors in Ghana. With the discovery and production of oil in commercial quantities, Ghana has become a partner to the Asian economic giant—serving as a strategic partner and a big market for Chinese exports. China is now the second largest exporter to Ghana behind Nigeria (which supplies Ghana mainly with crude oil), edging out the US, the UK and South Africa, with Ghana-China trade exceeding \$5 billion in 2015.⁹ The Ghana Investment Promotion Council (GIPC) reports show that China remained the top source of FDI in terms of the number of projects registered in Ghana in the first and third quarters of 2015.¹⁰ It is estimated that more than 500 Chinese businesses are currently registered in Ghana (Lam, 2015:15) Most of these companies are involved in oil and gas infrastructure projects, electricity projects, water supply, road construction, telecommunication and mining.

Lastly, in the last decade, China has become an important player in Ghana's economy, particularly its most underdeveloped sectors—infrastructure as well as the nascent oil/gas sector.

⁹ See Ghanaweb: "Ghana-China trade exceeds \$ 5 billion," available at <http://www.myjoyonline.com/business/2015/July-4th/ghana-china-trade-exceeds-5-billion.php> accessed July 4, 2015

¹⁰ See, "GIPC Quarterly Report, 2015", available at <http://www.gipcghana.com/phocadownload/reports/quarterly/2015/q1%202015%20gipc%20quarterly%20investment%20report.pdf> accessed March 24, 2016

As Arthur (2010) rightly argues, since independence, Ghana's most consistent progress has been in the areas of democracy and good governance. However, infrastructure development remains as a key challenge. This and other challenges remain in spite of decades of economic restructuring and donor support from Western governments such as the United State and the United Kingdom, as well as from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) (Boafo-Arthur, 1999).

While Ghana's relations with its 'traditional partners' are intact, Chinese assistance and investments have become critical in financing infrastructure projects in Ghana. And while China equally gains from its engagement with Ghana, some scholars see China's development assistance as highly influential in Ghana's economic and political development (Jiang and Jing 2010; Mohan and Lampert 2013; Rupp, 2013).

The backdrop of a recent surge in Chinese activities in Ghana warrants a closer examination of China's presence here and its implications for Ghana's post-colonial development. China weighs greatly in Ghana's economic and political development with its interest in the development of Ghana's energy sector (particularly oil and gas) and heavy presence in Ghana's domestic market. China's investment in Ghana could be an opportunity for the Ghanaian government to accelerate economic growth and develop Ghana's own industry and human resources. Yet an overflow of Chinese goods and not-so-well-planned natural resources deals, and absence of a well-coordinated response to China's intervention in Ghana's economy could potentially be disastrous to the overall development of Ghana. However, Ghana's relative economic and political success and its current development challenges provide a more contextual dimension to the on-going discussions on China's presence in Africa.

Data Sources and Collection Processes

This study uses several data collection methods and sources. It involves both primary and secondary sources. In addition to in-depth interviews, discourse analysis, and archival research, the primary sources include official policy statements, reports and speeches, some of which were readily available on official websites. I also used media reports, statements, and articles from newspaper websites, electronic databases, and copies of Ghanaian and Chinese government documents, which were available in Ghana.

The secondary data sources are comprised of published books, newspaper articles, academic journals, government documents and reports, project and policy documents and promotional materials. These sources were obtained from libraries and resource centres in Ghana, China and Canada. The secondary sources help augment information from the primary sources to enable me in presenting a detailed account of the on-going relations between Ghana and China. These methods are discussed below.

Interviews

Interview data was collected from multiple sources in Ghana and China. In Ghana, I interviewed government officials, civil society organisations as well as private individuals. In all, I interviewed 32 different individuals, institutions and groups in Ghana. I used a semi-structured interview format. This format gave participants the opportunity to express themselves and also enabled me to ask follow-up questions. An interview guide was prepared to serve as a compass for the interviews. Most of the participants were selected through my personal network in

Ghana¹¹ and with the assistance of my field research host institution—the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana.

Government officials interviewed included those from the Ghana Investment Promotion Council (GIPC); Ghana Gas Company Limited; The Bui Dam Authority; Ministry of Trade and Industry; Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Civil Society Organisations interviewed in Ghana are as follows: IMANI (policy think tank); Ghana Union of Traders Associations (GUTA); Danquah Institute; and Ghana-China Friendship Association. I also interviewed Ghanaian workers on Chinese projects, three households, and elders of two mining communities.¹² Three academics/experts from two Universities in Ghana were also interviewed. Additionally, I interviewed an individual from ECOBANK Ltd (a bank which recently opened a China's Yuan currency front desk), as well as Ghanaians who are either in joint ventures or engage in business with Chinese investors or enterprises. I also conducted interviews in other parts of the country where Chinese projects and investments are located, such as the Bui Dam in Brong-Ahafo and Northern regions in Ghana. With regard to sampling, the selection of participants for this study was by *purposeful sampling*. As Gall et al. (1996) state, the goal of purposeful sampling is to select cases that are likely to be information-rich with respect to the purpose of the study (1996: 218). I also discovered more of these participants during my stay in Ghana.

In the course of writing this dissertation, I visited China on two occasions. The first time was in November 2010. My first trip could be considered as an exploratory research trip that helped me to obtain first-hand information on Chinese perspectives on the scope and nature of

¹¹ I am a national of Ghana. I grew up, studied and have extensive research experience in Ghana through years of research assistantship and consultancy on different academic and national research programmes in Ghana. Thus I am very familiar with the social and cultural context of Ghana.

¹² These communities are Manso-Nsiena and Abodom both in the Amensie West district of the Ashanti region.

contemporary Africa-China relations. During my stay at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), I made use of the library and archival database on Sino-African relations at the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS) in Beijing. Through my conversations with the research staff at the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of CASS, I learnt a great deal about Chinese politics and economy and the underlying motivations of China's growing relations with African countries. My second visit to China in March 2014 was more focused. I was interested to learn from the Chinese perspective about the causes and motivation for the increasing number of Chinese who had taken interest in Ghana's mining industry as small-scale miners. I also had an extensive interview with a senior officer/scholar at the Institute of World Economics and Politics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The focus of this interview was to understand specific aspect of revisions to Beijing's policy of non-interferences in African politics. More importantly, I visited the Ghana embassy for an interview with the Head of Chancery of the Ghana Embassy in Beijing on historical and contemporary interaction between Ghana and China.

Critical Discourse Analysis

As Smith (2006) and others argue, Africa has remained one of the main areas of interest in development discourse for several decades. Global development as well as popular discourses on Africa, as a geopolitical space, have produced, formed and performed the region as a crisis spot (Smith, 2006). Language and discourse frame and constrain courses of action. Discourse and language can therefore be used to deceive and manipulate reality (Burnham, et al., 2004: 242). Discourse analysis thus allows the researcher to identify, describe and analyse policy ideas and values present in the process of policy construction and communication (Ibid, 246). To understand how different discourses of cooperation and development are mobilised in Chinese

development practices in Ghana, I conducted discourse analysis of important documents and speeches, especially primary documents elaborating China's relations with Ghana. One such document is *China's Africa Policy* (2006)—an official White Paper that spells out in general terms the contours of Beijing's official policies towards Africa.¹³

Other documents analysed included official publications such as parliamentary proceedings, speeches (government budget speeches, diplomatic speeches etc.), bilateral agreements, and press releases. These sources reveal the nature, direction, motivation and influences in Ghana-China engagements. Additionally, these documents aid the understanding of how different discourses of sovereignty, cooperation and development are mobilised and how such discourses have shifted/changed over time. Language barrier was not a problem as most of these sources were available in English.

Archival Research

This dissertation also relied on archival research. The aim was to track the historical connection between the two countries and understand processes of change and continuity in Ghana-China bilateral relations. I spent weeks at the National Archives and Libraries in Accra, Ghana, to access the available historical records and to determine the key personalities, cases and issues that have historically informed Ghana-China bilateral relations, as well as how various regimes/governments and other institutions have negotiated with the Chinese since Ghana's independence. As noted, similar archival research was conducted in the Library and Archival facility at the Institute of West Asian and African Studies in Beijing.

¹³ See *China Africa Policy*, available at China government website: http://www.gov.cn/misc/2006-01/12/content_156509.htm accessed May 11, 2012.

Media and Other Sources of Data

Lastly, because China's engagement in Ghana continually receives a lot of media attention, this research draws on both the local and international media (electronic and print). I researched Ghanaian English newspapers (such as *Daily Graphic* and the *Business and Financial Times*), including those known to be pro-and anti-government to capture differing coverage of Ghana-China relations over time. Additionally, the Ghanaian online news media (such as www.ghanaweb.com; www.myjoyonline.com and ghanabusinessnews.com) were used. I accessed official releases including speeches by government officials and information on bilateral programs between Ghana and China from embassy and other related websites. Occasionally, I accessed information from Chinese English news websites such as *China Daily* and *Xinhua*.

Significance of Study

This study is undertaken within the context of growing engagement between African countries and China. The study fills a considerable gap in terms of our understanding of the motivations, policy positions and responses of African actors. Most studies on the politics of Africa-China relations have predominantly focused on Chinese actors' objectives and dominance in their engagements with African actors. Many have also analysed the cost and benefits of China's engagements (Van der Wath 2004: 73; Darper 2006; Shinn and Eisenman 2005; He 2007). Others have discussed the benevolence or otherwise of China's involvement in Africa (Tull, 2006; He 2007; Taylor, 2007; Melber 2007; Huang 2008). However, as noted previously, very few studies have specifically focused on empirically analysing Africa-China engagement as a vibrant, two-way relationship in which African actors wield or exercise political leverage. This study examines varied ways local African actors accommodate, protest and resist Chinese

engagements contrary to recent studies that suggest lack of active involvement on the part of local African civil society organisations in accommodating and contesting China's involvement in Africa.

This work also highlights the importance of domestic conditions and politics that shape Africa's engagements with China as well as other external actors, thereby adding to knowledge about Africa's international relations. The findings of the study will not only stimulate further debate on the opportunities and challenges the rise of China presents, but more importantly provide insights into policymaking measures of mutual benefits in Africa-China relations.

By examining how the so-called 'China's development model' travels and how it interacts with African institutions, this study contributes to the evolving debate in International Politics on the rise of China on the world stage in general and on the African continent in particular. Thus it provides critical contribution to the concept of 'South-South' co-operation, which is influencing fresh thinking in international development literature and Development studies. The study also makes important contributions to the fields of international economy of development, state-society relations and studies on resistance 'from below.'

Theoretically, this work also contributes to agency/structure debate and particularly the role of African agency in international relations. By examining the complexities and conditions under which African agency manifests, this study contributes to the debate on Africa's role in international politics in a way that presents Africa as actor not just acted upon, and as a historical agent rather than history's recipient.

Scope of Study

It is important to clarify the scope and focus of this dissertation. First, while the study focuses, in part, on the theme of Ghanaian resistance as a form of agency, I do not wish to imply

in this study that all responses to various forms of Chinese presence and activities in Ghana should necessarily be understood in terms of resistance and discontent. Far from that, there are several instances where Ghanaians, particularly traders, enthusiastically welcome, engage and forge connections with Chinese traders for their personal and business goals (see Marfaing and Thiel 2011). Research also shows that the presence of some Chinese traders and their products in Ghanaian and other West African markets is the result of local entrepreneurs who actively source Chinese consumer goods, partnerships and capital goods from China (see Mohan and Lampert 2013: 1010). Moreover, surveys such as those conducted by Sautman and Yan (2009) show that 40.4 percent of the Ghanaian respondents see Chinese small businesses as helpful to local economic development, although they are also a source of problems for local people. Approximately 83 percent of the Ghanaian respondents had a positive view of China's path of development (cited in Aidoo and Hess 2014: 141). While some scholars (see Sylvanus 2008; Baah, Otoo and Ampratwum 2009; Carmody and Taylor 2006; Mohan and Lampert 2013) have examined discontent among some African populations who have been negatively impacted by the presence and activities of some Chinese actors, less has been written about whether, and if so, how these discontentment and concerns have led to strategic actions and policies by African actors. I suggest that we need to engage with the strategic responses (be it resistance or accommodation) of African voices, whether that of governments, civil society groups or individual private actors in order to deepen our understanding of Africa-China interactions.

Second, this study also intimates that interactions between Ghanaian and Chinese actors cannot simply be understood solely through dichotomies of domination and/or resistance. Rather, as shown in the case studies, the interaction is sometimes characterised by co-existence. Hence, this study does not explore agency or resistance by Ghanaian actors as practices situated outside

power and contexts. Instead, the study is fundamentally oriented at grasping how Ghanaian responses, strategies and policies alter or influence the activities of all actors involved.

Third, this work attempts to depart from the tendency to ascribe a unitary, monolithic identity to the Chinese and Ghanaian actors involved in the engagement. Chinese and Ghanaian actors are far from homogeneous; instead they are differentiated through complex, overlapping and multiple markers of identity, including class, power, occupation and social status among others. Thus there are many ‘Chinas’ in Ghana much the same way that ‘Ghana’ is not a monolithic entity. To be sure, Chinese actors engaged in Ghana include Chinese government officials, large, semi-autonomous Chinese corporations, smaller-scale independent Chinese firms and traders and others such as managers, technical specialists, manual labourers, and miners. Moreover, to assume that the Chinese ‘community’ in Ghana is homogeneous in composition and collectively involved in creating ‘problems’ for host countries would be naive. Ho (2008: 60-61) reflects on the heterogeneity of the Chinese population in Ghana:

Considered as one group, the Chinese in Ghana are fragmented and in flux. Typical indicators that some form of groupness or community exist such as a community newspaper, organised events that bring large numbers of Chinese together, social institutions that make claims to encompassing all or different categories of Chinese, and Chinatowns, were mostly non-existent...Other divisions within this categorical identification, Chinese, also exist such as divisions between mainland Chinese, Hong Kongers, and Chinese from other parts of Asia. Class also is a dividing line between certain networks: restaurant owners do not necessarily have the same network associations as those in the trading business, nor do restaurant owners themselves necessarily form a network.

The actors involved on the Ghanaian side are diverse and include Ghanaian state officials, state agencies, workers, trade unions, policy think tanks, community opinion leaders, traders and private individuals. Consequently, contra the predominant focus on state-to-state elite interaction in Africa-China engagement in exploring the responses of Ghanaian actors, this study looks instead to the dialogical ways in which non-state actors contend with, challenge, and

collaborate with Ghanaian state actors, and how this in turn impacts on processes of engaging Chinese actors in Ghana.

Fourth, I use the phrase, “Ghana’s engagement with China”¹⁴ to mean any sort of political and economic interaction with China and Chinese people. Viewed this way, there will be a difference in focus and depth of interaction with various Chinese actors and vice-versa. Thus, for example, for government officials, ‘engagement’ may refer to any and all actions that are carried out between Chinese and Ghanaian personnel, institutions and agencies, among others. Similarly, for business people and entrepreneurs, the term ‘engagement’ may generally refer to import and export partnerships.

Lastly, throughout this work I use the phrase ‘*Ghana-China*’ or ‘*Africa-China*’ (not *China-Africa*) in line with the focus of this dissertation and as a departure from the dominant ‘China in Africa’ discourses that ignores the agency of African actors and the interconnectedness of the two parties involved in the relationship.

Organisation of Chapters

This study is divided into seven chapters, including the introduction. Chapter Two, ‘*The Dragon Has Not Just Arrived: An Historical Overview of Africa-China and Ghana-China Relations*’, surveys the history of Africa-China interaction and, more specifically, relations between Ghana and China. First, it explores the historical contact and interest between Africa and China that started before the 15th century, continued during the 1950s through the Cold War years to the present. While recent media coverage largely portrays China’s contemporary relations with Africa as new or sudden, Africa-China connections are longstanding, and recent

¹⁴ The word ‘engagement’ is sometimes replaced with ‘interaction’, ‘involvement’, ‘connection’, ‘contact’, ‘linkage’ etc

Africa-China interaction builds on that longer history. I explore how these past relations condition the types of engagement we witness today. Second, Chapter Two also focuses specifically on the historical link between Ghana and China. I show that contact between Ghana and China started before Ghana's independence. I also discuss ways in which immediate Post-independence interactions were heavily influenced by Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and Chinese leaders such as Zhou EnLai. This chapter also highlights the mutual importance of Ghana-China interactions over the years and how recent relations have been shaped by domestic and external calculations of the actors involved.

In Chapter Three, *'Towards a Critical Political Economy of Africa-China Development Relations: The Rise of China and African Agency and Resistance,'* I present the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for understanding Africa-China development relations. I advance a discussion of critical African political economy (Smith, 2006; Mohan, 2013) infused with a postcolonial perspective. This critical political economy approach makes it possible to contextualise and historicise Africa's postcolonial development relations. I do so by offering a critical genealogy of 'development' and an overview of how immediate post-independence African leaders became preoccupied with the ideology of 'development' as well as the role that Africa's external interlocutors have played in dealing with the 'African crisis' since independence. I suggest that Ghana/Africa's recent 'embrace' of China comes after a mixed legacy of Ghana/Africa's engagement with Western countries and the IFIs. I argue that while Chinese development practices and discourses do not change the structural foundations of African economies, China's approach to development relations in Africa creates more room for African agency.

The rest of the chapter explicates the three key concepts that shape the research: 'South-South cooperation', African agency, and resistance. I trace the origin and use of 'South-South

cooperation' as an analytical framework fusing it with Immanuel Wallenstein's (1974) distinction between 'core', 'semi-periphery' and 'periphery' formulations to delineate China's role and ambiguous position within Africa. Having done that, I develop a conceptual framework for examining African agency. Drawing on Wight (1999) and Brown (2012), I advance a framework of African agency that facilitates an enquiry into where and how African actors have influence and then identify the factors that constrain them. Lastly, drawing on insights from subaltern studies and postcolonial analysis (Scott 1985; Spivak 1988; Mbembe 2001; Mamdani 1996), I present a conceptualisation of resistance that makes it possible to capture different actors and ultimately helps to account for the dialogical ways in which Ghanaian actors engage with Chinese transnational and state actors.

Chapter Four, '*Major Factors Driving Ghana's Contemporary Relations with China,*' interrogates Ghana's soaring political and economic relations with China. What explains China's growing funding of infrastructure development projects in Ghana? To answer, I summarise Ghana's postcolonial economic relations to examine the surge in its economic engagement with China. Following this overview, I present three overarching themes/factors uncovered during field research in Ghana: first, I discuss the view that Chinese economic courtship and attitude are attractive to Ghanaian policy makers; second, I evaluate the claim that China's unique focus on infrastructure investment fits in well with Ghana's challenge in this area; third, I examine the view that Chinese engagement offers Ghana some leverage in its foreign relations. In assessing these factors, I concurrently examine specific cases of Chinese assistance in Ghana's energy sector, particularly the Bui Dam and the Atuabo Gas Projects, by exploring the so-called 'resources for infrastructure'¹⁵ deals and their implication for Ghana's development.

¹⁵ This is a term/concept that is gaining currency among China-African scholars. It loosely describe a situation where African countries use oil or other natural resources as collateral to receive large-scale infrastructure projects

In Chapter Five, *'Agency in Tight Corners? Locating Ghanaian Agency in Ghana-China Energy Relations,'* I explore the everyday encounter between Ghanaian actors and their Chinese counterparts. Based mainly on field research, this chapter examines Ghanaian officials' responses to Chinese engagement as well as the responses of Ghanaian civil society organisations and private individuals. First, I explore the interaction between Chinese state actors and local Ghanaian institutions in Ghana's oil and gas industry to highlight ways in which Ghanaian and Chinese actors influence each other's interest, policies and strategies.

Second, I discuss how a Ghanaian state institution (Bui Dam Authority) collaborated with Unionists and Ghanaian workers at the Bui Dam Project to reverse unacceptable corporate behaviour of Sinohydro (Chinese company) leading to reforms with regards to the compensation and treatment of Ghanaian workers. I argue that the outcomes of these cases point two important issues. First, unsustainable contractual agreement with the Chinese and unacceptable Chinese corporate behaviour can be met with coordinated response and assertive action by Ghanaian actors to improve the behaviour of Chinese state actors and enterprises in Ghana. The first case shows that in democratic Ghana, parliamentary scrutiny and civil society pressure can lead to adjustment in the host's country's engagement with China. Second, the cases show that where local laws are well elaborated and enforced, expropriation of Ghanaians is more difficult although full compliance by Chinese enterprises to these agreements may not come instantaneously.

Chapter Six, *'Resistance as Agency: Ghanaian Agency in Everyday Interaction with Chinese Actors,'* examines two cases of Ghanaian political and social agency. This chapter discusses how and to what extent Ghanaian actors have influenced the processes of regulating

from China or Chinese companies. It is also commonly referred to as "Angola Model" or 'Angola Mode' to signify its supposed emergence with Angola and China Exim Bank loan arrangements (see Corkin 2013)

the presence, activities and behaviour of Chinese actors in Ghana's retail and mining sectors. First, I explore the role and strategies adopted by a Ghanaian interest group, Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA), in response to the presence and (illegal) activities of Chinese traders in Ghana's retail sector. I argue that the sophistication with which GUTA mobilized its members to protest and alter the Chinese actors' behaviours is a material gain for these interest groups; and the policy reforms their activities have led to in Ghana attest to their influence and agency in their engagement with both Chinese actors and the Ghanaian state.

The second case probes how local communities have responded to the presence of Chinese actors in Ghana's informal gold mining sector reserved for indigenes. Here, I make two observations: first, I observe that the general weakness in state capacity to prioritise and regulate the small-scale mining sector in Ghana simultaneously accounts for the arrival of foreigners into a sector reserved for Ghanaians and explains the resistance such foreign mining activities have elicited from local communities. Second, and more importantly, I argue that the resolve of 'host' communities 'to do something' about the looting of natural resources, destruction of the environment and disturbance of peace and social harmony is evidence of their social agency. The almost spontaneous community resistance to the perceived threat of Chinese mining activities and the subsequent government decision to take action against the miners leading to deportations and the reclaiming of lost lands is a sign of relief for the communities. These cases support the emerging proof of African agency in Africa-China interactions.

Finally, Chapter Seven, *'Conclusions and Implications of Study,'* includes a summary, overall conclusions and a discussion of the implications of the study. I also offer suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2

‘The Dragon Has Not Just Arrived’: An Historical Overview of Africa-China and Ghana-China Relations

Too often, Africa’s history of interactions with China is ignored in current coverage when in fact ...[t]he Chinese presence in East Africa actually dates back further than that of any European contact (Jessica Achberger, 2010: 368-9).

Introduction

Contrary to the political economy of development literature, which suggests that China is a “new kid on the block”, China has had a long presence on the African continent (Yu 1965; Ismael 1971; Larkin 1971; Eadie and Grizzell 1979; Jinyuan 1984; Winters 1984; Snow 1988; Achberger 2010; Li Anshan 2012; 2015) and, moreover, Africans have historically and continue to play an important role in China’s history and political economy (Snow 1988; Winters 1984; Bodomo 2012; Li Anshan 2015b). There is evidence of Asian (and specifically Chinese) contact and presence in Africa before the advent of European colonialism in Africa (see Li Anshan, 2015). Archaeological and material evidence suggest that there were trade contacts between the African continent and China before Chinese Muslim admiral and diplomat Zheng He, the eunuch sent by the Ming Dynasty to explore the known world, visited Africa in the early 15th century (see Philip Snow 1988; Anshan, 2012; 2015). After Zheng’s adventures in Africa, there was an enormous hiatus, partly as a result of the distance and difficulty of communication and the colonial interlude on both the African continent and in China (Snow 1988). After 1949, China’s contact with the rest of the world and particularly with various parts of Africa restarted in earnest and continues today. The turn of the millennium has witnessed the intensification of political, economic, and cultural cooperation between China and the African continent.

This Chapter traces the *long durée* of Africa-China interaction and Ghana-China relations. First, I explore the long historical waves of interest between Africa and China which

started before the 15th century, institutionalised during the Bandung Conference of 1955, intensified through the Cold War years, and continue into the present. This historical review is contextualised in terms of the ‘presentism’ perspective, which suggests relations started in the 1950s and so is new. The chapter challenges that view while documenting the intensifying growth in diplomatic, political and economic relations. I argue that placing the on-going relations between Africa and China in an historical context helps to analyse and understand continuities and discontinuities in Africa-China relations. It also helps to identify how traces of the past inform, influence and condition contemporary interactions. In addition to this exposition, I also offer a critical review of recent ‘contending perspectives’ on China's presence and role in Africa. Here I argue that Africa-China scholarship needs to move beyond the popular Sino-optimism and Sino-pessimism perspectives that oversimplify Africa-China engagement.

The next section examines the historical interaction between Ghana and China. I trace Ghana-China interaction before Ghana’s independence and analyze the post-independence official diplomatic relations since 1960. I examine the role of Ghana’s first president, Kwame Nkrumah, in forging relations with China and how his overthrow impacted subsequent Ghana-China relations. My review focuses on how engagement between Ghana and China has benefited both countries over the years, and how contemporary relations have been shaped by prevailing socio-economic conditions in Ghana.

From ‘Minimal Encounters’ to ‘Afro-Asian Solidarity’ to ‘South-South’ Cooperation

There are indications that informal trading contact between Africa and China goes back as far as the T'ang dynasty (9th century) and certainly into the Sung period (12th century). According to Basil Davidson (1959: 158), “Chinese goods were certainly reaching the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, by the sea route, as early as the beginning of the Christian era.” Li

Anshan (2015: 35) through archaeological discoveries has also shown that there were contacts between China and Africa long before Vasco da Gama's voyages to the Cape of Good Hope in 1498. However, the first significant official links between China and various African societies were not established until Admiral Zheng He's impressive fleets (Grand Eunuch of the Three Treasures) crossed the Indian Ocean to East Africa extending the maritime and commercial influence of China in the early 15th century (Snow 1988). After Zheng He's visit to the city of Malindi (present day East Africa), the ruler of Malindi is said to have sent an envoy with a giraffe as a present on the same fleet (Power, Mohan and Tan-Mullins, 2012: 32). The gift and that episode of interactions are today used rhetorically to tell the story of Chinese friendly intentions in Africa before colonialism. The Chinese claim that unlike other European powers such as the Portuguese who arrived in Africa 70 years following Zheng's journey, they did not seek to colonize African territories or to plunder its resources: despite sailing with a huge fleet, "travelling in thousands, armed to the teeth, the Chinese were not aggressive," as Zheng's fleet did not storm cities, conquered no land and refrained from plunder (Snow, 1988: 29). However, that period of China's 'engagement' with Africa ended when the Chinese fleet stopped visiting altogether.

Ming emperors and officials, facing domestic political and financial struggles, dismantled the navy as China looked towards its 'triumph of introversion' (Snow 1988: 31; see also Waldron, 1994). Even after Zheng He and his fleets left, the demand for Chinese goods remained and was filled by more indirect trade routes and serviced by middlemen, including Africans and Arabs who were subsequently pushed aside by the arrival of the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British fleets (Snow, 1988). The colonisation of Africa thus partly accounts for the hiatus in Africa-China interactions after the 15th century.

The next period of significant sustained Africa-China interaction (discounting migration on both sides) did not start until the late 1950s following the birth of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The birth of the PRC coincided with the end of European colonialism and the decolonisation movement across Africa. As well, the ideologically charged environment during the Cold War gave an impetus to China's relations with Africa. When the PRC was born there were only three independent states in Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, as well as apartheid South Africa. While broader strategic and economic goals may have informed China's engagement in Africa in the 1950s, anti-imperialism, anti-revisionism and Asian-African solidarity constituted the three key Chinese objectives (Yu, 1965). China responded to African aspirations by supporting three basic African goals: political independence, economic independence and the desire for membership in the community of nations. To this end, China collaborated with African leaders such as Nkrumah of Ghana and Nyerere of Tanzania to train African freedom fighters in the arts of guerrilla warfare, initially at the military academy in the city of Nanjing. Later on, training camps were established in African countries such as Tanzania and Ghana to support the independence struggle and the fight against imperial interests (Snow 1988; Chau 2007; Chau 2014). During this time, the issue of Africa-Asia unity was also echoed in speeches of Chinese leaders. For example, while in Ghana on a ten nation tour Premier Zhou Enlai stated,

imperialism is the enemy of the people of the world and enemy of the world peace. In order to defend world peace and promote the cause of human progress, the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America should unite, the people of various constituent of the world should unite, all peace-loving peoples and countries should unite to wage a resolute struggle against the imperialist policies of aggression and war (quoted in Chau, 2014: 19).

By the middle of the 1950s China saw the need to establish its identity and close engagement with the world of newly independent Asian and African states (Snow 1988). Two important historical events are instructive: the Asian–African Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955¹⁶ and the establishment of the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO), which held its first conference in 1957 in Cairo, Egypt, the same year that Ghana became the first black African country to win its independence. The Bandung conference provided the platform to devise strategies to effect decolonisation in the still-colonized countries in Africa and provided the foundation for evolving relations between Africa and China. China reiterated its unique understanding of Africa’s political and economic challenges given their own colonial history and struggle against poverty (Power, Mohan and Tan-Mullins, 2012). Bandung, thus proved a significant moment in Africa-China history where Africans and their Asian counterparts deliberated and registered their grievances about the nature of international politics and the role of the peoples of Asia and Africa. This dialogue led to the emergence of the concept of Afro-Asian Solidarity.

It was also at the Bandung conference that the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence—first introduced by China’s premiere Zhou Enlai during the negotiations with India over the Tibet issue, in 1954—was adopted as the foundation of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence—mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression; non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; equality and mutual benefits; and peaceful co-existence—became the guiding principles of Chinese foreign policy towards Africa in the struggle for liberation.¹⁷

¹⁶ The Bandung conference was attended by 29 states. The African nations that attended were Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast (Ghana), Liberia, Libya and Sudan.

¹⁷ *China and the Asian-African Conference (Documents)*, (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1955)

In the late 1960s, China strategically engaged Africa with the view that as long as the African people unite and persist in their struggle, they would certainly drive imperialism and colonialism out of Africa (Larkin, 1971). China supported nationalist and national liberation movements in colonies and against white minority rule in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and apartheid South Africa. Larkin (1971) argues that, as late as 1965, if there were competing factions in any African country, China tried to keep a good balance among them, maintaining contacts with all. Chinese support was for movements whose leaders' views closely aligned with that of the CCP, but China also encouraged nationalists to join in opposing their enemies rather than waste resources in internecine strife. During this period, as noted earlier, China offered military assistance in the form of equipment and training to liberation movements, especially in Southern Africa, with Southern Rhodesia as a classic case of China's assistance to liberation forces in Africa. China helped to train Zimbabwean guerrillas in their struggle against British colonial rule (Larkin 1971). Since ideology was an overriding factor in China's relations with Africa during the Cold War, after 1964, as the Sino-Soviet struggle grew and some nationalist groups chose sides, China could not maintain its preference for unity among nationalist groups. China turned away from those who gave their support to Moscow (Larkin 1971).

China's official reasons for supporting Africa's liberation struggles were presented as nothing more than a moral imperative to help the oppressed. At the same time, however, China was also trying to garner backing for its efforts to regain the United Nations seat, an effort that could be greatly assisted by the votes of independent African states (Serge and Beuret, 2009). With the assistance of newly independent African countries, China gained entry at the UN in 1971. In return, China invested in various African countries, building factories, farms, irrigation and energy projects, transportation and telecommunication facilities, and cultural, educational and sanitation projects along with other economic and social infrastructure (Serge and Beuret,

2009). Partly spurred by the perceived Soviet social imperialism, the Chinese increased their spending in Africa by the end of the 1960s. In 1976 China completed the Tan-Zam railway, which connected landlocked Zambia to the Tanzanian port of Dar es Salam on the Indian Ocean. This 2,000-kilometre project was meant to open up the interior to trade, but also to demonstrate China's technical prowess and benevolence (Serge and Beuret 2009).

The importance of Africa in Chinese policy circles declined considerably and remained relatively marginal from the mid-1970s through the 1980s (Segal 1992). Events back in China, namely the turbulent end to the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao Zedong, triggered this decline. The Chinese political system focused on internal politics in a struggle for both the leadership of the country and its economic direction (Alden 2007). Yung-lo Lin argues that though Chinese officials paid rhetorical lip-service to such issues as 'South-South cooperation' in the 1980s, the reality of the situation was that Beijing was mainly interested in maintaining close relations with those countries from which it could benefit economically and so the Africa continent, as a whole, played little part in its economic policies. It should be noted that the 1980s ('lost development decade') was particularly a difficult decade for Africa's economic growth and development considering the deteriorating socio-economic conditions being experienced in the region in the wake of both internal and external shocks and dislocations such as the global oil crises. This was also the period of intensive economic reforms in Africa spearheaded by Western powers and IFIs.

While China remained friendly to Africa after 1978, Chinese foreign policy was largely dedicated to fostering the economic modernisation programme which began under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. The near marginalisation of Africa was also compounded by the fact that by the mid-1980s China's relations with the Soviet Union had undergone a thawing process and as a result China no longer saw the continent as a region where Beijing should combat either

American or particularly Soviet influence, although such rivalry had largely driven China's foreign policy towards Africa in the 1970s (Yung-lo Lin 1989).

China's relations with Africa took another turn in the 1990s. Marchal (2008) points to two important events in the late-1980s that increased Chinese interest and influence in Africa: the Tiananmen Square protest and massacre and "The Great Leap Forward" or "Go Abroad" policy. Following the Tiananmen Square protest, China wanted to re-emerge from the resultant international ostracism it suffered from the international community. China embarked on a concerted campaign to widen its contacts in the developing world in an attempt to counter and resist the criticism endured at the hands of the West (Taylor 1998). Beijing sought to re-energize its diplomatic relations with Africa. Africa was the region to court, not just because the continent held more than a quarter of the votes in the UN General Assembly, but also because African elites wanted to strengthen links with China (Marchal, 2008).

When in 1995 President Jiang Zemin exhorted the Chinese business community to "Go abroad! Become world players!" once again Africa was the place to go not only because the continent had the world's most desirable natural resources, but also because Africa served as market for Chinese goods and services (Marchal 2008). China repositioned its aid as a tactic in its foreign policy in the 1990s because of its recognition of Africa's economic potential and also because of the support it received from African nations after the Tiananmen Square incident. Consequently, Chinese aid to Africa in the post-Tiananmen era increased dramatically as Beijing needed to win allies and friends (Taylor 1998). More importantly, in the 1990s China became interested in the economic potential of the African continent. Thus the promotion of economic linkages became the cornerstone of Beijing's policy towards Africa during this era and has intensified at the turn of the millennium.

It can be observed from the foregoing that relations between China and Africa exhibit some pattern: prevailing political and economic circumstances as well as national and international interests, as defined by elites, are key drivers of Africa-China linkages. In the modern era (following the initial minimal encounters around the 15th century) the nature of Africa-China engagement can be organized into at least three phases.¹⁸ The first phase (*The Bandung Period*, from 1950s to 1960) followed the Bandung conference in 1955, and resulted in decades of what has been termed ‘Third World Solidarity.’ This phase was characterised by ideological and political factors, including the need to provide solidarity with Africa to fight colonialism, imperialism, as well as the effect of the super-power rivalry on Asian and African countries—evident in Beijing's support for African national liberation movements. The second phase (*Post-Bandung Period*, from late 1970s to the late 1980s) saw China’s interests in Africa dwindle, although it kept official diplomatic relations with many African states in West and Southern Africa. Domestic preoccupation in China—the end to the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao Zedong—affected China’s continued relations with Africa. The third phase (*The Age of Business*, from the 1990s) saw a shift from ideological and political motivations to economic imperatives characterised by increased trade, investment and development assistance, as well as cultural exchanges.

The first two phases of Africa-China relations are critically important for any analysis of contemporary Africa-China engagement. However, the third phase of the relationship (China’s resurgence in Africa or the ‘Age of Business’), which has seen a remarkable growth in China’s presence and influence in Africa at the beginning of the twenty first century, will be the main subject of analysis in the next section.

¹⁸ I borrow this characterisation of Africa-China relations in phases from Aidoo, 2010. These periodisations are for analytical purposes only. Africa-China relation does not have to be unnecessarily compartmentalised as the reality of the unfolding relations show fluidity, where elements of one or all eras can be found in another period.

Contending Perspectives on China's Resurgence in Africa

Over the last decade China has sought to enhance its relations by convening a number of high-level summits between Chinese and African leaders, as seen by the institution in 2000 of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The Chinese government has also increased its development assistance to Africa, and cancelled debts that African countries owed (Taylor 2009). Under the ‘going out’ policy, Chinese firms have sought to expand overseas, including Africa. Moreover, China’s growing need for natural resources has meant that Chinese enterprises are increasingly developing mines and oil wells across Africa. Chinese migrants, including traders, investors and entrepreneurs, have also increased their presence all across Africa (Power, Mohan and Tan-Mullins 2012). As this ‘renewed’ presence and influence grows in Africa, it has attracted the attention of the media and academic interests in Africa, China and around the world.

Two perspectives have dominated contemporary discourse about Africa-China relations.¹⁹ The first perspective, which is the dominant view in Western scholarship, generally considers China’s resurgence in Africa as a threat to both Africa and the international community. Analysts suggest that through its policy of non-interference in domestic affairs of host African countries, China is buttressing the power of authoritarian and dictatorial leaders, stunting democratization efforts on the African continent by offering alternative lending and

¹⁹ There is no consensus that there are only two perspectives driving ‘China-Africa research.’ What is suggested here is that at least two dominant perspectives can be discerned from the burgeoning literature. Of course these two perspectives can overlap in China-Africa analysis. Moreover Adem (2013) has identified a third perspective, *Sino-Pragmatism* where people are generally more accommodating of China’s increased activities in Africa but who also believe that it’s too early to make judgment whether the disadvantages of a sustained Africa-Chinese economic engagement would outweigh the advantages for Africa. Alden (2007: 5-6) also identified three strands of thought about Afro-Chinese relations, namely: China as development partner; China as economic competitor, and China as colonizer (Alden, 2007: 5-6).

project finance without stringent conditions related to governance, political and fiscal reform, transparency, and human rights (see Harvey 2010; Helmut Reisen and Sokhna Ndoye, 2008; Vines and Campos 2010). Some also suggest that China is not only a ‘rogue donor’ (Naím, 2007) in Africa but is also ‘scrambling’ (Southall and Melber, 2009) for African resources (oil, land, etc) in ways not different to the era where Europeans siphoned resources from Africa (Manji and Marks, 2007; Trofimov 2007; Melder 2007; Hitchens, 2011). Others argue that China is flooding African markets with mass-produced cheap products such as footwear, textiles and thus killing local African industries (Taylor 2004; Alden 2005). Others argue that China’s non-interference policy fosters dictatorship and insecurity, exemplified in China’s problematic close ties to regimes in Sudan and Zimbabwe (Broadman 2007; Goldstein 2006; Campbell et al, 2012; Rogers, 2007).

Perhaps the most extreme of these views comes from those who talk of Chinese colonization in Africa (Nwoke, 2007; Behar 2008). These analysts argue that Chinese policies in Africa are set to economically and/or politically colonise Africa. China’s engagement is seen as nothing but second scramble for Africa’s resources and an eventual colonization (Lee, 2006; Nwoke, 2007). This new scramble “is nothing but the inter-imperialist rivalries to dominate and control the pillaging of the continent and the exploitation of its people and resources” (Nwoke, 2007: 31). Others point to the so-called systemic transfers of Chinese citizens to Africa. Richard Behar (2008), for example, argues that “there are already more Chinese living in Nigeria than there were Britons during the height of the empire” and that each Chinese project in Africa creates “collateral economies” and “population monuments.” All of these processes, critics argue, will eventually lead to, or has already led to, Chinese colonialism in Africa.²⁰

²⁰ See Oshodi (2012) for discussion on Chinese colonisation thesis.

While these interpretations of Chinese interest in Africa are not always obvious in people's evaluations of the situation, terminology easily found in the literature, such as "scramble," "predator," "empire," "conquest," "invasion," and "new imperialism," immediately suggests a negative interpretation, even if used metaphorically and even if the general direction of the article is not really neo-colonialist in substance (Roberts, 2010). This characterisation of Chinese opportunism is amply seen in Howard French's 2014 publication, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants are Building a new Empire in Africa*.

These negative views, which Adem calls it *Sino-Pessimism*,²¹ find traction in some quarters in Africa²² but mainly among Western scholars and highest level of Western political elites. For example in Lusaka, Zambia in June 2011, when asked about China and other emerging players in Africa, U.S. former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton responded: "We saw that during colonial times, it is easy to come in, take out natural resources, pay off leaders and leave. And when you leave, you don't leave much behind for the people who are there. We don't want to see a new colonialism."²³

The 'China threat' or *Sino-Pessimism* literature, in turn, has generated the second group of scholars who highlight the benefits of China's presence in Africa, and other scholars who seek to 'set the record straight' in Africa-China relations. At the risk of over-generalisation, *Sino-Optimists* largely see Africa-China linkage as a 'partnership,' 'opportunity,' 'win-win' and 'South South' solidarity. They believe African countries stand to gain much from closer ties with

²¹ Adem, Seifudein. 2013. "China–Africa Relations: Making Sense of the Discourse". *Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development* 20: 79-94.

²² Thabo Mbeki, the former president of South Africa, is quoted as saying: "...China can not only just come here and dig for raw materials [but] then go away and sell us manufactured goods." Quoted in Taylor (2009: 3).

²³ See "Clinton Chastises China on Internet, African 'New Colonialism'" June 2011. Available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2011-06-11/clinton-chastises-china-on-internet-african-new-colonialism-> (accessed, August 20, 2014)

China. *Sino-optimists* view Chinese engagement as an opportunity for Africa to develop. The former Senegalese president appropriately captures this view:

I have found that a contract that would take five years to discuss, negotiate and sign with the World Bank takes three months when we have dealt with Chinese authorities. I am a firm believer in good governance and the rule of law. But when bureaucracy and senseless red tape impede our ability to act and when poverty persists while international functionaries drag their feet, African leaders have an obligation to opt for swifter solutions. I achieved more in my one hour meeting with President Hu Jintao in an executive suite at my hotel in Berlin during the recent G8 meeting in Heiligendamm than I did during the entire, orchestrated meeting of world leaders at the summit where African leaders were told little more than that G8 nations would respect existing commitments (Wade, 2008: 20).

A former president of Botswana, Festus Mogae, has also said that “had China not come into existence as a partner for us we would have needed to create her.”²⁴ Another observer celebrates China’s initiative: “China is the only global power laying the tracks for an Africa-wide economic renaissance.”²⁵ These commentators praise China for its investment in Africa’s infrastructure; its provision of soft loans and debt relief to many African countries; and for serving as ‘alternative’ opportunity for African economies. Optimists also view China’s engagements in Africa as a “win-win” partnership (Naidu, 2007). China’s foreign policy towards Africa is highlighted as reflecting equality, mutual benefit and co-development (Anshan, 2007; He 2007).

Other scholars strike a correlation between China’s increased engagements in Africa and the overall positive performance and encouraging trends in some African economies in the last decade (Dugger 2010). Some also point to the scores of projects ranging from roads, dams and bridges to refineries that China has sponsored across Africa. These projects, they claim, are a

²⁴ Quoted in Adem, Seifudein. "China–Africa Relations: Making Sense of the Discourse." *Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development* 20 (2013): 79-94.

²⁵ Dayo Olopade, “China’s Long March Across Africa”, August 6, 2008; http://www.theroot.com/articles/world/2008/08/chinas_long_march_across_africa.html accessed March 2, 2014

testimony of China's commitment to Africa's development (Le Pere, 2007). Also, there are those who are charmed by China's soft-power politics and rhetoric of 'co-development' and non-interference in domestic affairs. For example, Moyo (2009) stresses the importance of the win-win economic bartering (natural resources for infrastructure investment) taking place between China and African countries. She argues that concerns about China expressed by the "Western liberal consensus" reflect paternalistic approaches towards Africa and development aid which they themselves failed to provide over the last fifty years (Moyo 2009).

Those who have sought to debunk the myth of China's role in Africa point out that not only Chinese but also Western actors are responsible for their lack of political will to solve Africa's development and governance problems.²⁶ This body of literature, which is largely reactions to the discourse about the so-called "China threat", has sought to emphasise that China is actually not that 'different' compared to many other Western states and that while the effects of China's growing influence in Africa may not be altruistic, this self-interest does not make China uniquely pernicious (Alden 2007; Downs 2007; Suzuki, 2009; Brautigam 2009; Axel and Fuchs, 2011). For example, in 2009 American scholar Deborah Brautigam published *The Dragon's Gift*. The subtitle of the book, *The Real Story of China in Africa*, suggests it was perhaps designed as a corrective and balanced alternative to the dominant pessimistic discourse so common in the West.

Beyond Sino-Optimism/Sino-Pessimism in Africa-China Relations

²⁶ See Chris Alden, *China in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2007); Erica S. Downs, 'The fact and fiction of Sino-African energy relations', *China Security* 3(3), (2007), pp. 42–68; Shogo Suzuki, 'Chinese soft power, insecurity studies, myopia and fantasy', *Third World Quarterly* 30(4), (2009), pp. 779–793; Ian Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2009); Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Dreher, Axel, and Andreas Fuchs. 2011. *Rogue aid? The determinants of China's aid allocation*. Courant Research Centre: Poverty, Equity and Growth-Discussion Papers.

The dominant views and scholarship on ‘China in Africa’ have enhanced our knowledge of Chinese foreign policy behaviour and its implications in Africa and elsewhere. However, and without wishing to downplay the contribution of these works, they have done little to expand our knowledge of the processes at play and the intricacies within the African side of the engagement. In other words, most of the analyses have focused on Chinese foreign policy objectives, its implications and consequences on Africa and the international community. Less attention has been paid to the equally important questions relating to the behaviour of the African actors, including the factors and conditions that drive African actors and institutions in their engagement with Chinese actors. Consequently, this critical blind-spot has resulted in myopic and often reductionist understandings of the relationship and a dichotomised debate of whether or not Chinese policies in Africa are simplistically good or bad. The prevailing focus on Chinese objectives and practices does not allow for the possibility to interrogate ways in which African actors express their agency in their negotiations and engagements with their Chinese counterparts.

To be fair, some of the recent scholarship on Africa-China interactions have tried to answer more of the ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions at a micro level rather than the more politically charged or theoretically informed ‘why’ macro questions that lead more easily to the Sino-Optimism or Sino-Pessimism classification described above. Indeed, recently some scholars have countered stereotyped imaginaries by researching Chinese–African encounters and interactions on the ground in various settings and constellations across the African continent and in China (see Mohan and Lampert, 2013; Corkin 2013; Mohan, Power, and Tan-Mullins 2013; Haman and Brown, 2013; Gadzala 2015; see also special edition of the *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* Issue 1, 2014;). These authors have variously attempted to ‘reinsert’ or ‘uncover’ African agency in Africa-China relations in ways that depart from but also engage the widely held

perception that Chinese actors drive and dominate interactions with their African counterparts. This dissertation builds on this body of work by investigating Ghana's influence in Ghana-Chinese interactions. In the next section, I present a brief overview of the historical relations between Ghana and China to contextualize their contemporary intensification of relations.

Ghana-China Relations: An Historical Overview

Interactions between Ghana and China began before formal diplomatic relations were established in 1960. Akurang-Parry demonstrates that as far back as 1874 Chinese labourers were brought into the Gold Coast (now Ghana) by the colonial administrators to provide labour for their infrastructural needs (Akurang-Parry, 2001). While the Chinese state may not have been directly involved in this earlier encounter, this insight reinforces the notion that Chinese presence in Ghana is not a recent phenomenon, though they intensified after independence and more so in recent times.

Ghana's independence from British colonial rule in 1957 coincided with two main international events that had huge influence on its foreign policy orientation and behaviour. The first was the Cold War hostilities between the East and West over the quest for dominance in international affairs; the second was the process of decolonisation, which incidentally was supported by the superpowers of the Cold War era—the former Soviet Union and the United States of America. Despite Ghana's historical connections with the West, it pursued relations with the East and with China in particular. Thus while maintaining ties with Britain, France and the United States, the country's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, maintained that there were pragmatic reasons why Ghana should seek and preserve normal relations with the two other

powers of the world—the Soviet Union and China.²⁷ Nkrumah was heavily influential in Ghana's formal interaction with the outside world, including China.

To fully understand Ghana's relations with China soon after independence, we must understand President Nkrumah—his personality, views and approach to politics, particularly international politics. Nkrumah was educated in the West: he attended Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania in the United States; he also studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science in the United Kingdom. It was during his days in the United Kingdom that he joined other African revolutionaries and became an active member of the West African Students Union and the Pan-African Congress and participated in the Manchester Congress of 1945 (a Pan-African Movement). Upon the request of the leadership of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), Ghana's first indigenous political party, Nkrumah returned to Ghana to become the Secretary of the UGCC party in 1947. Nkrumah later broke away from the UGCC and formed the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1949 that became a significant organizational milestone for Nkrumah.

In 1953 Nkrumah organized the first Pan-African conference in Africa in the Gold Coast, which brought together nationalist leaders in West Africa as well as leaders of other organizations against imperialism to seek the means of coordinating the efforts of the countries to form a united front to solve intrinsic problems such as African unity, racial discrimination, etc. Anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, racial equality and political revolution were key themes in Nkrumah's campaign and these appeared to be incongruent with China's interest and position on Afro-Asian Unity and solidarity. Thus it is fair to say that, in their international orientation, Nkrumah and Chinese leaders were interested in the establishment of a new world order and they

²⁷ See Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana's Policy at home and Abroad*, (Washington, DC: Information Office, Embassy of the Ghana, 1957), 3. This is a reprint of Nkrumah's Speech delivered to the Ghanaian parliament on August 29, 1957 available at <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/651/> accessed on March 18, 2015

all sought in some form to alter the international political landscape to coincide with their respective interests (Chau 2014).

During the years immediately after independence, the relatively buoyant position of Ghana's economy enabled Nkrumah's CPP government to pursue a vigorous policy in the international arena. Nkrumah's foreign policies were very political and this should not be surprising considering that his administration coincided with the Cold War and the process of decolonization. In spite of Ghana's historical connection with the West, in 1958 Nkrumah declared:

We cannot tell our peoples that material benefits and growth and modern progress are not for them. If we do, they will throw us out and seek other leaders who promise more... Therefore we have no choice. Africa has no choice. We have to modernise. Either we shall do so with the interest and support of the West or we shall be compelled to turn elsewhere. This is not a warning or a threat but a straight statement of political reality.²⁸

Thus Nkrumah's vision to promote economic development at home and position Ghana as world player influenced his decision to pursue relations with the East. While keeping ties with Britain, France and USA, Nkrumah maintained that it was prudent for Ghana to engage with the Soviet Union and China.²⁹ As well, by 1961 the left-wing faction within Nkrumah's CPP had become very influential in the party and on Nkrumah's policies and pushed for relations with the Communist states. That said, Nkrumah's turn to the East was also partly informed by his

²⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, quoted in Grundy (1963: 449)

²⁹ See Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana's Policy at home and Abroad*, (Washington, DC: Information Office, Embassy of Ghana, 1957), 3. This is a reprint of Nkrumah's Speech delivered to the Ghanaian parliament on August 29, 1957 available at <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/651/> accessed on March 18, 2015

disagreement with the Western elites on the Congo crisis (July 1960-November 1965) and on colonialism in Southern Africa.³⁰

After Ghana's independence in 1957 Ghana and China began to 'engage' each other. The mutual interest Ghana and China had for each other was evident in some of the events that happened even before they established formal diplomatic relations in 1960. For example, on 6 March 1958, a Chinese cultural troupe visited Ghana, for the first time, and performed at the first anniversary of Ghana's independence celebration in Accra. This troupe also gave performances during the Conference of independent African States in Accra in 1958 (Chau 2014). A year after independence, at the UN in September 1958 (before establishment of official relations), Ghana's representative at the UN, Ako Adjei, gave a brief speech about the need to admit China into the UN (Chau 2014, see also Anderson, 1958). At the All-African People's Conference in Accra in December 1958, China's delegate Yang Shuo who was an observer at this Conference used the opportunity to contact members of the African delegations (Chau 2014).

Communication between Ghana and China following the conference were more direct in nature. Gamesu Kofi Amegbe, a leading member of the Preparatory Committee of the All-African People's Conference, and Moses Fairchild Gahoho, a Ghanaian publisher in China, gave a speech in Beijing during the celebration of Ghana's second independence anniversary (Chau 2014). Their speech focused on "the struggles of African peoples for freedom and Ghana's achievements since independence" (cited in Chau 2014: 78). On the occasion of Ghana's third anniversary of independence on March 4, 1960, China's Premier, Zhou Enlai, sent a congratulatory message of greetings to the government and people of Ghana in which he expressed hope in developing friendship relations (Chau, 2014). Obviously, the public

³⁰ For more on this see Aluko Alajide "After Nkrumah: Continuity and Change in Ghana's Foreign Policy" *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring, 1975), p 56

announcement was also meant to show China's intent to have direct diplomatic relations with Ghana. In the same year when Ghana became a Republic and Nkrumah assumed the office of the President, Premier Zhou Enlai and Chairman Liu Shaoqi released separate congratulatory messages to Nkrumah and the people of Ghana (Chau 2014).

Before formal diplomatic relations, Nkrumah envisaged that the Chinese shared his anti-imperial and anti-colonialism views and that they were also interested in his strategies. He therefore used the China option (particularly Chinese economic support) to advance his policies with regards to national liberation movements in Africa. But both countries strategically used their engagement towards their own professed national interest. While the Chinese were interested in increasing their political influence in Ghana and in Africa, Ghana under Nkrumah was interested in using the Chinese support to advance his goals, especially his African unity agenda. Clearly Ghana and China shared common political interests and had similar perspectives on world politics at the time. These commonalities between the two countries became increasingly visible through their mutual support in international politics.

The year 1960 saw a more rapid interaction between Ghana and China. On July 6, 1960 Ghana became the first former British colony, and the second Sub-Saharan African country to establish diplomatic relations with China.³¹ In a communiqué issued on July 5, 1960, the two countries agreed to establish diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadorial representatives. At the invitation of Chairman Liu Shaoqi, President Nkrumah accepted to pay a friendly visit to China.³² Mr Huang Hua, a Chinese senior party official was appointed China's first ambassador to Ghana. Mr Huang arrived in Ghana in August 1960 and presented his credentials to President Nkrumah in September 1960. Speaking at the ceremony at which he presented his credentials,

³¹ Guinea was the first black African state country to recognize Communist China. See Chau, Donovan (2014: 80)

³² "China and the world: China-Ghana Diplomatic ties," *Peking Review* 3, no. 28 (12 July 1960): 26

Ambassador Huang declared, “the Chinese government and people set great store by their friendship with the Ghanaian Government and people and would strive to further their cooperation with Ghana.” The Ambassador also stressed that Ghana-China “ties conform to the common interests of the two peoples and is beneficial to the cause of opposing imperialism and colonialism and defending world peace”³³ President Nkrumah in his reply said, “it is gratifying to know that in the fight for freedom and independence of all Africa, Ghana can count on the support of the Chinese Government and people.”³⁴

In 1960 Nkrumah became fully aware of China’s importance to world politics and to his own policies in Africa. Within a month of establishing diplomatic relations, Nkrumah dedicated a portion of his first major speech at the UN General Assembly Meeting to vocally support China. He stated that to make the organization “more realistic and more effective and useful,” China should be admitted to the UN.³⁵ From August 14 to 29, 1961 Nkrumah paid his first official visit to China and held high-level meetings with Chinese officials, including President Lui Shaoqi and the Premier Zhou Enlai. Two themes are discernible from their meetings: that Ghana and China had common interest in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism and that they shared common history (*Peking Review* 1961A: 5-6).

During this visit, Nkrumah and Zhou Enlai signed the Ghana-China Treaty of Friendship. In a communiqué issued on August 18 1961, the two countries affirmed their rejection of imperialism and pledged their resolute support to the on-going anti-colonial struggle in Africa and the importance of such struggle to safeguard world peace.³⁶ Nkrumah’s visit also culminated in the signing of three agreements to develop economic and technical cooperation between the

³³ “First Chinese Ambassador to Ghana” *Peking Review* 3 no. 37 (13 September 1960): 41

³⁴ *Ibid*, 41

³⁵ Kwame Nkrumah UN Speech, quoted in Chau, Donovan. *Exploiting Africa*., 81

³⁶ Based on archival research in Accra, Ghana (Ghana Archives July-August 2012). Treaty can also be found in “Treaty of friendship, *Peking Review* 4, no. 34 (25 August 1961): 6

two countries: 1) the Sino-Ghana Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation in which China agreed to a 20 year interest free loan of 7 million Ghana pounds. This agreement also stipulated that China would send to Ghana experts and technicians, train Ghanaian technicians, as well as supply Ghana with equipment and materials; 2) the Sino-Ghanaian Trade and Payments Agreement that guaranteed an annual 4 million Ghanaian pounds in volume of export for the two countries; 3) the Cultural Cooperation Agreement intended to open a field in which the two countries could exchange experience and learn from each other in the arts, science and education, and health issues (Huang 2008: 176; see also Chau, 2014: 83).

Ahead of Nkrumah's visit to China, Mr Cobina Kessie was named Ghana's first ambassador to China in October 1960. Kessie previously served as Ghana's ambassador to Liberia. Ambassador Kessie arrived in China in March 1961 to a rousing welcome.

Before the end of 1962, Chinese economic assistance was underway in Ghana. In October of 1962, Ghana and China signed the protocol on economic and technical cooperation. The agreement required China to supply to Ghana equipment, building materials, and technical assistance to help Ghana build industrial projects and also to develop the cultivation of rice, freshwater fisheries, and handicraft industries (*Peking Review*, 1962: 23). Although Ghana did not use Chinese loans until about 1965, it is estimated that from 1961 to 1964, a total of about \$40 million of Chinese economic aid was given to Ghana (see Chau, 2014: 88). While Nkrumah believed in the role of nationalist movements in the struggle for independence, he did not always have the resources to sponsor the emerging freedom fighters. In 1964, Ghana signed an agreement with the Chinese "for the provision of military equipment and advisers for Ghana's 'freedom fighters'" (Chau 2014: 89). This agreement signalled the beginning of the training of freedom fighters in the manufacture and use of explosives, guerrilla tactics and fundamentals of armed struggle (Chau 2014: 89).

In early 1966, however, China's influence in Ghana and across Africa was declining. On February 24, 1966, when President Nkrumah made a stopover in China (on his way to Hanoi at the invitation of the President of North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, with proposals for ending the Vietnam War),³⁷ he was informed of his overthrow back home in a joint military-police coup d'état. In Nkrumah's words: "[t]he word 'coup' should not be used to describe what took place in Ghana on 24th February 1966.... [T]he cowards who seized power by force of arms behind my back were... traitors among the army and the police who were inspired by and helped by neocolonialists and certain reactionary element among our own population" (1972: 9). A day after the coup, Nkrumah issued a statement in China calling on people of Ghana to "remain calm, but firm in determination and resistance" (1972: 10). On February 28, before leaving Peking, Nkrumah thanked the PRC leaders, including Chairman Liu, Premier Zhou Enlai, and Vice Chairman Lin Feng for their support. He issued another statement which again dismissed the rebellion in Ghana and expressed his commitment "to crush the rebellion without delay" (Nkrumah 1972: 17). After the Ghanaian army toppled the Nkrumah's government, Ghana's relations with China were greatly affected. Since China had established very close relations with Nkrumah, his overthrow meant that it would be difficult to forge new ties with the new leadership of Ghana. In October 1966 the two nations severed ties.

Ghana-China Relations after Nkrumah

The fundamental changes in Ghana's domestic orientation after the coup against Nkrumah were accompanied by major shifts in Ghana's foreign policy goals and strategies. Nkrumah and in fact all post-independence Ghanaian governments have variously used the terms

³⁷ For an interesting discussion on Nkrumah's attempt to settle the conflict that brought China and the United States to the brink of hostilities (the Vietnam War) see Snow (1988: 109). See also Armah, 2004

“nonalignment,” “neutralism,” “true neutrality,” or “balanced neutrality” to represent the guiding principle underlying Ghana’s policy with respect to the Great Powers. However, from independence in March 1957 through mid-1960s, Ghana's nonalignment posture favoured the West. As Kwame Nkrumah said in 1958, history had brought Ghana and the West together and this could not be easily erased.³⁸ This sentiment was also echoed in October 1969 by the Prime Minister of Ghana, Dr. Kofi Busia, in his address to the UN General Assembly: “[Ghana's] own historical contacts and experiences have brought it about that we share more common interests with some [Western] countries at this point of time than with others.”³⁹

The new leaders (the National Liberation Council (NLC) and the Progressive government) who succeeded him were reluctant even revengeful of any engagement with China. These leaders reversed Nkrumah’s policies. The NLC expelled about 665 Russians and 52 Communist Chinese technicians after the coup on charges of espionage. The NLC military regime saw these steps necessary to safeguard the position of the military regime as they believed the Russians and Chinese could still be aiding Nkrumah in exile.⁴⁰ The NLC regime, which said its first priority of foreign economic policy was to secure aid for the ‘reconstruction’ of Ghana, increased its relations with Britain, the US, and West Germany. Ghana became pro-West and anti-communist. Ghana almost entirely depended upon the West to fill its economic and military goals. On Cold War issues at the UN, Ghana took the Western line (Aluko, 1975: 57). The Political Committee of the NLC may have wanted to make a shift towards a ‘two China’ policy, but the diplomats among them prevailed over this contemplation, arguing that it would not augur well for them to make any gestures towards a Chinese government-in-exile should Nkrumah attempt to build a government-in-exile in Guinea. On February 28, Ghana

³⁸ K. Nkrumah, "African Prospect" in *Foreign Affairs* (October 1968).

³⁹ Quoted in Aluko 1975: 58

⁴⁰ Scott Thompson, New Directions in Ghana, *Africa Report*, Nov. (1966) 11: p. 19

under the NLC sent a note to the Chinese Embassy to request for all Chinese technical experts working in Ghana to leave. By March 1966 Ghana had expelled hundreds of Chinese nationals. The Chinese embassy expressed misgivings about the way Ghana was worsening their relations.⁴¹ But a severance of Ghana's relations with China seemed imminent in late October 1966 largely because of the prevailing view that there was continuous Chinese financial assistance to Nkrumah while in Guinea. In October 1966 the two nations severed their ties.

After six years of broken relations, Ghana and China restored diplomatic relations in February 1972 when the National Redemption Council (NRC) military government headed by General I.K. Acheampong was in power. In February 1972 in Lagos, Ghana's Commissioner for foreign affairs, Major General N. A. Aferi, and China's ambassador to Nigeria, Yang Chi-liang, jointly issued a communiqué on the resumption of diplomatic relations between Ghana and China.⁴² Under the new military leadership of the NRC that had come to power through a coup in early 1972, a delegation of Ghanaian traders visited China. In China the Ghanaian delegation met with Chinese officials, including the Minister of Foreign Trade Pai Hsiang-kuo and Vice Minister of Economic relations with Foreign Countries Chen Mu-hua, among others (Chau 2014: 100). In March 1973 an interest free loan that China had offered to Ghana during Nkrumah's regime was renewed for the constructions of irrigation facilities, cotton and textile factories. In the following year, China donated agricultural machines and sports equipment to Ghana (Chau 2014).

From the 1970s onward, partly due to political upheavals in both countries, the Ghana-China Economic and Technical Cooperation financial agreement, although uninterrupted, was

⁴¹ "China Strongly Protest Against Worsening of Sino-Ghana relations by Ghanaian Authorities" *Peking Review*, 9 no. 13 (March 25, 1966), 8

⁴² "The Week: Resumption of Diplomatic Relations Between China and Ghana" *Peking Review*, 15 no. 6 (March 3, 1972), 3

significantly less robust compared to the Nkrumah years. The ACET (2009) estimates that between 1972 and 1980, Chinese assistance totaled just about \$9.1 million. These funds were distributed to projects in health, agriculture, education, and industry, such as the Juapong Cotton and Textile Factory in the Volta Region. Significantly, as Ghana and other African countries were going through economic reforms to sustain economic growth from the late 1970s through to the late 1990s, China played a lesser role compared to Western governments and institutions in shaping African economies. But Ghana's political support for China continued unabated. Notably, from the late 1980s during the tenure of Jerry Rawlings as Ghana's Head of State (1981-2001), Ghana provided diplomatic support to Beijing following the reprehensible Tiananmen Square incident, as much of the Western world turned against China. The Chinese government rewarded Ghana in 1990 with a grant of \$2.4 million to build the Ghana National Theatre Complex, an edifice that sits a few blocks away from Nkrumah's mausoleum in Accra (Idun-Arkhurst, 2008; Amoah 2014).

Incidentally, the Ghanaian official (John Kufuor) who cast the vote for China in support of its membership at the UN in 1970 became the President of Ghana from 2001 to 2009. The presidency of Kufuor ushered in what has been termed "Golden age" of Ghana-China relations, marked by massive infrastructural projects supported by China, of which the flagship example is the Bui Dam Project, discussed in Chapter four (see Amoah 2014: 5). Kufuor's administration saw the signing of several cooperation agreements and infrastructure projects with China. These included the construction of the military and police barracks in Accra, financed through a grant of \$3.9 million from the Chinese government; a grant of \$2.4 million to renovate the National Theatre built in the 1990; and a \$28 million interest-free loan to finance the reconstruction of the 17.4km Ofankor-Nsawam stretch of the Accra-Kumasi Highway by China Railway Construction Corporation, which links the southern sector to the northern sector of the country.

Former Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Ghana in 2006 led to a discussion on a number of agreements on improving infrastructure, communication and human resource development. In all, six agreements to strengthen economic and technical cooperation were signed, including an accord for \$66 million for the expansion and upgrading of the telecommunications network,⁴³ the construction of a primary school and a Hospital in Teshie (Davies, 2008).

Ghana and China held bilateral talks and signed six agreements in Beijing in 2006 during the FOCAC Summit. These agreements included a concessional loan of \$30 million for the implementation of a communication system for the security agencies, and the cancellation of \$24 million of debt owed to China (Davies 2008, Baah et al 2009). The two nations also signed agreements regarding the construction of the Bui Hydro Dam project, an economic and technical co-operation grant, tourism promotion and a feasibility study on the construction of a new office building for the Ghanaian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 2008 Ghana hosted the Africa Cup of Nations Soccer tournament. Ghana's hosting of the tournament was considered a great opportunity to invest in the infrastructure development. This involved the construction of road networks, expansion of airports and construction of new stadia. Ghana received a concessional loan of US\$ 38.5 million from China Exim Bank towards the construction of two new stadia in Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale, which were used for the 2008 Africa Cup of Nations Soccer tournament. Shanghai Construction Group of China constructed the two stadia at a total cost of US\$313.5 million. Barclays Bank of Ghana supported the project with additional loan facility of US\$ 275 million (Baah et al 2009: 95).

⁴³ See "Premier Wen visits Ghana." Xinhua News Agency (June 20, 2006).
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-06/20/content_4717868.htm accessed 14 Jan. 2015

Since 2001, China has also delivered two debt relief packages to Ghana. The first relief package was in 2003 when China cancelled US\$ 66 million bilateral debt owed it by Ghana. The second relief was granted in 2007 with the cancellation of US\$ 24 million (Baah et al 2009: 95).

Ghana and China celebrated the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic engagement in 2010 during the Presidency of Evans Atta Mills (2009-2012). While the era of former President John Kufuor (2001-2009) has been described by some as the period that rekindled China's interest in Ghana (due in part to Kufuor's economic diplomacy and several official trips to China), the tenure of President Mills (2009 to 2012) also saw increased relations between Ghana and China.⁴⁴ In September 2010 the Chinese announced a US\$3 billion facility for gas and oil-related infrastructure development in Ghana. This facility was negotiated at the highest levels, with Ghana's President Atta- Mills 'snubbing' a high level UN meeting in New York to stay in Beijing for the signing ceremony.⁴⁵

Consistent with China's increasing relations with other African countries, and in the spirit of *China's African policy* launched in 2006, there has been an increase in economic, political, and cultural cooperation between Ghana and China since 2000. On-going frequent exchange of high level official visits between the two countries is an indication of the continuous friendship they share. Ghana remains an important partner in China's Africa policy, and while China is equally gaining from its engagement with Ghana, some see China's development assistance as highly influential in Ghana's economic and political development (Jiang and Jing 2009; Mohan and Lampert 2013; Rupp, 2013).

⁴⁴ During my field research in Ghana for this study, the president Atta Mills died in office, and I wrote a blog about how his death impacted my field work and its potential effect on the nature of Ghana-China relations. See "Fieldwork and the Death of a President" <http://www.africaportal.org/blogs/community-practice/fieldwork-and-death-president>

⁴⁵ See "China's Romance With Ghana," *Business Times Magazine* Dec 2010-Jan 2011 <http://content.yudu.com/Library/A1qlr2/BusinessTimesMagazin/resources/5.htm> accessed March 18, 2014

Ghana's evolving relations with China continue to receive academic attention (see Idun-Arkurst, 2008; Davies, 2008; Ayittey et al 2009; Baah et al 2009; Aidoo 2010; ACET 2011; Chau 2007, 2014; Amoah, 2014). In the last decade some scholars have examined the influx of Chinese products and traders in Ghana (Axelsson, 2012; Giese 2013; Giese, & Thiel 2014; Marfaing & Thiel, 2013). Other scholars have examined the everyday interaction between Ghanaian traders and Chinese merchants (Mohan and Lampert 2013; Lam, 2015), and Chinese employers and their Ghanaian workers (Giese & Thiel, 2015). Some have also examined China's engagement in Ghana's energy sector focusing on its impact on the Ghana economy (Rupp 2013; Hensengerth 2013; Odoom, 2015) as well as the oil industry (Hardus, 2014). This study adds to this growing scholarly work.

Conclusions

This chapter surveyed the history of Africa-China engagement, and interactions between Ghana and China. I argued that despite the media portrayal of China's 'new' or 'sudden' engagement in Africa, relations between Africans and Chinese started before the 15th century; it continued during the 1950s through the Cold War years and has intensified in the last decade. I also demonstrated that Ghana-China interactions started before Ghana's independence in 1957 and argued that Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and Chinese leaders such as Premier Zhou EnLai heavily influenced immediate post-independence interactions between the two nations. Chapter Two also argued that examining the historical relations between African states and China helps to contextualize the on-going relations and to identify how traces of the past inform, influence and condition contemporary interactions. The chapter showed that since the turn of the millennium, the underlying principles of Africa-China relations and Ghana-China interactions have shifted from ideological to economic imperatives characterised by increased trade,

investment and development assistance. China's development intervention in Africa, particularly in the last decade, has been monumental with significant challenges and opportunities for Africa's development trajectory. In its contemporary development relations with African countries, Beijing mobilizes historical principles of mutual respect and solidarity, and legitimizes its involvement in Africa on rhetoric of co-development, and 'win-win' principles. However, contemporary relations between China and African countries are more complex: is the cooperation being witnessed any more progressive than the more familiar "North-South" relationship? What theoretical tools are available to analyse China's growing development intervention in Africa? How should Africa-China relations be analysed within the changing development landscape? In the next chapter, I propose a set of theoretical and conceptual frameworks for examining the unique relationship that China is building with African nations.

Chapter 3

Towards a Critical Political Economy of Africa-China Development Relations: The Rise of China and the Question of African Agency and Resistance

China's opening up and rediscovery of Africa coincided with Africa's deteriorating economic performance as a result of conflicts, mismanagement, as well as structural adjustment policies. [...] [F]rustrated by complex donor policies and the high overhead cost of multilateral development projects, African governments continue to appreciate the alternative presented by China in an increasingly multipolar world. (Mulugeta Berhe, 2013:1)

Introduction

Africa's growing relations with China and its postcolonial development cooperation need to be properly historicised and contextualised to reveal the complexities, continuities and ruptures, as well as to allow for discerning possibilities of new futures. Thus, to discern why China has increased its contemporary development intervention in Africa, we have to place their relations within the broader geopolitical and developmental debates. Chapter Three presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for understanding Africa-China development relations in contemporary times. First, I draw on a critical African political economy (CAPE) perspective to examine, analyze and explain the intensification of Africa-China and Ghana-China relations. A critical political economy perspective placed into productive engagement with postcolonial approaches helps situate the Africa-China encounter within the broader dynamics of the global economic relations and makes it possible to contextualise and historicise Africa's postcolonial development relations. This approach provides the lens to account for and understand the social, political and economic complexities that have saddled the continent over the years in order to account for issues of agency and constraints in Africa's international cooperation. The CAPE approach also recognizes differences between African polities and enables interrogation of the agency of African political and social actors.

Second, this chapter explicates three key concepts that shape this research: ‘South-South cooperation’, African agency and resistance. How should contemporary economic and political relations between Ghana/Africa-China be analysed? Is it a ‘South-South’ or a new version of North-South relationship? What do African countries and China have in common? In an attempt to answer these questions I trace the origins and use of ‘South-South cooperation.’ I argue that ‘South-South Cooperation’ (SSC) framework can be useful for understanding political aspects of Africa-China relations. However, I maintain that we should depart from unproblematic normative assumptions about China's place within Africa or the South, while at the same time drawing on Wallenstein’s ‘semi-periphery’ and ‘periphery’ formulations to delineate China’s role and ambiguous position vis-a-vis its African counterparts. The remainder of Chapter Three focuses on developing a conceptual framework for examining African agency in Africa-China interaction. What does African agency look like in practice and where can we observe it? I attempt to answer this question by developing a conceptual framework of agency that allows us to account for the various actors and institutions engaged in the daily interaction between Africans and Chinese. I argue that an analytical focus on African agency affords us the chance to inquire about where and how African actors are influencing or exerting agency and to identify those factors making possible or not the exercise of agency. Finally, taking insights from subaltern studies and postcolonial analysis, I conceptualise resistance as practices or acts that transform and/or reproduce the structures (be it the state or transnational actors) to which they are targeted and are linked to basic changes in the everyday lives of people. This conceptualisation of resistance makes it possible to capture the dynamics of different actors, including the postcolonial state, civil society and ordinary citizens, and ultimately helps to account for the dialogical ways in which Ghanaian actors engage, and collaborate with Chinese transnational and state actors.

African Political Independence and the Ideology of Development

After political independence in the 1960s, the new countries of Africa or more precisely their leaders became preoccupied with the idea of ‘development.’ For example, Nkrumah of Ghana said, “[w]e cannot tell our peoples that material benefits and growth and modern progress are not for them. If we do, they will throw us out and seek other leaders who promise more.... [T]herefore we have no choice.... [W]e have to modernise.”⁴⁶ As Ake (1996) notes, African leaders needed to find something to replace the ideology of self-government (which was no longer relevant after political independence) if they were to survive, maintain their power, gain some leverage in the postcolonial state and win international allies. Consequently, they settled for the ideology of ‘development’ to replace the nationalist ideology of self-government since independence had been won. How did this ideological shift come about?

Africa’s quest for ‘development’ came at the time when former colonial ‘masters’ were also promoting the idea of development (Ake 1996: 8). ‘Development’ here refers to ‘the post-second world war project of intervention in the ‘third world’ that emerged in the context of decolonisation and the Cold War’ (Hart 2001: 650). European and new world powers such as the United States thought about the concept of partnership in development to maintain a presence and gain some leverage in the post-colonies and to get allies in the Cold War (Ake 1996: 8). The quest to ‘develop’ in Africa thus coincided with the interests of world powers and the “growing will to transform drastically two-thirds of the world in the pursuit of the goal of material prosperity and economic progress” (Escobar 1995: 4).

Cold War politics sparked interest in studies in the United States about Africa and the new world. Politicians and theorists became preoccupied with the kind of development and partnership that needed to be pursued to deal with the social and economic problems of Africa,

⁴⁶ Nkrumah, cited in Grundy 1963: 449

Asia and Latin America (Escobar 1995: 5). The support from federal government funding and grants and fellowships from the leading U.S. foundations as well as the political commitment from policymakers attracted many theoreticians who began to investigate the past, present and the future of the ‘new’ nations of Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Chege, 1997). This group of researchers and the (development) theories they propounded would become the bedrock from which the idea of promoting ‘development’ (and studying it) in the non-Western world would emerge. Accordingly, from the modernisation theory to the (hegemonic) neoliberal economic framework, mainstream ‘development’ thinking has been entirely rooted in the historical and social experiences of Western societies. The US and more generally Western experience, ideologies, institutions, strategies and practices have almost entirely dominated ‘development’ promotion and intervention in the global South. In sub-Saharan Africa, since the 1970s, the predominantly Western international donor community led by the two Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), —the WB and the IMF—has influenced and shaped economic and development processes. If Western dominance has long influenced the context, discourses, institutions and strategies of ‘doing’ development in Africa and the global South, what impact will the rise of China (a postcolonial state and a non-DAC⁴⁷ development actor) have on development practice in Africa?

Before we turn to that consideration, however, it is important to present an overview of the evolution of development theory and how ‘development’ became the rallying point for Africa’s immediate post-independence leaders and external actors. After this overview, I will then historicize the discussion about the ‘African crisis’ and the policy prescriptions employed to solve it. These discussions will help to contextualise recent Chinese development intervention

⁴⁷ China is not a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD).

and will provide the background to properly interrogate Chinese development intervention in Africa.

Postwar Development Theory and Cooperation

Development understood as an aspiration, ideology, and field of study became an issue of priority following the end of World War Two (WWII) (Bernstein, 1971: 142). This periodisation is not to deny both the antiquity and continuity of the notion of development in Western thought or a tradition of concern with ‘progress’, ‘growth’ and ‘improvement’ in the 15th and 18th centuries (Bernstein, 1971: 142). However, ‘development’ that emerged in the 1950s had a practical orientation and narrower focus: namely, how the new nations of former European powers (and the not yet independent colonies in Africa and elsewhere) might be transformed economically and politically (Leys 1996).

Post-WWII preoccupation with development was subsequently institutionalised through a proliferation of international agencies, and studied by Western, particularly American social scientists. As a result, development ideology took on a character and intensity derived from a specific historical global context (Bernstein, 1971: 142). Following WWII, U.S. President Harry Truman outlined his ‘fair deal’ for the ‘underdeveloped world’, thus opening a new ‘era of development’ (Esteva, 1992: 6). Positioning it in opposition to, and implied acceptance of, the notion of the ‘underdeveloped’, Truman began the construction of a ‘regime of representation’ whose natural culmination was capitalist industrial society. Suddenly, in addition to grand old Western Europe, the ‘new’ nations of Asia, Latin America, and Africa became areas whose political and social evolution demanded greater academic input and training, as well as diplomatic and military attention. This ‘enthusiasm’ was underwritten by federal government funding and by Area Studies grants and fellowships from the leading U.S. foundations (Chege,

1997). New theoretical understandings were needed and so a generation of political scientists, economists, sociologists, and scholars of several other disciplines began to investigate the past, present and future of the 'new' nations that were largely unknown to the West before the 15th century (Ma, 1998: 339).

This new attention manifested in the growth of Area studies and modernization theory. The search for material and historical information as well as for the identification of external and internal factors that may cause underdevelopment begun: areas of investigation would include culture, terms of trade, dependency, corruption, lack of democracy and so forth (Esteva, 1992). For modernisation theorists, the causes were internal; traditional cultural traits of the new states were antithetical to development. For dependency theorists, the ahistorical, uncritical and political nature of modernisation theory was called into question. For them the poor countries were in that condition due to past looting in the process of colonization and the continued capitalist exploitations at the national and international levels: underdevelopment was a creation of development (see Dos Santos 1970; Frank 1967; Wallerstein 1974)

The very discussion of the origins or the causes of 'underdevelopment' illustrates the extent to which it was understood as something real, concrete, quantifiable and identifiable. Besides, the promoters of development influenced by modernisation theory (and in many cases influenced by Cold War partisanship), reduced development to economic growth. The goal of development was growth, and the agent of development was the state (Leys 1996). Development consisted of growth in the income per person in economically underdeveloped areas. These taken-for-granted presuppositions rendered a rational, modernist, linear understanding of development. According to Rostow's classic and simplistic scheme, development entailed moving from point A (traditional) to point B (high mass-consumption, or modern). Each country

would progress ('catch up') unproblematically to modernity—from a 'traditional' to 'modern' form of social organisation already completed in the industrialised West (Rostow, 1960).

By the 1960s, the original optimism that this approach would yield rapid results begun to diminish, and the limitations of modernisation theory as a viable account of development were beginning to be exposed (Leys 1996: 8). The early 1970s therefore became an era of Dependency theory. The Dependency school largely criticised the ahistoric and uncritical perspectives of Western-produced development discourse. They inverted many of the assumptions of modernisation theory. They saw the metropolitan policy as maleficent, not beneficent; international trade structures perpetuated underdevelopment, rather than solving it. Development offered nothing to the periphery and so part of the solution lay in reducing links to the centre and in embarking on grand nationalisation policies through a variety of state-oriented and centrally planned mechanisms such as Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) (Leys 1996: 12).

The Dependency school's inability to offer a sound basis for viable economic policies triggered its demise. The hope inspired through state-led development begun to fade out by the 1980s, paving the way for the emergence of neo-liberalism—another theoretical explanation that also sought to diagnose and offer remedy to underdevelopment. Adherents of neoliberal economic policies claimed that what was hindering development in the developing world were none of the things that development theorists had discussed. The problem rather was the idea of bringing about development through state intervention in the economy. The neoliberal revolution offered an intellectual justification for a new wave of market-oriented intervention led by the World Bank and the IMF in Africa and elsewhere. These actors believed that development was blocked by mismanagement by the state; inflated public sector; inefficient economic control policies; corruption, among other reasons (Leys 1996: 18). The solution laid in a commitment to neoliberal growth strategies (privatisation, deregulation, devaluation, subsidies cuts, market

liberalization and export-led growth) in the developing world through structural adjustment (see Mohan et al. 2000).

In spite of relative success of the Asian Tigers and some countries in Africa, pessimism for these reforms prevailed. The 1980s was called ‘the lost decade of development’. The ‘adjustment’ process meant for many countries dismantling, in the name of development, most of the (previous) social and economic achievement (Esteva, 1992: 12). By the 1990s a new development ethos was needed. The Development project needed to undergo many reformations as its failure to achieve social and economic improvement as well as environmental sustainability continued and objections against paternalistic universalism grew stronger.

Yet these reformed models—sustainable development, alternative development, human-centred development and integrated development, to name a few—all accepted the presupposition that there existed two ‘real’ categories of ‘developed’ and ‘undeveloped’ and that those who are ‘developed’ can and should foster ‘development’. Upon this fundamental dichotomy is situated the three axes of development: “the forms of knowledge that refer to it and through which it comes into being, the system of power that regulates its practices, and the forms of subjectivity fostered by this discourse, those through which people come to recognise themselves as developed or underdeveloped” (Escobar, 1994: 10).

The assumption that development involves a replication of something that already exists, framed as a unidirectional, logical, evolutionary process, “gave global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history” (Esteva 1992: 5). Such assumptions are based on certain interpretations of history and fundamentally on the assumption that some people and places are less ‘developed’ than others (Kothari, 2006: 13). This distinction (based on a binary form of thinking), which serves as an underlying structure of organising and interpreting reality, originates from colonial times, defines the present development discourse and has serious

political implications for the relationship between the global North and the global South (Six, 2009).

Postcolonial and Post-development Critique of Development

In the last decade a growing body of work has been more critical of the development project. Postcolonial analyses of the development project have demonstrated the continuities and divergences between the period of colonial rule and the contemporary moment of international development, and explored how development mediates, extends and counters this legacy (Crush, 1995; Pieterse and Parekh, 1995; Cooper and Packard, 1996; Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Kothari, 2002, 2006). Taken together, these scholars highlighted the importance of adopting an historical perspective to understand contemporary development (Kothari 2006: 10).

We also see a growing body of literature that insists on ‘thinking beyond’ development (Escobar 1992; Abrahamsen 2000). These various critical theoretical strands of thought are deeply sceptical of the rational, modernist, linear understandings of development and its ahistorical nature. These scholars generally fall under the rubric ‘post-development theory’, and are often distinguished from other critical approaches to development (such as dependency theory, ‘alternative development’ theory and ‘human development’) by their insistence that development be rejected entirely, rather than better implemented or altered in specific ways.⁴⁸

Insight from this body of literature is highly relevant to the discussion of the rise of developing countries and their implication for development concepts. Post-development theorists seek to deconstruct the idea of development as it came into being after the end of WWII. They

⁴⁸ See for example the contributors to Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree (eds), *The Post-Development Reader* (New Jersey, Zed Books, 1997); Arturo Escobar, “Imagining a Post-Development Era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements”, *Social Text*, 31/32 (1992): 20-56; Sally Matthews. “Post-Development Theory and the Question of Alternatives: A View from Africa”, *Third World Quarterly*, 25, 2 (April 2004): p. 374

do so by illustrating the historical dimensions of these ideas; that is, by clarifying how these ideas came about, and what kind of power relations these ideas inherently reflect (Six 2009:1107). As Six (2009: 1107-8) rightly points out, “one conclusion from this contextualisation of the development idea is that the development discourse itself is rather ahistorical” because “it’s implicit interpretation of history is deeply embedded in the dichotomy of the modern on the one hand and the pre-modern on the other, resulting from an evolutionary understanding of time.” This teleological understanding of history served as the overall legitimization for colonial dominance, but which decolonisation after the WWII made impossible to sustain. Consequently the distinction between the ‘modern’ and the ‘pre-modern’ or ‘civilized’ and the ‘uncivilized’ has been essentially replaced by the difference between the developed and the underdeveloped. Such dichotomies and binary oppositions are foundational to relations of international aid, institutions of development and discourses of intervention; they “provide the rationale and justification for the practice of some people intervening to develop others and thus also shape those who give assistance and those who must be grateful for it” (Kothari 2007: 37). Although in global relations today such categories are no longer acceptable, the underlying logic of the development discourse still follows this structure.

Recognizing that the ideas, theories and practices associated with the term ‘development’ are diverse, Development is understood as “the various ideas and practices which have been premised upon the belief that some areas of the world are ‘developed’, and others not, and that those which are not can and should set about achieving the ‘development’ which has thus far eluded them *ostensibly under the direction of the developed.*”⁴⁹ This idea of development based

⁴⁹ Sally Mathews (2004), “Post-development and the question of Alternatives: A View from Africa,” *Third World Quarterly*, 25, 2: 375 (emphasis added)

on certain interpretations of reality, history, and relations requires identification of whom is less developed (and of the society in which they live), as well as who can prescribe and deliver ideas about modernity, progress, morality and civility (Kothari 2006: 13). This paradigm is a distinct product of global history understood as a relationship mainly between two poles: the advanced Western societies on the one side and their counterpart, non-Western societies on the other. Indeed, this relationship has undergone severe changes over several years, particularly following decolonisation. Nevertheless, the development paradigm itself is a result of precisely these processes and hence reflects historical continuities as well as important ruptures (Six 2009: 1103).

This understanding of development, which is the conceptual framework of economic and political development co-operation today, faces challenges on two fronts. The first challenge comes from global economic transformation as a result of the rise of emerging economies (such as China) as alternative poles in the world economy and their influence on the economic context in which other developing countries act (Six 2009: 1104). These on-going transformations also affect the West's economic relations with the developing world. The second dimension is the normative one, which relates to the first. While the development paradigm provides the conceptual framework for economic and political relations, it is also a set of normative discourses that define hegemonic interpretation of terms such as 'development' and 'partnership'. These discourses describe 'reality' and prescribe certain modes of economic as well as political behaviour (Six 2009: 1104). This study will question the dominance and legitimacy of these discourses and related practices by examining the rise of new development actors on the 'donors' side and the alternative normative discourses they employ.

China's rhetoric and practices of development intervention in Africa undoubtedly raise many more questions about development than they answer, but they push for new ways of

understanding that do not reproduce the centrality of Western ways of creating the world. The next section reviews the political economy of postcolonial ‘African crisis’ and what has been done to solve it before discussing how to understand Chinese development relations in Africa.

Postcolonial Africa and the Crisis of Development

Africa’s political independence ushered the ‘new’ nations into a new era with the dual task of state formation and development. As noted, how ‘to develop’ became a fundamental problem for them. This ‘*developmentality*’, which took hold after independence, became a “means of reproducing political and economic hegemony in the postcolonial era without any serious commitment to the transformation of the colonial state and the economy” (Mawuko-Yevukah 2014: 38).⁵⁰

This view of development can be seen in the ideas and strategies put forward by African leaders and external actors such as the WB about how to achieve ‘development’. Influenced by ideals of dependency theorists⁵¹ and a deep antipathy to neo-colonialism⁵², almost all first generation African leaders sought to disconnect their new countries from global economic integration. For example, in addition to the call for African unity and non-aligned relations with the global powers, African countries embarked on building their own industries to protect them

⁵⁰ The developmentality perspective considers the official development discourse as a form of governmentality regime. Governmentality, and indeed developmentality, “works neither through the extension of bureaucratic or military control to underdeveloped border regions...nor through the logic of repression and control ...but instead through a form of “positive power that wins legitimacy and empowers action” though through non-participatory practices. (Lie 2015: 725; see also Deb 2009)

⁵¹ Originating in the 1950s dependency theorists such as Frank (1971); Wallerstein (1975); and Amin (1976) generally, argued that the development of the industrialised countries had occurred at the cost of, and often on the backs of, the developing nations. They argued that differences between production and trade in the North and the global South are rooted in colonial history; and that the present arrangements in the international economy have ensured that Northern countries develop at the expense of the Southerners.

⁵² The essence of neo-colonialism, According to Nkrumah, is that the State, which is subject to it, is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside. (Nkrumah, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, Nkrumah, 1965)

from the fierce outside competition through what became known as the Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) strategy. They viewed state-led development as the most effective means to counter the threats and exploitation of capitalism and neo-colonialism. Almost every sub-Saharan African country pursued some variation of state-led industrialisation and development. Even Kenya and Ivory Coast, which previously espoused the rhetoric of capitalism, were heavily state-led in their early post-independent development policies (Hyden 2006).

Contrary to the state-led approach to development and industrialisation, Africa's external 'partners,' such as the World Bank and the IMF, blamed Africa's underdevelopment on domestic, political, economic and social factors. For the IFIs, postcolonial Africa needed to adopt strategies promoted by modernisation theorists to be able to develop and industrialise like the Western world. These two competing ideologies provided both the basis for development policy in postcolonial Africa and the framework for understanding what became known as the 'African crisis.' According to Owusu (2003; 2006), most African nations did relatively well economically during the first decade of independence. But by the mid-1970s all these gains started to erode as a result of both internal and external developments, such as political instability across Africa, the oil crisis in the 1970s and downturn in the global economy culminating in the 'crisis' of legitimacy and of the African state.

While the crisis of African development has prompted responses from the continent and from external actors since independence, as I discuss below, Africa has remained one of the main areas of interest in development discourse for several decades (Smith, 2006). According to Smith (2006: 3), global development as well as popular discourses on Africa, as a geopolitical space, have produced, formed and performed the region as a crisis spot (2006: 3). Generally the continent has been perceived by some as not only 'backward' and the mirror of underdevelopment and therefore in need of 'modernisation' and 'development', but also "a scar

on the conscience of the world.”⁵³ Nevertheless there is no clear consensus on how to explain Africa’s so called ‘development crises’ (Leys 1994): since independence, several different theoretical explanations have been offered. Some have sought to reinforce endogenous explanations for Africa’s development crises and suggested that African crisis has more to do with inherent flaws in the systemic cultures and traditions rather than the logic of the global economy (Schraeder, 2004; Owusu, 2007). Scholars like George Ayittey (1992; 1998; 2005), Frimpong-Ansah (1991) and Callaghy (1987; 1988) have laid the blame for Africa’s post-independence underdevelopment on poor leadership, civil war, misrule and administrative ineptitude by the political elites. Others maintain that external factors, including the legacies of colonialism and the structure of the global economy, are the root of developmental problems in Africa (see Ake, 1996; Callaghy, 1987; Bayart, 1993). These differing explanations notwithstanding, international and local actors have initiated ‘development’ programmes and strategies collectively and separately to promote socio-economic development since independence.

Since the global economic crisis of the 1970s, and the emergence of neoliberal globalisation, the dominant theoretical perspective that has sought to assess, explain and prescribe solutions for what is perceived as the ‘crisis of development’ and poverty in Africa has been the (hegemonic) neoliberal ‘Washington Consensus’ (WC). With its almost exclusive focus on factors such as governance, political leadership, corruption and the policy environment, the failure of the postcolonial state is problematically presented as the key explanatory variable of Africa's development crises (Eyoh 1996; Smith 2006). The central feature of this approach is a commitment to neoliberal growth strategies (privatisation, deregulation, devaluation, cutting

⁵³ Former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, Quoted in Malinda S. Smith, *Beyond the ‘African Tragedy’* See preface

subsidies, opening markets and export-led growth), which have been imposed and policed through Western, dominated institutions, particularly the IMF and World Bank.⁵⁴ Its ‘one-size-fits-all’ neoliberal solutions to underdevelopment have been promoted under Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) as the condition for lending money to African countries (Mohan et al. 2000). More than thirty years since neoliberal policies were imposed on African countries, the large majority of Africans still live in poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor countries has been widening (Matthews 2004: 378). This is not to say that every initiative under the neoliberal development project has failed. There have been some achievements over the past five decades or so (improvement in literacy rates, decrease in infant mortality and several other indicators of improved standards of living represent successes), but the record is socially uneven, and nowhere more so than in Africa. The dismal impact of the development project under neoliberalism bred scepticism about its prospects and the claim to authoritative expertise by various Western governments, multilateral agencies and nongovernmental organisations (Mawdsley, 2007).

For many of its critics, the development project under neoliberalism promises unattainable futures; it is universalistic; it seeks cultural homogenisation and it is ultimately Western. The development project is “based upon the notion of development as ‘trusteeship’ in which the agency of Africans is not merely ignored, but more importantly, is rarely acknowledged as existing in the first place” (Mercer, Mohan, and Power, 2003: 432). Despite all the talk of ‘empowerment’, ‘partnership’ and ‘participation’, and a shift to ‘neoliberalism with a human face’, the macroeconomic policy prescriptions of neoliberalism has seen no change. More

⁵⁴ See Mohan et, al. (2000) for detailed discussion of the theory, practice and impacts of structural adjustment policies

than three decades of experiment with market fundamentalism imposed by Western actors has produced development contradictions and uneven growth.

Given these growing reservations and the generally failed partnerships endured with Western powers and IFIs, and against the backdrop of changes in the global economy, African nations over the last decade have increased their engagement with emerging powers such as China, Brazil and India. Manji and Marks contend that “[Africans] feel that traditional relations and partnership with the West have not helped Africa overcome the structural obstacles to eradicating poverty and reversing its economic marginalisation” (cited in Dent, 2011:12). In view of this failure, according to most African leaders, it has become imperative for Africa to increase its options regarding development partners, and China seems to present itself as a particularly viable one. This ‘China option’ for financing development will revive triangulation (Large 2008), which allows African states to maximise their engagement with multiple external actors.

Chapter Four examines how this prevailing view of China’s role and influence in Africa finds traction among Ghanaian policy makers. Below I present a brief overview of Ghana’s postcolonial economy to contextualize this perception among policy makers in Ghana. This overview also provides the background for analysing the changing relations between Africa/Ghana and China within the framework of South-South cooperation.

Overview of Ghana’s Post-colonial Political Economy

At the time of independence in 1957, due to its natural and human resources, Ghana was regarded as a country with great economic prospects. Ghana was the richest or at least one of the richest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Killick, 1978). It was the world’s leading exporter of cocoa with an annual average output of 370,000 tons in the 1950s (Dzorgbo 2001:2) As a

middle-income country (measured by per capita income), Ghana was one of the richest in Africa, with annual GDP growth rate of 6 per cent, a substantial foreign exchange reserve and a strong civil service (Donkor 1997).

Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, instituted a number of state intervention initiatives including free education and health care, mass industrialisation and electrification programmes, as well as several state corporations to compete with private and foreign enterprises (Mensah, 2006). These programs and services became the mainstay in Ghana and led to steady economic growth that increased people's living standard. However, by the mid-1960s there were growing economic difficulties and accusations of intolerance for political dissent against Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) government (Mawuko-Yevugah, 2014).

Despite Nkrumah's ambitious socialist policies, which made basic services and necessities accessible to the majority of the people, and laid the foundation for long-term growth through unprecedented levels of investment in education, health care, electrical power and road networks, his political vision was also his nemesis (Mawuko-Yevugah, 2014). By the early 1960s Nkrumah had moved Ghana into a one party-state with his CPP government as the only legal political party in Ghana. Nkrumah also introduced the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) in 1958, which allowed persons considered to be a threat to national security to be detained without trial. The introduction of the PDA followed incessant assassination attacks on Nkrumah. These acts were seen as undemocratic and extra-judicial and helped to mobilise the political opposition, embolden critics and alienate Nkrumah from the masses. Nkrumah was toppled in a military coup d'état in February 1966.

Nkrumah's overthrow did little to improve the general well-being of Ghanaians, as experimentation with different forms of national economic management by his predecessors did not do much to tame the tide of economic decline (Mawuko-Yevugah, 2014). The overthrow of

Nkrumah also set the stage for an era of political instability. Within a space of three decades following independence Ghana witnessed four military dictatorships and four democratically elected governments. The National Liberation Council (NLC) which overthrew Nkrumah in 1966, was replaced by the democratically elected government of Dr K. A. Busia and the Progress Party (PP) in 1969. The PP lasted for only about three years and was toppled by Colonel I. K. Acheampong and his National Redemption Council (NRC) in 1972. On July 5 1978, a palace coup replaced Gen. Acheampong with Gen. F.W.K. Akuffo as head of the Supreme Military Council (SMC II). In 1979, Jerry Rawlings' Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) staged a military coup and overthrew the NRC (SMC II). Rawlings and his AFRC handed over power to the civilian government of Dr. Hilla Limann in the same year. On the last day of 1981, Rawlings returned to power again with his Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) in another military takeover. Jerry Rawlings was later elected as president under a democratic dispensation and ruled from 1992 until 1999 when his political party the National Democratic Congress (NDC) lost in the general elections to the New Patriotic Party led by John A. Kufuor.

The climate of political instability coupled with several years of economic mismanagement continued well into the 1980s. By 1983, the economy was a classic example of stagflation: inflation was increasing and output was declining rapidly. There was a shortage of almost every conceivable item: food, raw materials and even water (Dzorgbo 2001; Mawuko-Yevugah, 2014). The Ghanaian political scientist, Bofo-Arthur (2001: 247), appropriately sums up Ghana's deteriorating socio-economic situation at the time:

Between 1970 and 1982, income per capita fell by 30 percent and real wages by 80 percent; import volume fell by two-thirds; real export earnings fell by one-half, and the ratio of Ghana's export to GDP dropped from 21 to 4 percent. Furthermore, the domestic savings rate fell from 12 to 3 percent and the investment rate from 14 to 2 percent of

GDP; finally, the government deficit rose from 0.4 to 14.6 percent GDP of total government spending.

As Ghana's economy reached a crisis point, the PNDC government accepted a set of neoliberal economic policies under the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to get the economy back on its feet (Boafo-Arthur 1999). After a decade of the implementation of the SAPs, the World Bank touted Ghana as a reform success story due to improvement in levels of export, imports and balance of payments resulting in a GDP growth average of 5.2% in 1983-1990 (Hutchful 2002, Arthur 2002).⁵⁵ But not long after the economic success and the hope put in Ghana's economic future, the economy remained structurally weak and fiscally unsustainable without external support. The implementation of the World Bank and IMF guided structural adjustment reform policies yielded little of the desired results sufficient to impact positively on poverty reduction, social equality and long-term development (Arthur, 2002). While the economic recovery programs had some positive impact on the macroeconomic position, they failed to invigorate the productive sectors of the economy. As Jeffrey Sachs summarises, very little headway had been made with the implementation of the World Bank and IMF guided policies:

Ghana suffers from considerable extreme poverty. Like other African countries, Ghana has been unable to diversify its export base beyond a narrow range of primary commodities, mainly cocoa beans. It lacks the domestic resources needed to finance critical investments in health, education, roads, power and other infrastructure (2005: 272).

⁵⁵ The implementation of SAPS produced some positive results. The fiscal and macroeconomic performance of the country saw a turnaround from the preceding years. In the early years following the implementation, available statistics indicate that there was economic growth, reversal of production declines in major sectors (especially agriculture), moderation of inflation, stimulation of exports, improvements in the balance of payments, and increase in domestic savings. GDP per capita increased by about 2 percent between 1983 and 1987, and cocoa production increased by about one-third between 1982 and 1986, while domestic financing was controlled and revenue collection increased sharply (Government of Ghana 1987). Infrastructure improved with appreciable level of repair and development. Gibbon (1992) rated Ghana as one of Africa's most successful reformers pointing to the appreciable macroeconomic outrun as a result of the implementation of SAPs.

By the third quarter of 1999, the Ghanaian economy slipped back into economic crisis. A combination of poor macroeconomic management, particularly through fiscal indiscipline, and adverse external economic conditions—low cocoa and gold prices, and high oil prices—caused weak macroeconomic fundamentals. Inflation accelerated and interest rates rose. Large fiscal imbalances persisted, causing government to borrow more from the domestic economy, thus crowding out the private sector. The fiscal excesses led to the rapid build-up of domestic debt (Mawuko-Yevugah 2014).

By the beginning of 2000, Ghana's domestic debt had gone up to almost 20 percent of national output, with interest payments more than the national expenditure on health and education combined. The total Ghanaian Government bonded domestic debt at the beginning of 2000 stood at about 9.1 trillion cedis (see Osei & Quartey, 2001). Interest payment on the debt alone was more than a third of the national recurrent expenditure and certainly more than the development expenditure (Osei & Quartey, 2001). In addition, Ghana had the statutory obligation of servicing its external debt. The current account-induced balance of payments difficulties of 1999 intensified into the 2000 general election year, leaving the country's foreign exchange market badly distorted (Osei & Quartey, 2001). It was against this background that the New Patriotic Party led by J. A. Kufuor was elected into office in January 2001.

Following a keenly contested presidential election in December 2000, for the first time in the history of Ghana, there was a successful transfer of power from one democratically elected government (NDC government under Rawlings) to another democratically elected government (the NPP government under J. A. Kufuor). The NPP government was sworn into office January 2001 amidst great expectation among Ghanaians. Shortly after taking office, the NPP government announced that it had inherited a stagnant economy, depleted national coffers and a huge national debt. The total national debt, comprising foreign and domestic debts, steadily grew

from \$2,903 million in 1983 to \$7,804 million in 2000 (Bank of Ghana Quarterly Economic Bulletin, 2000). The Ghanaian economy was in a precarious situation. According to Amponsah (2007: 124), the liberal theory that correlates democratization with economic development had been confounded in Ghana. Thus quite contrary to expectation, the Ghanaian state after nearly a decade of liberal democracy had failed to revamp the economy. This paradox of Ghana's development initiatives meant that by the year 2000 the country had a relatively sound record of good governance and policy regime but, contrary to expectations, a slow economic growth and development (Amponsah 2007).

Under these circumstances the NPP government under President J.A. Kufour further embraced the IMF and the World Bank and their neoliberal policies, which were this time geared towards aggressive economic recovery and the so-called pro-poor strategies. In 2001, after having been previously proclaimed as an economic miracle by the World Bank and others, the Ghana government applied for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative (Arthur 2010). The HIPC initiative was a program initiated by the IFIs that entailed comprehensive, integrated and coordinated action by the international financial community. Bilateral, multilateral and commercial as well as the international financial institutions cooperated to reduce to 'sustainable' levels the external debt burden of poor countries unable to sustain external debt levels within a reasonable period of time and without additional external support, but that nonetheless demonstrate sound economic and social policy reforms (Osei-Fosu, 2010: 19).

Developed and supported by the IFIs and Western governments, the HIPC scheme was supposed to relieve Ghana and other developing countries of much of their external debt. Since high interest payments on external debts hindered the poverty reduction programs, debt relief advocates contend that debt cancellation will help countries channel much needed resources to overcoming poverty and promoting economic and industrial development. By meeting certain

neoliberal conditions like privatization, export promotion, and trade liberalisation, countries can reduce or cancel their external debts. The HIPC policy became part of the NPP government's development plan, aimed at restoring Ghana to economic recovery.⁵⁶

While Ghana has made significant progress in political governance since independence and especially since Constitutional democracy in 1992, many challenges remain (Arthur, 2010). Significant development constraints such as inadequate infrastructure impose serious limitations on the country's ability to attract and absorb large investments for economic diversification and job expansion. In an attempt to avoid the over-dependence on the Western partners such as the IMF and World Bank and to broaden its investor base, the various political forces in Ghana recognise China's vital role in the Ghanaian economy (Aidoo and Hess, 2014). The NPP government under Kufuor (2001-2009) embraced China as a diplomatic and business partner. This partnership initiated major deals like the US\$150 million loan facility by Alcatel-Shanghai Bell (ASB) to Ghana Telecom and the expression of interest by Sino Hydro Corporation in Ghana's Bui hydroelectric project (Boafo-Arthur, 2007: 246). The NDC government under the Presidency of the late Professor Evans Atta Mills, who took office first in 2009 and again won the 2012 (under President Mahama), has continued the economic and political enthusiasm which the previous Kufuor government showed towards China. Currently Ghanaian policy makers perceive China as a partner-in-development in Ghana's economic future.⁵⁷

The view that China's development intervention and assistance provide new opportunities for finance, political space, and inspiration for African states is ever more popular

⁵⁶ According to Osei-Fosu (2009) since Ghana opted for the HIPC debt relief initiative in March 2001 and reached decision point in February 2002, and the completion point in June, 2004, the country has received a total amount of about GH¢221.10 million into the HIPC account at the Bank of Ghana.

⁵⁷ Interview with Ghana Gas Company official Accra, September 2012

across much of Africa.⁵⁸ Some scholars and policymakers suggest that China legitimizes its economic and development relations with Africa on rhetoric of co-development, mutual partnership and ‘win-win’ principles that are attractive to African nations. However, relations between China and African countries are more complex: to what extent do the rhetoric and practices of China’s development assistance differ from Western interventions in Africa? Is the cooperation being witnessed any more progressive than the more familiar “North-South relationship”? What does China have in common with its African counterparts? How should Africa-China relations be analyzed within the changing development landscape? The next section sheds light on these questions by examining the unique relationship that China is building with African nations under the framework of South-South cooperation.

China in Africa: A model of South-South cooperation?

The increasing interaction between China and African countries, as noted above, is recasting Africa’s international relations and changing the continent’s development landscape. While some analysts express concern about China’s motives and practices, others are optimistic about the opportunities presented by China’s engagement with African countries (Manji and Marks, 2007; Tull, 2006; He 2007; Moyo 2009; Brautigam 2009; French 2014). Some observers—mostly Chinese officials but also some academics—present China as ‘the largest developing country in the world’ and an “all-weather-friend” of Africa, by emphasising, among other things, the value of China’s development experience and cooperation for transforming Africa through South–South collaborative efforts (GOV, 2010). As Dehart (2012: 1360) explains, while Western governments and pundits (negatively) depict Chinese involvement with

⁵⁸ Interview with Ghana Gas Company official Accra, September 2012

terms such as the “China model” or the “Beijing consensus,” China “has rejected these models ... offering instead South-South cooperation to describe its goal.” Other scholars (Melville and Owen 2005; Alden 2005; Marks 2005, 2007) fail to see China’s engagement in Africa as a form of ‘South-South cooperation.’ Below I interrogate the origin and the concept of South-South cooperation as an analytical framework to examine the strategic relations between Africa/Ghana and China. Then I employ the ‘South-South cooperation’ perspective (influenced by Wallenstein’s ‘periphery’ and ‘semi-periphery’ formulation) to delineate China’s role and position vis-a-vis its African counterparts.

The Rise of South-South Cooperation

As with other Southern countries⁵⁹, the Chinese government premises its engagement on the Africa continent on historical relations based in a broader discourse of South-South Cooperation (SSC). The idea of SSC is not new but has gained some currency in international development in the 21st century for both ideological and pragmatic reasons (Mawdsley 2007; Vickers, 2012). The explanatory framework for the debates around SSC points to three underlying issues: the historical legacy of North-South relations including over 50 years of—some would say, failed—development in Africa; the colonial experiences that developing countries share with their African hosts and the related beliefs in the benefits of SSC; and, lastly the potential global power shifts that emerging developing countries donors represent. As shown below, the historical roots, meanings and uses of SSC shed light on China’s engagement in Ghana/Africa.

⁵⁹ The term “South” here is a political term, not to be understood geographically. Undoubtedly, China is part of the northern hemisphere, however, it shares some features of a developing country, such as still considerable levels of absolute poverty and substantial structural shortcomings in its economy.

The idea of SSC emerged when the world of newly independent Asian and African states or what was then called “Third World” began to institutionalise their solidarity. This solidarity was based on shared struggles against (neo)colonialism, imperialism and concerns regarding a global political and economic structure that, they argued, was tilted in favour of developed countries (also referred to as the “West” or the “North”). Therefore, as DeHart (2012:1367) explains, at the root of the concept of SSC is the understanding of a shared history, experience with colonialism and desire for sovereignty and equality. In this vein, the concept of “South” has more to do with an understanding of the global divide between developed and developing countries than geographical regions. Other scholars go further, seeing in SSC, “suspicions of the ‘hegemonic’ character of North-South relations, and a desire to promote more ‘mutuality’ in exchanges among developing countries of the global South (Vickers, 2012).

Two important historical events have been linked to the emergence of the SSC concept and are instructive for our discussion: the Asian–African Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955⁶⁰ and the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries held in Buenos Aires in 1978 (UN, 2009; UNCTAD, 2010). The Bandung conference proved significant in history when Africans and their Asian counterparts deliberated and registered their grievances about the nature of international politics and the role of the peoples of Asia and Africa. The discussion led to the emergence of the concept of Afro-Asian Solidarity (‘Third Worldism’) and to ideas that eventually led to the creation of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961, the creation of the pro-South United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the G-77 in 1964. It was also at this conference that the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence (mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-

⁶⁰ The Bandung conference was attended by 29 states. The African nations that attended were Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast (Ghana), Liberia, Libya and Sudan.

aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefits; peaceful co-existence) discussed in Chapter Two were adopted.⁶¹ Significantly, the Buenos Aires conference took place during a decade when the Western⁶² world felt vulnerable due to the successful increase in oil prices by Southern oil producers and increased Southern pressures for a New International Economic Order (Cohn, 2012). The 1978 conference was also significant because the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPOA) was adopted, that gave SSC a strategic framework for South-South collaboration (UNCTAD, 2009: 7).

Although its substance has changed in contemporary times, SSC is still relevant today and recognised as a framework for developing countries “to strengthen their economic, social and political interdependence, accelerate development and correct distortions in international systems caused by the asymmetrical power relations of the colonial era” (UN, 2009:4). SSC is seen as a mechanism for enhancing growth, reducing poverty and integrating into the global economy (Shaw 2010; UNTAD 2010). Tejasvi (2007) defines SSC as “developing countries working together to find solutions to common development challenges”. South-South cooperation in this dissertation refers to the processes, institutions and arrangements designed to promote political, economic and technical cooperation among developing countries in pursuit of common development goals. SSC is multidimensional in scope, encompassing cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, as well as the exchange of knowledge and technical expertise between developing countries. SSC is also a mobilising symbol for diverse group of developing nations and serves as a strategy for these sets of states to manage their relations with the powerful countries of the global North (Alden, Morphet and Vieira, 2010: 3)

⁶¹ *China and the Asian-African Conference (Documents)*, (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1955)

⁶² “The West” or “western” is a somewhat elusive term, including European and North American, but also some Asian (Japan, South Korea) and Pacific states (Australia, New Zealand). For the purposes of this study and with regard to development cooperation, it is defined here to mean those states organized in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and specifically those in the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

While the SSC framework is a useful concept for understanding aspects of China's relations with African countries, growing economic and political diversity between China and African states calls for a more critical understanding of Africa-China relations within this framework. Wallerstein's 'semi-periphery' and 'periphery' formulations help to delineate China's role and position vis-a-vis its African counterparts (Wallerstein 1974; 1976; 1997; Shaw 1979). In its relations with African countries, China could be described as a 'semi-periphery' state that engages its African counterparts in a seemingly 'similar' yet unexpectedly 'different' ways (Mohan and Power, 2011: 46). China's approach to politics and development intervention, to borrow Homi Bhabha's (1994:86) words, are 'almost the same [to the West] but not quite.'

As a framework, Wallerstein's world-system theory is in many ways an adaptation of dependency theory (Dos Santos 1970; Rodney 1974). Wallerstein (1974; 1976; 1997) states that a world system is a world economy integrated through the market with division of labour and multiple political structures. The capitalist world economy originating in Europe in the latter half of the 15th century has grown to spread across the globe. The system was based on an international division of labour that proscribed relationships between different areas as well as the types of labour conditions within each area or region. The world system is comprised of areas characterized by particular economic and political structures governed by the drive for the endless accumulation of capital. The concept thus ties economics and politics together (Alvin, 1990:181). Wallerstein explains that the capitalist world economy is built on a hierarchy of core areas, semi- peripheral areas and peripheral areas. These categories describe each region's relative position within the capitalist world system as well as some internal political and economic features (Wallerstein, 1974).

According to Wallerstein's formulation, the core countries are the industrialized capitalist countries on which peripheral countries and semi-peripheral countries depend. Core or

metropolitan countries control and benefit from the global market the most. Today, core nations generally include former colonial powers in Western Europe as well as countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and Japan. The peripheral countries export raw materials to the core and these materials are expropriated through unequal trade relations. These countries usually receive a disproportionately small share of global wealth. They are dependent on, and according to some scholars exploited by, Western powers (Dos Santos, 1971). Peripheral countries are structurally constrained to experience a kind of development that reproduces their subordinate status. Most African economies show some of these features.

The semi-periphery countries lie between the two extremes. Semi-periphery countries represent either core countries in decline or periphery regions improving their relative position in the capitalist world economic system. They have organisational characteristics of both core countries and periphery countries (Wallerstein, 1976; Terlouw, 1992). They are often focused in the manufacturing and exportation of industrial goods and commodities. While these advances separate the semi-periphery from the periphery, they lack the power and the economic dominance of core nations and still have a lot of un-managed poverty, placing them beneath the core (Terlouw, 1992). In many ways China's economy is very much like this. The difference between China and most semi-peripheral countries is that its particular history means it has a semi-peripheral economic structure, but its social structure looks more like a peripheral country still (more peasant poor farmers and a smaller—though growing—urban working class).

Although the asymmetrical relations (particularly in trade) between African countries and China could be understood from the 'core-periphery' dichotomy, at the same time this notion seems insufficient at explaining the complex dialectic relations between China and its African partners. China's developing country status and its development challenges at home as well as its development practices and the rhetoric it employs in its engagements with African countries

requires a more nuanced, complex conceptual model. The ‘core-periphery’ dichotomy articulated by dependency theorists (Gunder Frank, Prebisch, among others) explains a relationship of ‘unequal exchange’ in which the rich nations of the world enforced trade relationships with the poor, whereby the former extracted surpluses from the latter. It follows that dependency theory assumes that economic domination runs across North-South geo-economic patterns. While the analytical usefulness of dependency formulation remains, what is being witnessed since the emergence of China as a global trade heavyweight is its unusual position within the ‘core-periphery’ framework. Thus, particularly, in its economic and trade relations with Africa, China does not seem to fit the theoretical concept of ‘core’ country, nor does it any longer fit the standard ‘periphery’ nation. Unprecedented growth in China (Breslin 2005, 2007; Jiang 2009) over the past decade and subsequently its export of manufactured goods to Africa has meant that its trade with African countries is markedly unfavourable for the latter. However, China’s own struggle from underdevelopment and its ambiguous status as a developing country (Sautman, 2006) affords Beijing a historical legitimacy resulting in a distinct culture of ‘South-South’ cooperation (see *China Africa Policy* 2006).

The evocation of China’s ambiguous position (China’s so-called ‘exceptionalism’) has been the source of much of China’s engagement with Africa and, concurrently, a bone of contention with various African constituencies, Western governments, and other international institutions. This ‘exceptionalism’ is also made visible because Africa-China linkages are unique in many ways. China, unlike other European actors, does not have a history of colonisation in Africa. China thus has a specific position among African countries; however, this position is ambiguous. China’s economic and social structure defines a ‘dual position’ as developing country, on the one hand, and ‘donor’ in its external relations, on the other (Six, 2009: 1110). Consequently, the framing and conduct of China’s engagement is informed by a discourse of

difference and similitude: in Africa China is considered different from other external powers based fundamentally on China's own experience as a developing country (Alden and Large, 2010: 1). While China's status as a developing country and its political claim to speak for Southerners is questionable, China shares certain commonalities with African countries coming from common development experiences and shared interests in restructuring international system (He 2007; China Africa Policy, 2006). This notion of Chinese exceptionalism informs the 'China way' of engagement in Africa that purports to promote 'mutual benefit' and 'win-win' outcomes, so that while its engagement with Africa may remain asymmetrical in economic content, the two can be almost 'equal' in recognition of economic gains and political standing (Alden and Large, 2010).

In its development cooperation, China actively mobilises historical discourses of geopolitics (respect for sovereignty, non-interference in political affairs, anti-hegemony) and the language of commonality and mutuality (solidarity, friendship, anti-imperialism) in order to justify and legitimise its Africa policy. Consequently, China is 'different' and conducts its economic relations with Africa in somewhat distinctively different ways to Western countries (Mohan and Power 2011: 487). While it may not be clear whether the overall result of Chinese economic cooperation and partnership is different to the West (this requires case by case studies, and country by country studies), there is clearly a much longer history of thinking about SSC across the global South within China and Africa.

The substance of SSC has changed in contemporary times, specifically since the mid-2000s. SSC now involves concessional finance and infrastructure development at a larger scale involving a broad range of states. The rapidly changing setting with substantially increasing financial volumes and a multiplication of actors under an umbrella approach to SSC creates administrative and policy challenges, not least also for SSC 'providers' like China and

‘recipients’ like African countries (Grimm 2015: 33; see also Chaturvedi et al. 2012; Pérez et al. 2014).

In examining Ghana’s engagement with China, this dissertation hopes to depart from unproblematic normative assumptions about China’s place within Africa. Instead, the goal is to flesh out the complexity of the relationship as well as the agency of Ghanaian actors in the formation of these partnerships. While in many ways China exhibits a different relationship with its African counterpart (Six 2009) and therefore is perceived as different from other European powers, we should nonetheless interrogate ways in which China exercises hegemony in its relations (Power, Mohan and Tan-Mullins 2012). Thus Ghana-China relations are analysed within the prevailing political economy of global development relations focusing on how Ghanaian actors negotiate their relations with their Chinese counterparts.

Africa-China Relation: Convergent Interests and Agency

From the foregoing, we see that Africa’s ‘embrace’ of China under the rhetoric of SSC comes after decades of long standing development cooperation with Western countries and the IFIs. Development relations between Western countries and Africa have not been abandoned (and there are no signs that they will be) even as African nations increase their interaction with China. Hence, the best way to understand evolving Africa-China interaction is not to see the rise of China as a paradigm shift that knocks away Western powers in Africa, or as a relationship that would structurally change the African continent’s development trajectories overnight. The interaction should rather be seen as a form of a power shift in the development cooperation of most, if not all, of the countries on the African continent. However, this shift has huge implications for Africa’s development prospects and its agency.

While the Chinese, like any other foreign actors, are self-interested actors in Africa, Beijing apparently engages with its African counterparts differently. Based on its own experience, China in its relations with Africa emphasises the importance of respect for sovereignty and self-determination. This in many ways encourages learning from each other and makes distinctions between the directions of learning. Unlike other Western actors, China believes that in its relations with Africa each country has to choose its own distinct policies to fit the local conditions and their individual history. The most obvious effect of this approach to development relations in Africa is the room it gives to African *agency*. But the question is do Africans recognise this? Here, Wole Soyinka's remark about Léopold Sédar Senghor's *Négritude* comes to mind: "Is the tiger concerned about its tigritude?" (cited in Chabal 2014: 52). Having dealt with this study's context for Africa-China relations, in the next section I discuss two concepts central to this examination: *African agency* and *resistance*.

African Agency in International Relations

The question of agency has been theorised in International Relations (IR) over the years, including in the context of agency-structure *problematique* regarding the nature of agents, structures and their interrelationships (Doty 1997; Wight 1999; Hollis and Smith 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1996). The primary question centres around the extent to which structural factors limit actors' ability to make choices and effect changes to their social, economic and political environment. There are generally two positions: the first extreme position of structural determinism implicit in the works of Althusser and Emile Durkheim practically dismisses human agency. As Durkheim famously asserted, "the individual is dominated by a moral reality greater than himself: namely, collective reality" (Durkheim, 2002: 37). The other extreme position exaggerates the individual and minimizes or even discounts the role and importance of

structures. For its proponents, social outcomes are outcomes of individuals. Margaret Thatcher has famously said, “there is no such thing as society.”⁶³

The dialectical relationship between structure and agency means that one or other element becomes dominant and the other subordinate. Although most theorists may agree that social structure is a human product, or that this product shapes individuals and their interactions, theoretical development of the agent-structure question has inclined towards either structure or action. Thus while “methodological individualism postulates a social world devoid of social determinants [...], methodological structuralism presents a world devoid of creative agents” (Wight, 1999: 114).

In IR perhaps more than any other social science discipline the tendency has been to favour structural explanations of social outcomes. Most realists, liberals and dependency theorists will argue that “international politics is an arena of limited agency, and particularly so for the vast majority of state (and other) actors that are not classified as great powers” (Beswik and Hammerstad, 2013: 471). Influenced by the work of sociologists such as Anthony Giddens (1984) and the constructivists turn in IR since the 1990s, contemporary agent-structure theorists such as Alexander Wendt, Martin Holis, Steve Smith and Colin Wight have all variously sought to extend or mediate between the two competing conceptualisations by moving it from an either-or perspective in the hope of finding a middle or third way where actors are both constrained by and also constitutive of the structures within which they live and function (Wight, 2004).

While structurally inclined explanations have been on the decline since the 1990s, they have certainly not disappeared in IR research, particularly in the study of Africa and Africans’ role in global politics (Beswik and Hammerstad, 2013; Brown 2012). From structuralism to Marxism, world-systems theory and globalisation, major global perspectives and theories have

⁶³ Douglas Keay, “An interview with Margaret Thatcher,” cited in Gadzala 2015: xix

sought to explain African realities in terms of structure. While the renewed interest in the rise of African agency has attracted attention, it has also generated two extreme perspectives. On the one hand, there are those who talk about Africa “as if all structural constraints had fallen away”, and on the other hand, there have those who insist, “that nothing has changed, that the ‘big structures’ of global inequality remain unaltered and Africa perpetually dominated” (Brown, 2012: 1903). These two perspectives have sought to discuss how Africa is either “‘hemmed in’ or ‘seizing the 21st Century’; ‘hopeless’ or ‘hopeful’” (Brown, 2012: 1903). Problematically, these binary narrative and reductionist approach to African agency does not advance our understanding of the complexities within the concept; neither does the binary help us in any meaningful way to study the multiple dimensions of agency.

Recent Africanist research on agency has benefited from philosophical and sociological reflections on the concept (Giddens, 1987; Archer 2003; Ortner 2006; Emirbayer & Mische 1998). As de Bruijn, van Dijk & Gewald (2007: 1) argue, “one of the important contributions of the agency perspectives to the academic understanding of social change in Africa has been its capacity to explode ... victimising approaches in exchange for a much more balanced understanding of the local processes at work in Africa.” However, the intellectual context within which the African agency debate emerged in IR has not sufficiently delineated the concept of agency (cf. Brown 1996). What does the term agency mean, and precisely what do we mean when we say that someone or something—Africa—has agency? To find answers we need to understand the social, economic and political conditions, constraints and opportunities of agency. This evaluation means that no easy assumptions can be made about what agency is or about whose hands in which it is vested: this determination of the conditions of agency can only be demonstrated through theoretically grounded and detailed empirical research and can never be assumed or taken for granted.

In the next section I draw on Wight (1999) and Brown (2012) in order to develop a conceptual framework for understanding African/Ghanaian agency at the level of the state and sub-state actors. Wight's 1999 article on the question of agency and structure provides a useful framework that avoids an artificial separation between the two spheres. As noted, the preponderance of work on Chinese policy objectives and practices in Africa at the expense of African responses and influence implicitly suggests a denial of a meaningful conception of agency on the African side or a lack of effort to uncover such agency, if any. While this study does not dismiss the existence of internal or external structures that potentially constrain African actors in their engagement with external actors, it contends that constraints, whether in the form of lack of capacity, domestic structures of economic disadvantages, or disabling discourse, are real and persistent (Brown 2012). However, analyses that begin with and focus wholly on such constraints always make it difficult to articulate any real engagement with the political actions of those actors operating within these tight corners (Lonsdale 2000; see also Brown and Harman 2013). It is therefore imperative to think through a flexible conceptualisation of agency that allows us to account for the various actors and institutions as well as the structural context in the daily interaction between Africans and their Chinese counterparts.

Theorising African Agency within and Beyond the State

Analysis of African agency in international politics can draw on the theoretical literature on agency in IR (Wight, 2006) and the growing literature on many aspects of Africa's international relations (see Clapham 1996; Dunn & Shaw 2001; Harrison 2010; Taylor 2010; Brown 2006; Smith, 2007; Brown and Sophie (2013); Cornelissen, Cheru and Shaw, 2012; Lavelle 2005). There is also a range of debates in historical and cultural studies of Africa, especially around colonialism and its aftermath, dealing with questions of African agency in

relation to more structural accounts of colonialism (see Lonsdale 2000; Cooper, 1994; Kolapo & Akurang Parry 2007; Mamdani 1996). Insight could also be gleaned from Africa's international relations literature such as that on 'small states' (Ingebritsen, Neuman, Sieglinde & Beyer 2006); Lee & Smith 2010), as well as various works on Africa which seek to approach international relations 'from the inside out' (for some recent work see, Odoom and Tieku, 2012; see also Clapham 1996; Bayart 1993).

The range of arenas within which African political actors express their influence or agency is wide: it could be at the multilateral, intra-regional, bilateral and sub-national levels (see Brown 2012). This study has a limited scope. It focuses on the role of agency of both state and non-state actors in Ghana's *bilateral* relations with China. While a focus on state actors is important for several reasons, not least because state elites have assumed the status of primary actors and representatives of the African state in Africa's international relations, it is now more importance to understand that African agency is sometimes exerted in arenas far removed from the formal state-based and intergovernmental areas. It is therefore imperative to interrogate how non-state actors engage external actors and see to what extent non-state actors offer different forms of agency. Thus an empirical study on the role of agency of both state and non-state actors in Africa's engagements with China is important for our understanding of growing Africa-China linkages.

African Agency

In order to conceptualise African agency for the purposes of this study, I pose two overlapping questions: how much agency are African political and social actors able to enact, and what kind of agency is being enacted in their engagement with the Chinese? The former question revolves around the degree of influence or power agents are able to exert, their room for

manoeuvre, and the identification of those factors that constrain or enable such agency. The latter question raises analytical problems about the nature of such agency, its content and political purposes and the ways such agency is shaped within a given society.

Below I draw on Colin Wight (1999) and William Brown (2012) to expand on these two questions towards a conceptualisation of African agency. The attractiveness of Wight's three-layered account of agency is that it allows not only for examining the degree or extent of agency in terms of ability to exercise action, but also for the possibility of looking at the structural contexts from which such agents arise and in relation to which they operate. Thus Wight's framework offers the space to think through both the 'how much' and 'what kind' questions of African agency raised above. However, Wight's framework is primarily concerned with the realm of the state. In order to fully conceptualise the kind of agency at play in Africa-China relations, I extend beyond Wight's focus on official state roles to consider non-state actors such as civil society groups. Also, I draw on Brown (2012) to provide another context by historicising the account of African agency.

In his article, *'They shoot dead horses don't they? Locating agency in the agent-structure problematique'*, Wight (1999) developed a three-level theorization of agency to address the agent-structure problematique and the lack of adequate attention given in IR to the role of (state) agency. Borrowing from Spivak (1996), the first meaning Wight ascribes to agency conforms to the traditional meaning of the term which speaks of agents as someone or something capable of 'doing something' –the notion of 'freedom of subjectivity' involving meaning and intentionality. Wight calls this agency₁ (1999:130). This first dimension according to Wight is the *human* basis for agency through which 'anything that happens in society' travels. However, as actors are necessarily embedded within social context, the social forces that are ever present inhibit them. Therefore, Wight identified a second dimension: agency₂, which refers to the ways in which

agency₁ becomes an ‘agent of something’ and this something refers to ‘the socio-cultural system into which persons are born and develop’ (1999: 133). Here Wight is emphasising the wider socio-cultural system, as well as personal histories, backgrounds and social conditioning, which shape agency over time. This dimension of agency makes it possible to identify that which enables or serves as constraints on any agency. Wight (1999: 134) also adds that actors can reproduce and/or transform their individual or collective identities within the system, thereby leading to a reproduction and or transformation of the socio-cultural system itself (although he notes that ‘not all agents are equally placed or positioned’ for such system reproduction and/or transformation). The third dimension of Wight’s framework refers to the particular roles that agents inhabit. This “position practices” (agency₃) refer to the roles that may or may not be formally ascribed to agents and could also constrain or empower their choices. This aspect of agency is structural and refers to properties that ‘persist irrespective of the agents that occupy them’, as illustrated in the more formal sense, to the roles of a leader or diplomat, but also in a less formal sense to a constituent, advocate or protester.

Any particular example of agency requires all three dimensions discussed above. Agents are neither simply free individuals (they are affected by structure), nor script-defined role performers. Both roles and subjectivity are shaped in extent and content by, and operate within, a specific social context. Thus all three dimensions are ‘co-constituted’ and can only be determined or analysed empirically (Wight, 1999).

Wight’s framework suggests two analytical tasks for locating and accounting for agency. The first task is to identify and account for the degree or extent of agency seen in terms of the ability to exercise subjective freedom of action (that is, agency as doing something). The second and related task is to account for the social and political content of that agency seen in terms of the roles to be filled and the social context within which agency arises (agency as being an agent

of something). This way of seeing and accounting for agency is useful for this study because it helps determine ‘how much’ subjective freedom of action is being exercised and what is it that agents are doing with that freedom of subjectivity. More importantly, it also presents a nuanced notion of agency capable of accommodating a variety of actors that can be labeled ‘agent’, and can help differentiate between them, and ultimately locate agencies in the ‘complex dialectical interplay’ with the structural contexts from which they arise and in relation to which they operate (de Bruijn, van Dijk & Gewald, 2007).

On the issue of African agency, however, there is the need to extend beyond Wight’s focus on official state agents (political realm of things) to include other diverse actors (such as civil society groups and ordinary individuals),⁶⁴ many of whom are situated outside the formal political structures of the state. The need to include ‘social agency’ (or agency in the social realm) with regards to the question of African agency in the Africa-China engagement acknowledges that ‘all forms of external intervention necessarily enter the existing life-worlds of the individuals and social groups affected, and in this way are mediated and transformed by these same actors and structures’ (Long, 1994: 20). Thus the agency of non-state actors or agents are critical because, on the one hand, they form the blocs of interest to which state leaders must relate and thus have a special role in shaping state preferences and the actions of state leaders. On the other hand, non-state actors also encounter and interact more directly with ‘external’ actors, be it state actors or transnational actors (Brown 2012: 1897). Lastly, as agents seeking political change across the continent, non-state actors influence both the institutions through which other agents seek to act as well as the perceptions of Africa’s trajectory inside and outside (Brown 2012: 1897).

⁶⁴ In the context of the opportunities and threats raised by China’s entry into Africa, civil society action is often more important than it has been treated in the ‘China in Africa’ literature.

Following from the above analysis, when probing African agency, we must account for and recognise the subjective freedom of the agents concerned (whether abstracted as states or institutions, or as more individualised actors), but viewed both in the sense of the roles they are performing and the social contextual constraints that inform that subjectivity (Brown 2012: 1897). In other words, in describing different examples or manifestations of agency—be it political elites, or socially located individuals and groups—part of our account needs to be about the subjective freedom involved but also the roles being filled and the socio-cultural contexts which inform and constrain that agency (Brown 2012). It is through this conceptualisation of agency that we can properly begin to understand aspects of the Africa-China relationships that are more locally driven and mediated than is generally recognised.

This approach to theorising African agency is important for a number of reasons. First, as noted, an analytical focus on African agency affords us the chance to enquire about where and how African actors are making influence or exerting agency and an identification of those factors, which makes it possible or not to exercise their agency. Seen this way, it should be obvious that an analytical focus on agency therefore does not presume any premature conclusions that African actors are necessarily shaping the outcome of the Africa-China relations more than has been accounted for (although it can be argued that there are spaces where African agency seen in this way has been more impactful or increased; yet this may not be the case in all countries and certainly not in all sectors). A focus on African agency, seen in its first dimension discussed above as an ability to influence or exert power, does not therefore automatically or simply invert the conventional approach to project an unconstrained view of agency. Far from that, what a focus on agency does is to prompt analysts to identify such spaces for potential manoeuvre and to explain the factors at work that open or close down those spaces (Brown and Harman 2013: 3).

Second, analytical focus on agency also calls on us to explain what could be done with the potential room for manoeuvre. Thus another set of questions in need of attention is concerned with explaining the kind of agency that is being expressed. This search for the form of agency involves identifying specific agents at work (elites, civil society groups, ordinary people), the social-cultural context within which they act, and therefore, the political purposes they carry: what is that they seek to achieve or change?; whose interests are being pursued or prioritised? The kind of agency in turn requires an examination into the tools actors use to express agency within the various context they operate and pursue their goals. The tools could be a reassertion of control, resistance, playing of identity politics for attention, naming and shaming of perceived opponents, violence or use of force (Oriola 2013).

Seen this way, the kind of agency exerted across Africa may be different from other forms of agency, given the potential peculiarities of the constraints on that agency. However, as shown in subsequent chapters such constraints do not have to obscure agency altogether. It may just imply that the tools and sites of such agency may differ and thus offer something new for our understanding. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the role of agency of Ghanaian actors and institutions in their engagements with Chinese actors.

In Chapters Five and Six, this conceptualisation of agency is used to analyse and interrogate agency both within and beyond the Ghanaian state, by providing an empirical analysis of Ghanaian agency, first by showing how elements of the Ghanaian state created a hybrid set of institutions (such as BPA) to broker Chinese investment projects, and second by discussing how Ghanaian social actors (such as GUTA) have influenced and regulated the activities of Chinese enterprises (such as Sinohydro) and migrants in Ghana.

If Ghanaian actors (state and non-state) wield influence and exercise political and social agency in their engagements with Chinese officials and transnational actors, what tools do they

use to express agency within the various context they operate and pursue their goals? The next section explores the concept of resistance as a tool for political and social agency.

Resistance in Africa

The history of resistance in African political spaces predates colonialism. From the role of Ghana's Aboriginal Right Protection Society (ARPS) in protecting their right to land in the 1800s to the anti-colonial liberation movement during the colonial period, and to the contemporary forms of informal civic agency, Africans in various ways and with varying capacities have actively opposed internal and external forms of domination (Davidson 1968; Ranger 1967; 1985; 1996; Lonsdale, 1979; Willem and Obadare 2014; Oriola 2013). Although initially 'African history' was dominated by actions and inactions of Big White Men on their 'civilising mission' to 'save' the 'natives', a new wave of African historiography has sought to focus on the contributions and involvement of Africans to events that unfolded on the continent in the past. The works of Terence O. Ranger (1967; 1985; 1996) and Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale (1979; 2000) have been instrumental on this front. These works have shown that even under the hands of colonialism, Africans were not idle, thereby painting a picture of dualistic relationship between the European powers and the African elites in which the former's policies were a response to African strategies and modalities as much as African strategies were a response to the intricacies of colonialism.

While the subject of anti-colonial resistance has been popular in African historiography in the 1960 and 1970s, a new wave of research in the 1990s has also focused on the ways in which groups of ordinary Africans contested postcolonial governments who had become intolerant and many of whom have declared one party states (see Willem and Obadare 2014). Studies on African resistance in the 1990s and 2000s followed the popularity of the concept of

‘civil society’ in the post-Cold War period to highlight the activities of Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that targeted the state and transnational actors (see Obadare 2006; 2011). Despite this body of work, the narrative of domination has long continued to shape the account of postcolonial African subjectivity, with more pessimistic scholarship emphasizing the structural constraint to African agency.

Resistance as agency: What, Who, Which resistance?

Mass mobilizations, such as the Occupy Wall Street Movement in United States; the “Occupy Nigeria” (where in January 2012 a coalition of civil society organizations, professional bodies, politicians, students and human right groups poured on the streets against the sudden increases in petroleum prices), Los Indignados in Spain, or the Arab Spring and other popular uprising in North Africa and the Middle East, all point to the ongoing salience of resistance in the public space. These forms of resistance and the surge in writings about them are indications of its importance in the process of state formation and global processes (see for instance McMurray and Ufheil-Somers 2013; Lynch 2013; Gitlin 2012; Graeber 2013; Mitchell, Harcourt and Taussig 2013).

Resistance takes different forms: it ranges from big public protests, armed insurgency, and individual acts of defiance, to anything in between (Oriola 2013; Chabal 2014). Different actors manifest resistance in different forms and patterns: it can be active or passive, localized or global, negative or creative (Gill 2008; Chin and Mittelman 1997; 2005). The tools and strategies for resistance are diverse: they may be subtle or audacious, involving use of force and violence depending on the given circumstances as recent studies have shown (Chin and Mittelman 1997; Oriola, 2013). My research conceptualises resistance as practices that are shaped within the localities in which they are espoused and exercised. Acts of resistance are purposeful and

intended at particular targets. Resistance is directed at blocking further alienation, expropriation, marginalisation and environmental degradation in a sustained manner. In many ways it represents a project of restitution and self-determination arising from exploitation and perceived injustices perpetuated by the state, global capitalism and transnational corporations (Harvey 2003; Gill 2008; Chin and Mittelman 1997; 2005; Oriola 2013). These public occupations may or may not readily result in outstanding “breakthroughs” such as a ‘revolution’ as witnessed in North Africa recently, but they alter the behaviour, transform and/or reproduce the structures (be it the state or transnational actors) to which they are targeted and are linked to basic changes in the everyday lives of people (Gill, 2008).

This view of resistance forces us to confront some key questions regarding Africa-China relations: what are the opportunities and spaces for accommodation and resistance in contemporary Africa-China encounters? What strategies are employed and what kinds of agents animate those spaces? How are issues of power and identity imbricated in the strategies of resistance? I engage these questions through an interrogation of the experiences and outcome of Ghanaian actors’ (state and non-state) engagement with Chinese state and transnational actors in various social, political and economic contexts. These encounters are examined conscious of the mutual imbrication of actors as well as the domestic and exogenous constraints that animate their encounters. The goal is to examine and understand acts of resistance within the formal setting, but more importantly to locate and engage the subtle and unconventional ways in which resistance is mobilised and enacted in the local context.

This study partly seeks to show the resilience and role of Ghana civil society organisations and of ordinary residents in creating and maintaining leverage in their engagement with Chinese actors. It also suggests that there is the need to broaden our conceptualisation and examination of agency and resistance to transcend the role of NGOs which has become the

standard example of agency and resistance in Africa. Drawing on field research in mining communities in Ghana, the study partly explores other forms of agency best described as informal and spontaneous in nature. In situating this form of agency within the local socio-economic and political milieu, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of the process of social change that is taking place in often-marginalised spaces.

As will be discussed further in Chapter Six, resistance, even when it is local, frequently engages with or targets the state, transnational actors and other entities. In this regard, the state-society relationship that exists and the political and economic conditions within which transnational actors and locals are engaged are of great importance to this study. Consequently, I examine agency and resistance as practices embedded in power relations understood as a network of relations that can be both constraining and enabling of certain courses of action. Thus, the subjects or actors that are constituted through power relations always both exercise and experience power. Drawing on inspirations from Foucault (1980), it is understood that Ghanaian state and non-state actors are not actors that primarily exercise power or agency. They are actors that are also subject to power. Conceptualising power this way helps to expose the multiple sources of power and the different levels at which power is both reproduced and contested.

Agency and resistance are treated as practices that are dialogically produced and characterised by forms of coexistence. This characterisation is important because ultimately this work is about apprehending how agency and resistance practices transform and reproduce the actors involved in Ghana-China relations. If we take Mamdani's conceptualisation of the relationship between citizen and subject (Mamdani, 1996), our understanding of agency and resistance should be found in the process by which both actors are negotiated in a never-ending process of becoming. Consequently, drawing on Achille Mbembe (2001: 103), this work hopes to refrain from "the binary categories used in standard interpretations of domination, such as

resistance v. passivity, autonomy v. subjection, state v. civil society, hegemony v. counter-hegemony, totalisation v. detotalisation.” As Mbembe (2001: 110) rightly suggests, it is unnecessary to insist “on oppositions (*dedoublement*) or, as conventional analysis posits, on the purported logic of resistance, disengagement, or disjunction. Instead, the emphasis should be on the logic of “conviviality”, on the dynamics of the domesticity and familiarity, inscribing the dominant and dominated within the same *episteme*.”

Another idea that this study aims to contest is the tendency to associate resistance practices with ‘success’, heroism and large-scale revolutions (cf. Tilly 1978). As noted above, while the Arab Spring in North Africa and the Middle East has also led to large scale revolutionary processes and gives us hope about social change, the public discourse that brands the suddenness of these events obscures the long historical trajectory and socio-economic conditions under which such momentous events occur (Willem and Obadare 2014). Thus this study does not define resistance as solely organised, widespread effective rebellion against the state or transnational actors. On the contrary, this work partly seeks to understand everyday forms of resistance often part of nascent stages of the processes of social change. This position intersects with the arguments developed in the vast literature on “subaltern studies.” Contrary to popular Indian historiography, which was biased towards elites with a focus on the role of agency of ‘Big Men’, the Subaltern Studies Group drawing on the work of Antonio Gramsci have sought to focus on the voices and role of peasants, women, industrial and low-caste workers in bringing about social change (Willem and Obadare 2014). Drawing inspirations from this work, the aim of this study is to focus not just on the role of state actors or organised labour but also on the role of ordinary Ghanaians who use strategies of their choosing in their attempt to achieve or maintain a better standard of living. James Scott (1985: xvi) in his widely cited book, *Weapons of the Weak*, conceptualised everyday forms of resistance as “the prosaic but constant

struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labour, food, taxes, rents and interest from them. Most forms of this struggle stop well short of outright collective defiance” but involve a broad range of practices used by the dominated to challenge dominant powers. Seen in this light, as recent studies have shown (Willems and Obadare 2014; Obadare 2010; Willems 2010), practices such as gossip, humour, dress and other cultural practices such as rituals, although not treated in this work, could all be understood as practices of resistance.

Lastly, while this study emphasises the everyday character of resistance, it is wary of the tendency to attribute a unified and coherent identity to agents. Agents are far from homogenous and are marked by different levels of capacities and multiple forms of identity including race, class, ethnicity, gender, age and social status. Thus this study conceptualises agency and resistance in a broader perspective that encompasses different actors, including the postcolonial state, civil society and ordinary citizens, to ultimately account for the dialogical ways in which Ghanaian actors engage, contend, reproduce and even collaborate with Chinese transnational actors.

Conclusion

This chapter developed the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that will help to think through Africa-China engagement and Ghana-China interactions. It explored the critical literature that interrogates Africa’s international relations and development cooperation with external interlocutors. I argued that a critical African political economy perspective placed into productive engagement with postcolonial approaches helps situate Africa-China encounter within the broader dynamics of the global economic relations and makes it possible to contextualize and historicize Africa’s postcolonial development relations. This approach also helps to recognise differences between African polities and present an avenue for interrogating

the agency of African political and social actors. Through a critical examination of Africa and Ghana's postcolonial political economy, I suggested that Africa's reengagement with China comes after mixed legacies of decades of cooperation with Western actors and the IFIs. Chinese development intervention in Africa, while challenging Western development discourses, institutions and strategies, does not change the structural foundations of African economies; instead, Beijing's approach to development cooperation in Africa makes room for African *agency*, providing the space to interrogate how African actors respond to the opportunities and challenges China's engagement present. The Chapter also discussed in detail three concepts—'South-South cooperation', African Agency and Resistance—that shape the research and provide the framework for analysing the complexities in Africa-China and Ghana-China engagement. I provided a framework of African agency that not only makes it possible to study where and how African actors exercise influence their engagement with Chinese actors but also allows a recognition of the factors that constrain their expression of agency. Lastly, the Chapter offered a conceptualisation of resistance and agency that makes it possible to capture how different actors resist Chinese intervention, and also to account for the dialogical ways in which Ghanaians engage Chinese transnational and state actors. On the whole, through the discussion of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, I argued that while Africa-China interaction and Ghana-China engagement continue to grow, whether or not the benefits of Chinese development intervention in Africa can be effectively realised rests with the agency of African actors. In the next chapter I examine the specific case of Ghana to understand why and how Ghanaian actors define their growing engagement with the Chinese.

Chapter 4

Major Factors Driving Ghana's Contemporary Relations with China

The way China does things is different; they come with carrots without the cane.... [T]hey say we can help you, we are just like you, they are building infrastructure projects all over. This is what the Ghana government seem to buy into. [...] [B]ut it's like we [Ghana] are so desperate for China. This behaviour in our approach towards China is wrong. We need a government that will engage China properly to our advantage. (Ghanaian academic's interview with author, 2012)

Introduction

This chapter through empirical analysis engages with the first question of this dissertation: what factors account for Ghana's rising political and economic relations with China? As noted in Chapter One, the question of why and how African countries have increased their engagement with China in contemporary times is often not empirically and sufficiently addressed in the growing 'China in Africa' literature. The lack of sustained attention to the drivers of the African side of the Africa-China relations means our understanding of the whole picture of evolving Africa-China interaction is limited. This chapter takes as a point of departure Ghana's soaring relations with China to investigate the driving forces on the Ghana side of the two-way engagement between Accra and Beijing.

The chapter begins by providing a brief overview of Ghana's post-independence economic relations as a background to a discussion on how and why it engages with China. Following the brief overview, I examine the factors that have contributed to the surge in Ghana's economic and political engagement with China in recent times. Based on data gathered during interviews in Ghana and secondary sources, I present three overarching themes/factors behind Ghana's recent engagement with China: first, I discuss the predominant view that Chinese economic courtship and attitude are attractive to Ghanaian policy makers; second, I evaluate the

claim that China's unique focus on infrastructure development meets Ghana's challenge in this area; third, I examine the view that Chinese engagement offers Ghana some leverage in its relations with other foreign interlocutors. In examining these factors I also discuss some of the specific infrastructure projects that China has funded in recent years. Ultimately, I argue that while China has become a critical development partner in Ghana with its investment in infrastructure development, the Chinese approach, particularly its "resource for infrastructure" deals, favours the Chinese. Ghanaian state managers have to engage China strategically and ensure that Beijing provides financing in line with Ghana's strategic development plans.

Ghana's Post-Independence Political Economy

Ghana experienced a relatively stable transition into the post-independence era with great economic prospects. It was one of the richest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the world's leading exporter of cocoa. As Ghana's first post-independence president, Kwame Nkrumah instituted a number of state programs leading to steady economic growth. Despite Nkrumah's ambitious policies, which made basic services and necessities accessible to the majority of the people, in the 1960s he had become unpopular for some of his political decisions (such as the detention of political opponents and declaration of one party state) within and beyond Ghana. Nkrumah's government was overthrown in 1966. His overthrow began a two-decade period of regime changes and economic decline. Under these circumstances Jerry Rawlings came to power through a military coup in 1981, established the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) and committed to long-term economic and political reforms. The PNDC government, after initial hesitation, accepted a set of neoliberal economic policies under the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) to revive the economy (Boafo-Arthur 1999; Hutchful 2002).

After a decade of the implementation of the SAPs, Ghana was considered an economic success story (Hutchful 2002; Arthur 2002). However, Ghana's economy remained weak and heavily dependent on external support. As Arthur (2002) argues, among other failures the implementation of the World Bank and IMF guided structural adjustment reforms could not address the related problems of poverty reduction and social equality. By the beginning of 2000, Ghana's domestic debt had gone up to almost 20 percent of national output, with interest payments more than the national expenditure on health and education combined. In 2001 the New Patriotic Party (NPP) came to power and complained of depleted national coffers and huge national debt. By the turn of the century Ghana had a relatively sound record of good governance and policy regime but, contrary to expectations, a slow economic growth and industrial development (Arthur 2010; Amposah 2007). In 2001, after having being previously proclaimed as an economic miracle by the World Bank and others, Ghana government applied for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative (Arthur 2010; Opoku, 2010). The HIPC policy became part of the NPP government's development plan, which aimed at putting Ghana back on the road to economic recovery.

Ghana has seen some economic stability in the last few years and raised its international reputation through successful elections and peaceful transfer of power (Arthur, 2010). Ghana's credit ratings has improved and made it one of the most preferred destinations in Africa for investment. The discovery of oil and subsequent production since 2010 has raised prospects (but also concerns) about Ghana's economic growth and development.

It can be seen from the summary above that Ghana's economy since independence has witnessed periods of turbulence but also relative growth. It can also be observed that in its economic relations Ghana has maintained close ties with Western countries and the IFIs. Western partners including the IMF and World Bank continue to influence Ghana's economic

policy and management. In 2013, for example, Ghana reached an agreement with IMF under the IMF's Extended Credit Facility worth \$940 million.⁶⁵ The Ghanaian government aims to use the IMF programme to boost economic changes and end a power crisis that has affected economic growth. However, while Western influence in Ghana's economy is intact, successive governments (the NPP, NDC 1, and NDC II) since 2000 have increased their economic relations with China. Chinese assistance in Ghana is not new, as Beijing and Accra have enjoyed relatively strong bilateral relations since the independence. However, Ghana-China relations have soared in recent years. China is now Ghana's single largest trading economy. Chinese enterprises and construction firms are engaged in various sectors of Ghana's economy. What factors account for the increasing relations between Ghana and China in contemporary times? The next section provides some answers.

Framing Ghana's engagement with China

For the purpose of this study, "engagement with China" is generally defined to mean any sort of interaction with China and Chinese people. This definition suggests that for various Ghanaian actors there will be a difference in focus and depth of interaction. For example, for business people and entrepreneurs, the term "engagement" may generally refer to import and export partnerships. For government officials, "engagement" may refer to any and all actions that are carried out between Chinese and Ghanaian personnel, institutions and agencies, among others.

This section is based on interviews conducted with Ghanaian government officials and policy makers, as well as other primary and secondary sources. It focuses on drivers of state-to-

⁶⁵ See "IMF Readies Loan for Ghana to Support Reform Plan" IMF Survey Magazine (February 26, 2015). <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2015/CAR022615A.htm> accessed January 24, 2015

state relations between Ghana and China. It should be noted that while some of the themes/factors discussed below could be taken as official policies, they also reflect the perceptions of Ghanaian officials about Ghana's engagement with China. These perceptions, whether borne out of facts or emanating purely from people's personal experience, influence Ghanaian officials' views and explain their understanding of their relationship with China. Therefore these themes are analysed solely with the aim of understanding how Ghanaian officials understand and make sense of their relations with China.

Understanding Ghana's Embrace of China

One remark by a Ghanaian official during an interview sums up the prevailing factors that account for Ghana's recent relations with China. Mr Atta (pseudonym), a senior government official of a newly created Ghanaian institution in the oil and gas sector, suggested that China's recent investment in Ghana, particularly in the energy and oil and gas sector, has profound implications for Ghana:

... don't forget that we [Ghana] have always had something to do with the Chinese since independence.... [N]ow whether we like or not, China has become a crucial option for us; they are financing projects, they want to engage us, in fact they need us; and they now present us a choice and opportunities we have not seen in recent times.... [O]nly thing is, we have to be careful with the Chinese, they can be smart people.⁶⁶

Atta's remark echoes the sentiments of most Ghanaians that were interviewed in Ghana. There is a shared sense among interviewees that recent engagements between Ghana and China are borne out of prevailing economic and political conditions in Ghana. Furthermore, there is the sense that Chinese engagements present both opportunities and challenges, and only when Ghana

⁶⁶ Interview with Mr Atta, Senior government official, September 2012, Accra.

focuses on implementing keen strategies and policies will it gain more from China and meet its objectives of attracting international investment without compromising national autonomy. The three major themes unearthed from interviews are presented below.

1. Chinese Courtship and Friendship Toward Ghanaian Partners

My interviews quickly revealed the dominant belief among Ghanaian officials that their engagement with China is premised on respect and benefits for each other. Interviewees often cited this sentiment in contrast with Western donors, even though interview questions contained no specific reference to the West. Many officials interviewed believe mutual benefits offered by the Chinese presence make them a viable alternative, although some interviewees, especially academics, caution that it may be misleading to consider China as an alternative to the West, suggesting instead that China ought to be seen as just another partner for Ghana. Based on interviewees' responses, however, China clearly promotes and portrays itself as a 'fellow developing country' and thus understands the development challenges of Ghana/Africa in contrast with the self-presentation of Western actors and institutions. At least two conversations indicated that whenever the Chinese come to the table to negotiate, they come as partners, not as superiors. One interviewee said:

I think the Chinese are showing more courage than the West ever did, so I respect that because they are coming from a level of greater appreciation of our [Ghana] economic value to them [T]hey may not respect you, but they respect what you have and that is what matters. But if they respect the value that we have for them, it means we can negotiate with them.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Interview with Head of Policy think tank, Danquah Institute. Similar sentiments were expressed by other government officials interviewed

These views from Ghanaians resonate with the Chinese. First, Chinese leaders continue to emphasise that their African counterparts are equal and sovereign states that must be treated with respect. Recently, China's special envoy to Africa, Zhong Jianhua, made this point in the run-up to President Xi Jinping's 2013 trip to Africa: "Africa wants to be treated as an equal, and this is what many Western countries do not understand, or are at least are not willing to do. China at least knows that we have to treat people in Africa as equals."⁶⁸ While this sentiment is problematic because a priori it presupposes a kind of inferiority, Beijing nonetheless presents itself as 'different' and legitimises its economic and development relations with Africa on the rhetoric of co-development, mutual partnership and 'win-win' principles. As discussed in Chapters one and two, this rhetoric has historical roots in Africa-China relations dating back to the Bandung Conference in 1955 where the Principles of Peaceful Co-existence were adopted. Since then they have been constant in Beijing's diplomatic practice on the continent. Former Premier Wen Jiabao remarked during a tour in Africa that for several decades, "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" (quoted in Dent, 2011: 48). In many ways, it is this shared sense of 'colonialism' that is used to legitimise and defend China's current interventions in Africa and to situate China discursively as part of the developing world (Dent, 2011).

Chinese rhetoric of mutual partnership and co-development are undoubtedly purposefully mobilized to help achieve Chinese strategic goals and objectives in Africa. However, Beijing's insistence on the principle of respect for national sovereignty, and the provision of development assistance (deeply entwined with trade and investment strategies) *with no questions asked* is less

⁶⁸ George Obulutsa and Fumbuka Ng'wanakilala, March 24, 2013. "Africa's Trade Ties with China in Spotlight as Xi Visits," available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-africa-idUSBRE92N07C20130324> accessed July 15, 2014

about a managed process of ‘catching up’ with ‘developed nations’. Beijing seems to recognize that Africa’s resources are vital for China’s growth, and that an exchange of resources for infrastructure can be a ‘win-win’ situation for both parties (Mohan and Power, 2011: 55). Chinese rhetoric are attractive not only to some Ghanaian leaders but, for different reasons, to populations that have been at the sharp end of structural adjustment, budget cuts, and Western protectionism (Mawdsley, 2007: 415), as well as those who now share the view that “China offers African partners a counterbalance and alternative to the often overbearing, domineering, exploitative and misguided interventions of the West.” (Strauss and Saaverda 2009: 9).

Arguably the rhetoric China employs in legitimising its engagement with African countries reflects part of China’s own history and this has significant impact on how China is perceived among Ghanaian actors. However, these narratives implored by China have become attractive only because of the unique context within which they are framed. China, unlike other European actors, does not have a history of colonization in Africa. Moreover, for many observers Beijing’s “similar plight in development to Africa gives China a profound understanding of the problems that Africa endures, and also helps to shape appropriate aid and assistance to the continent” (He, 2007: 32). These distinctive features coupled with China’s moral constancy as an ‘all-weather-friend’ “unlike the West, which constantly changes its colours and demands on Africa in terms of accountability, transparency, structural adjustment” affords Beijing a historical legitimacy resulting in a distinct culture of ‘South-South’ cooperation (Strauss 2009: 230).

While China’s claim to be the leader of the developing world and therefore entitled to speak for the South is questionable, among some Ghanaian and African leaders China’s own struggle from underdevelopment affords Beijing some legitimacy among African partners (Six, 2009: 1110). Perhaps, given Beijing’s own experience and its interpretation of the problems that Africa endures, Chinese actors do not use ‘pseudo-emancipatory rhetoric’ and ‘salvation

discourse' (as do some Western donors) in their development assistance and cooperation (Six, 2009: 1109). Obviously, the normative characteristics of Chinese foreign relations discourse in Africa do not indicate that China wields superiority as development partner. Therefore, how China presents itself and the narrative it mobilises in its engagement are attractive to Ghanaian and African partners.

Second, Chinese leaders have over the years repeatedly outlined their ideological understanding of 'South-South' cooperation and the need for postcolonial assistance. For example, during the China–Africa Cooperation Forum in 2000, China asserted that the present world order is unjust and inequitable and that under these circumstances developing countries must act together to safeguard their common interests "...[and] co-ordinate positions on reforming multilateral economic and trade regimes and formulating new rules, with a view to increasing their collective bargaining capacity... and make efforts towards the democratisation of international relations and the establishment of a just and equitable new international economic order."⁶⁹

In official rhetoric also, China urges economic cooperation with emphasis on "learning from each other and seeking common development", especially in areas such as development and exchange in education, science, culture and health (China Africa Policy, 2006). Such rhetoric of development intervention stresses the right to national self-determination, cooperation and mutual benefit rather than 'humanitarianism' and opposes the hierarchy of nations embodied in development intervention by the Western institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank (Sautman, 2006). More importantly, such rhetoric provides an alternative vocabulary for development relations. For a long time Western development actors have considered themselves

⁶⁹. The full text of this October 10, 2000 speech can be found at: People Daily "China and Africa Usher in the New Century Together" http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/10/eng20001010_52238.html accessed on January 8, 2012

as the standard-setters for any development model and the developing countries (the recipient) as those who are in need of help. This framework excludes the possibility of learning from each other. Arguably China's rhetoric recognises the necessity of political agency among African countries and continental institutions as opposed to the often Eurocentric and reductionist view of the continent as simply a subject of development and in need of saving. Couched in rhetoric of co-development and win-win cooperation, instead of simply 'saving Africa,' Beijing's economic and political relations pose a challenge to Western development practices and partly explain why Ghanaian and African elites welcome it.

Last, China's Africa policy is based on insistence on the principle of strict non-interference in domestic affairs. Informed by its own history and experience, "China believes that upholding non-interference and offering unconditional aid are important to its principles to develop lasting relations with Africa" (He, 2010: 32). While this principle of non-interference is now undergoing some revisions given China's recent involvement in South Sudan and its ongoing participation in UN/AU peacekeeping operations across Africa⁷⁰, in China's development assistance there is no obligation to create a civil society in the Western sense, no requirement to uphold some international environmental standards, and no attempt to interfere in the recipient's internal affairs. While we may agree that bad governance and corruption add to the problems in Africa, the Chinese approach in Africa seem to show that China believes that the problems of Africa are more of lack of development than lack of better governance. This interpretation is problematic as good governance should not be an enemy to development or vice-versa. But some commentators suggest that Beijing's interpretation of state sovereignty and non-interference

⁷⁰ For more on China's Changing Policies in Africa See: Harry Verhoeven (2014) Is Beijing's Non-Interference Policy History? How Africa is Changing China, *The Washington Quarterly*, 37:2, 55-70,. See also: Richard AIDOO and Steve HESS "Non-Interference 2.0: China's Evolving Foreign Policy towards a Changing Africa" *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 1/2015: 107-139

principle leads to a larger amount of policy space for African countries (Tiejun Zhang, 2010: 177).

Western dominance in developmental affairs has a huge influence on other countries' national sovereignty: it leads to loss of national autonomy and limits the capability of affected countries to control their own economic development. This loss of ownership over development policies has magnified the resentment felt by 'development recipients' and made them all the more receptive to the different approach taken by China. For many Ghanaian and African leaders the so-called 'Beijing consensus' is "based more on the principles of sustainability and mutual benefit rather than charity.... China's [development assistance] to Africa is not one of a "superior" providing for an "inferior" but rather of one developing nation *engaging* another" (He, 2007: 33, my emphasis).

However, whatever principles are articulated through China's foreign policy and development rhetoric, its real life actions may often differ from those principles and should be interpreted sceptically. That said, as Strauss writes, "rhetoric is not merely "empty words" to discount before peering into the somehow "harder" reality of China's intentions and actions. In China as elsewhere, official and semi-official rhetoric provides the framework within which policy and initiatives are developed, explained and legitimated both domestically and internationally" (Strauss, 2009: 779). And it is these narratives and the resultant effect that in part make China attractive to Ghanaian officials. But as these rhetoric on their own cannot be expected to sustain China's courtship of Ghana, at least not for the long term, the next section looks at how Chinese rhetoric of mutual benefit and 'win-win' translates into tangible support in Ghana's economy.

2. Financing Infrastructure Development in Ghana

The second factor accounting for growth in Ghana-China relations relates to Ghana's need for economic infrastructure and China's interest and investment in that sector. In an April 2012 speech in Beijing, Ghana's president John Mahama said:

With the World Bank and the IMF you will get credit for, say, shoring up your foreign reserves, which is a good thing. Now, what we're looking for is investment in building our economic infrastructure. With the current financial crisis, it's very difficult to go anywhere in this world and get \$3 billion. And yet these are infrastructure projects that we need to put in place in order to move Ghana to the next economic level.⁷¹

As seen in President Mahama's statement, China's recent investment and assistance in Ghana fills an important vacuum in Ghana's development trajectory. The statement also echoes the views of most Ghanaian officials interviewed. Interviewees believe that China is willing and able to finance projects that are critical to the long-term development prospects of Ghana, which the traditional bilateral and multilateral donors have been unwilling to finance. In the words of one academic: "China is doing what our western partners do not.... China is financing projects all over; China is building the Ministry of Defence, Cape Coast stadium, not to talk of the gas project and many road networks."⁷² Similarly, another Ghanaian official compared China's assistance in Ghana's infrastructure sector to that of other Western actors: "whereas the Western donors come with stringent conditionalities, China offers immediate help with the needed infrastructure."⁷³

Obviously, these sentiments are problematic not the least because they reinforce Ghana's continued dependency on foreign aid and on foreign actors to solve its developmental challenges. However, for many of the interviewees China's capacity and willingness to contribute towards

⁷¹ President Mahama, cited in Sanderson and Forsythe (2012)

⁷² Interview with Ghanaian academic, University of Ghana, Accra, August 2012

⁷³ Interview with Ghanaian official, Accra, Ghana September, 2012

Ghana's infrastructural landscape is its major trump card in its 'competition' with other emerging economies and the traditional European and American powers in Ghana. While Western international financial institutions like the World Bank have been engaged in Ghana's economy for several years, some Ghanaian officials juxtapose the Bank's record and China's recent investment. They seem to agree with Sachs (2007): "unlike the Chinese, the bank [World Bank] has too often forgotten the most basic lessons of development, preferring to lecture the poor and force them to privatise basic infrastructure, rather than to help the poor to invest in infrastructure and other crucial sectors."⁷⁴

The sentiment around Chinese infrastructure investment was a recurring theme among officials in Ghana. Ghanaian officials emphasised the crucial role that public investments, especially in infrastructure, play to lay the basis for private-sector-led growth. Officials stressed how the government is keen on ensuring that electricity and transportation networks reach every village in Ghana. For most interviewees, if there's any plan for meaningful and sustainable economic development in Ghana, infrastructure development must be a crucial part of it, and in this regard, China is already at work.

Over the past decade China's infrastructure funding and projects are considered to be critical to the success of governments in Ghana (Aidoo 2010; Amoah 2014). To be sure, Ghana has seen major economic stability in the last decades and successfully raised its international reputation through successful elections and peaceful transfer of power (Arthur 2010), yet Ghana like other African countries faces significant development constraints in the areas of infrastructure and power generation. This deficit has limited the country's ability not only to meet the growing demand of its people but also to attract and absorb large investment for

⁷⁴ Jeffrey Sachs, "China's Lessons for the World Bank", May 2007 available at <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/may/24/chinaslessonsfortheworldb> accessed on July 17, 2015

economic growth and job creation. Ghana has more than an estimated \$2 billion financing gap for necessary infrastructure (Foster and Pushak, 2011). To overcome this infrastructural shortfall, Ghana has relied on China for financing roads, energy, and telecommunication infrastructure, largely neglected by Ghana's traditional partners in recent times.

Chinese assistance has become even more critical following the re-basing of Ghana's economy in 2010, effectively making it a middle-income country with huge implications on where it can secure development financing. In November 2010, Ghana became a middle-income country through a somewhat unconventional and in many ways unexpected approach: a technical statistical adjustment (Todd and Majerowicz, 2012). While it had seen GDP growth from 1.4 percent in the 1970s to 5.5 percent for the past decade, "a GDP rebasing exercise recalculated how to measure the economy and Ghana suddenly found that its official GDP per capita was not under \$800 as previously thought but rather \$1,363" (Todd and Majerowicz, 2012: 1). This accelerated leap put the country into a new income category overnight and had profound consequences for Ghana.⁷⁵ Since income categories are used by many international organizations to classify countries for differential treatment, there was an immediate lessening of Ghana's eligibility for concessional finance from the World Bank, Ghana's single most important creditor for the past three decades (Todd and Majerowicz, 2012).

This loss of concessional finance takes a toll on Ghana's economy, and Ghanaian government officials acknowledge this fiscal peril. Notably, the Finance Minister, Seth Terkper, has said in an interview that Ghana's lower middle-income status has had an impact on the country's ability to borrow on soft terms, thereby delaying key infrastructural projects. According to the Minister, "as a middle income country, some of the sources from which we

⁷⁵ It is instructive to note that a middle income status also comes with other opportunities that are useful for the country in questions not least of which is that it also opens doors for other sources of raising revenues including the international bonds market.

[Ghana] borrow on very soft terms are no longer available to us [Ghana]. They are dwindling.”⁷⁶ For example, “the World Bank, which gives Ghana the softest loans for roads, power projects, harbours etc, has reduced the length of time for the repayment of these loans and has increased interest rates after the 2011 economic status categorisation.” According to the Minister, instead of the 40-year duration for the repayment of the loans, “now we [Ghana] can only borrow from that same source [World Bank] for 25 years. The interest rate has gone up...from 0.75% to 1.5%.”⁷⁷ Since Ghana continues to face pressing infrastructure challenges, losing previously reliable sources for financing infrastructure development places intense pressure on the already precarious situation. No sector is more affected by the current situation than the energy sector.

As in most African countries, Ghana has long been battling the problem of supply of consistent energy. Inconsistent electricity supply not only affects the domestic or household level, but has led to a drastic scale back and even shut down of large industrial operations over the last several years. While unreliable access to electricity is not new (Ghana suffered energy crises in 1983, 1998, and 2006/7), the recent energy crisis has taken on a persistent pattern unknown in previous years (Rupp 2013:106). While the nation has attempted to boost its supply of energy over the past few years by considering other sources of energy, Ghana’s consumption of electricity outstripped supply as far back as the mid-1990s as a result of the increase in consumption and the ambitious National Electrification Program, which aimed to bring electricity to rural communities.⁷⁸ The demand for power is now estimated to be growing in

⁷⁶ See Myjoyonline: "Ghana's middle income status impedes infrastructural dev't but IMANI disagrees." Available at <<http://www.myjoyonline.com/business/2013/November-24th/finance-minister-says-ghanas-middle-income-status-impedes-infrastructural-devt-but-imani-disagrees.php>> accessed 26 Feb. 2015

⁷⁷ ibid

⁷⁸ According to Ghana’s President Mahama (during his 2015 State of the Nation Address to Parliament) access to electricity in Ghana is 76% and ranked 2nd only to South Africa in sub-Saharan Africa. See "Ghana News - Full audio: State of the Nation Address." 26 Feb. 2015 available at <<http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/February-26th/full-audio-state-of-the-nation-address.php>>. For details about the National Electrification program see “Guide to Electric Power in Ghana” 2005

excess of 10 percent per annum with the electricity supply gap in Ghana oscillating between 300 and 600 MW.⁷⁹ This shortage and the resulting electricity fluctuations are detrimental to businesses, individuals, and the nation as a whole. For example, Idun-Arkhurst reports that in 2007 the Volta Aluminium Company (VALCO), Ghana's major foreign exchange earner and an important source of raw materials for many of Ghana's local companies, was compelled to shut down temporarily for the 11th time in its 40-year history due to chronic power and water shortages (2008:7).

As of writing of this study (2015-2016), an on-going power rationing or "load shedding," as government calls it, in Ghana has forced some electricity consumers to endure days of blackout, while others experience power outages every four to six hours.⁸⁰ The effects and frustrations posed by the consistent power outages are felt in workplaces, homes, schools and hospitals. The storage of food, academic activity, and artisans such as hairdressers, welders, and health care providers are all dramatically affected by the power shortage.⁸¹

While many factors account for the shortage of electricity, one of the most significant is the fact that since 1965, Ghana has relied principally on Hydro sources. Hydro sources, however, dictate that consistent power supply depends on availability of rainwater to fuel hydro dams, such as the Akosombo, Kpong, and recently the Bui Dam. Due to low rainfall in the catchment area of the Volta River in recent years, the water level of all the dams, especially the Akosombo reservoir, has fallen critically. This scarcity has led to attempts to look for other sources of power such as solar, wind, tidal wave, and biomass, but also gas fired thermal power following the oil

⁷⁹ See Myjoyonline: "Ghana News - Full audio: State of the Nation Address." Accessed 26 Feb. 2015 <<http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/February-26th/full-audio-state-of-the-nation-address.php>>

⁸⁰ See, Graphic Online: "Prepare for intensified load shedding- GRIDCO" available at <http://graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/37615-prepare-for-intensified-load-shedding-gridco.html#sthash.KzAZ4hvV.dpuf> accessed on February 27, 2015

⁸¹ See Myjoyonline: "Ghana News - Full audio: State of the Nation Address." Accessed 26 Feb. 2015 <<http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/February-26th/full-audio-state-of-the-nation-address.php>>

discovery in 2007 in Ghana. All of these developments have made it even more crucial for the Ghanaian government to target prospective partners interested in such sectors of Ghana's economy. Chinese assistance in recent times suggests a three-fold recognition: the dire need for energy infrastructure in Ghana, China's ability to fill this gap (and how doing so helps its own energy needs at home), and its competitive advantage over Ghana's traditional partners that do not prioritise infrastructure development as part of their development assistance.

Providing insight into Ghana's reliance on China for its energy infrastructure needs, the Atuabo Gas project is notable for its scope. Constructed by Sinopec and funded through China's integrated strategy of 'resources for infrastructure' approach (discussed below), the Atuabo Gas Project illustrates China's unique approach to development financing and its implications for recipient countries. Next, I discuss how funding was secured for its construction and why the Ghanaian government considers the project highly critical for its energy security.

Atuabo Gas Project in Ghana

Following Ghana's discovery of oil in commercial quantities in 2007 at the Jubilee Field and subsequent production of oil, then President Atta Mills commissioned a task force to review and make recommendations on how best to deploy Ghana's oil and gas resources for national development.⁸² The task force recommended an evacuation and treatment of associated gas from the Jubilee Field production. This led to the creation of the Ghana Gas Company that was assigned the responsibility "to build, own and operate infrastructure required for the gathering, processing, transporting and marketing of natural gas resources."⁸³ Ghana Gas also

⁸² Interview with Ghana Gas official in Accra, Ghana, September, 2012

⁸³ See, "Project Background" Ghana Gas Company website: <http://ghanagas.com.gh/the-project/background/> accessed Feb 24, 2015.

recommended the development of gas processing infrastructure projects in Atuabo, Domunli, and Esiamia in the Ellembelle and the Jomoro districts in the Western region of Ghana.

The Atuabo Gas project (Figure 2) located on the coast of western Ghana is part of the Western Corridor Gas Infrastructure Project of the government of Ghana. The project includes the installation of offshore pipeline from the Jubilee Field; a gas processing plant with a capacity to process 150 million standard cubic feet of gas; a Natural Gas Liquids export system for the export of LPG; a construction of a 120 kilometre pipeline to further transport processed gas to the Aboadze thermal power station; and an office complex. Construction work on the gas plant started in August 2012 with the Chinese state owned enterprise Sinopec International Petroleum Corporation as the lead contractors. The plant will receive and treat raw gas from the offshore Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) facility named “Kwame Nkrumah” (after Ghana’s first President).⁸⁴ The plant began commercial production in April 2015.⁸⁵

Finance Plan

In 2010, Ghana’s former President Mills led a business delegation to China to finalise negotiation for a \$3 billion loan facility to Ghana. This loan facility is dedicated to the Western Corridor Gas Infrastructure Development Project for construction or rehabilitation of roads, ports, and oil and gas processing. Out of that amount, \$1 billion was allocated for the Gas processing infrastructure projects at Atuabo, Domunli, and Esiamia in Ghana. The facility was secured from the Chinese Development Bank (CDB) on a non-concessional basis through Ghana’s Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The government of Ghana is to raise 15

⁸⁴ Interview with Ghana Gas Official in Accra, September 2012. See also Graphic: “Atuabo Gas Processing Plant: Solution to Energy Crisis” <http://graphic.com.gh/features/features/24155-atuabo-gas-processing-plant-solution-to-energy-crisis.html> accessed June 1, 2015

⁸⁵ See, SpyGhana: “Ghana’s Atuabo gas plant begins commercial production” available at <http://www.spyghana.com/ghanas-atuabo-gas-plant-begins-commercial-production/> accessed May 1, 2015

percent of the total amount while the CDB funds the remaining 85 percent.⁸⁶ The loan is to be paid at LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate) plus 2.95 percent with an upfront fee of 0.2 percent and commitment fees of 1 percent per year. This finance plan is further discussed in Chapter Five.

Figure 2: Atuabo Gas Plant (a portion of plant under construction)



Source: Ghana Gas Company (2013)

Oil and loan Repayment Arrangement

The whole US\$850 million (part of the \$3 billion loan) investment program of Ghana Gas is collateralized against Ghana's share of crude oil from the Jubilee Field.⁸⁷ Ghana National Petroleum Company (GNPC) and UNIPPEC signed a commercial agreement that committed

⁸⁶ See, "Finance plan" Ghana Gas Company: at <http://ghanagas.com.gh/the-project/financing-plan/> accessed February 25, 2015

⁸⁷ In July, 2014 in a rather surprising twist to the saga of the \$3 billion CDB loan Ghana government announced a proposal to take only \$1.5 billion instead of the \$3 billion as originally signed.

Ghana to supply crude oil to the Chinese to repay the \$3 billion loan. Under the agreement, UNIPEC has secured an off-taker contract to lift Ghana's share of crude from the Jubilee Field, in which Ghana is committed to supply about 13,000 barrels of oil daily for fifteen-and-a-half years to pay the \$3 billion loan. The Ghanaian parliament gave its assent to the agreement in February 2012 following a long and heated debate between the majority (National Democratic Congress), which was in support of the deal, and the minority (led by the New Patriotic Party), which felt that the commercial agreement was exploitive and not in Ghana's interest in the long term. The \$3 billion infrastructure loan has raised a number of issues that continue to be debated in the media and other circles. The controversies surround Ghana's government failing to meet its part of the bargain.⁸⁸ This failure is compounded by the fact that the agreement anticipates that 60 percent of the value of contracts involved in the gas project will go to Chinese vendors. Many observers, including civil society organization such as the Danquah Institute, which believed that the Chinese deal was not value for money, noted this one-sided allocation of future value.⁸⁹ Some observers also suggest the prices of the individual projects were forecast in deceptively broad terms so that when the deals are finalized, the ordinary Ghanaian will not be able to determine whether the arrangements are value for money or even where the budgeted money actually goes (Mohan, 2015: 50). There are also issues around the country's level of national debt, which has increased exponentially from \$8 billion to around \$20 billion under the National Democratic Congress government since it took power in 2008 (Mohan 2015: 50).

⁸⁸ Interview with Franklin Cudjoe, CEO IMANI (Policy Think Tank), Accra. August, 2012.

⁸⁹ Interview with Gabby Otchere-Darko, Director of Danquah Institute Accra, August 2012.

The Atuabo Plant: Benefits for Ghana and China

The Ghana government has pursued this project against all the criticisms highlighted above because of the project's perceived strategic importance to Ghana's energy independence. Ghana has suffered continued power outages across the country, in large part owing to disruptions on the supply side. For several years now Ghana imports gas from neighbouring Nigeria via the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP). As has been noted, over the years damage to the pipeline and high volatility in Nigerian exports have led to repeated gas shortfalls in Ghana.⁹⁰ This situation has forced the Ghanaian government to replace gas with oil in its thermal generators, costing government millions of dollars per day. The biggest expectation of the plant is that the gas facility will help to close the gap between electricity supply and demand in Ghana. Gas from Atuabo will feed the VRA's Aboadze thermal plant, offering a more stable and lower cost source of supply. Also, the reduced oil import burden is important to the Ghanaian government, given its rising debt load and heavy budget deficit.⁹¹ In addition to supplying gas to the Aboadze thermal plant, the plant will also produce liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for domestic use.⁹² Currently, all of Ghana's LPG is produced at the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR), whose capacity is around 1,500b/d, but its output significantly lower.⁹³

Besides power generation, the projects will create employment opportunities for Ghanaian nationals, especially those training in the oil and gas sector (Darkwah, 2013). Other benefits include the creation of new infrastructure to support a vibrant petroleum and

⁹⁰ See: "Atuabo gas project start-up will boost Ghana's energy sector," BMI Research (November 18, 2014), <http://www.businessmonitor.com/news-and-views/atuabo-gas-project-start-up-will-boost-ghanas-energy-sector#sthash.iFYxPaIT.dpuf> accessed March 10, 2015

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² See, "Benefits" Ghana Gas Company: available at <http://ghanagas.com.gh/the-project/benefits/> accessed March 10, 2015

⁹³ See: "Atuabo gas project start-up will boost Ghana's energy sector," BMI Research (November 18, 2014), <http://www.businessmonitor.com/news-and-views/atuabo-gas-project-start-up-will-boost-ghanas-energy-sector#sthash.iFYxPaIT.dpuf> accessed March 10, 2015

petrochemical industry and provide a new economic growth sector for Ghana starting with the Western Region.⁹⁴

For China, this project presents a win-win situation: China can ensure that the commercial loan is repaid, obtains the much-needed oil and establishes contracts for its construction and procurement firms. The \$3 billion CDB loan to Ghana for the gas infrastructure means that at least three Chinese firms are involved in Ghana's nascent oil and gas sector. As part of the Master Facility Agreement (MFA), Sinopec, the lead contractor, secured the contract to construct the gas infrastructure under a \$850 million subsidiary agreement. Second, SAF Petroleum Investments, a subsidiary of Sinopec, procures items required for the gas project and resells them to Sinopec. Third, UNIPEC is another subsidiary of Sinopec and is considered China's largest international trade company. Its business focuses on trading in crude oil and LNG. As stated earlier, as part of the MFA, Ghana is required to supply 13,000 barrels of oil daily for fifteen-and-a-half years to pay the \$3 billion loan. UNIPEC secured an off-taker contract to extract Ghana's share of crude from the Jubilee Field.⁹⁵

China's investment in Ghana's gas project allows Beijing to secure entry into Ghana's new oil industry and bolstered its energy repertoire in Ghana. Yet what is curious and perhaps attractive about China's involvement in the Ghana/African oil and gas sector is the nature of the approach, terms of engagement and the tools China used to develop and leverage its relations with African governments.

China seems to recognize a particular complementarity between Africa's endowment as well as its needs and China's capacity to meet these needs. Most African countries are rich in natural resources, but poor infrastructure remains one of the key stumbling blocks to their

⁹⁴ See, "Benefits" Ghana Gas Company: available at <http://ghanagas.com.gh/the-project/benefits/> accessed March 10, 2015

⁹⁵ Interview with Ghana Gas Official, Accra September 2012

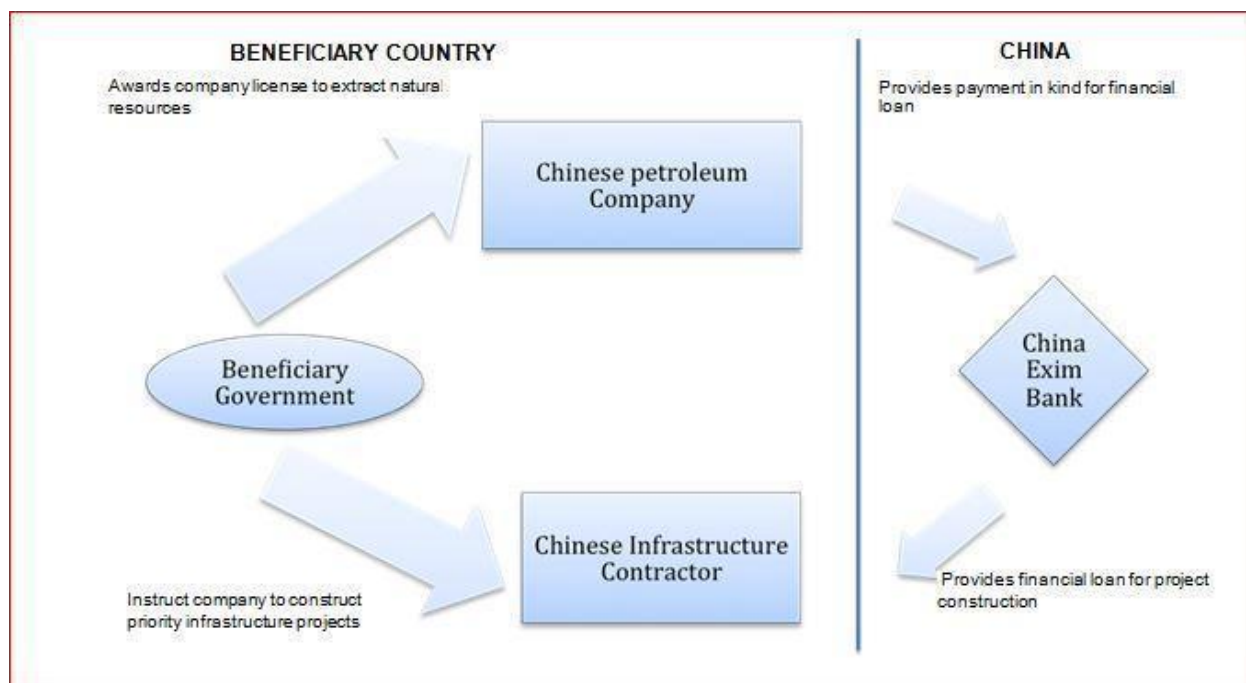
development. At the same time, China needs Africa's oil and minerals to fuel its growing economy and has developed one of the world's largest and most competitive infrastructure construction industries (Habiyaemye, 2013; Jiang, 2009). This economic complementarity between resource rich Africa, faced with infrastructure challenges, and manufacturing giant China, who is proficient with infrastructure construction firms but also confronted with the need for oil and minerals, shapes the dynamics of China's increasing engagement in Africa. The nature of China's investment and development assistance to Africa strengthens this complementarity. China offers to its African partners an integrated system of development cooperation that bundles trade and investment instead of offering only foreign aid (Moyo, 2009). China's integrated aid strategy and scheme of financing in which it provides its large state-owned firms with export credits, securitized by access to an African country's resources through agreement with the government of the African economy, has been termed 'Infrastructure for resources' or 'Angola Mode' (Chen, 2010; Corkin, 2013).

This type of natural resource backed financing deal has become embedded in China's policy of engagement with resource-rich countries in Africa. However, it did not originate in China and it is not unprecedented. China adapted this strategy from its engagement with Japan in the 1970s regarding its trading of commodities for lines of credit (Brautigam 2011). As Brautigam explains "China learned from Japan the current system of using commodities as security for a commercial line of credit that enables a country to finance a specific investment today, and pay for it later with future earnings" (Brautigam 2011:5). China believes its experience with Japan was premised on mutual benefit and thus has adopted a similar strategy in Africa. There are incentives associated with this arrangement for both China and the recipient nation since "securing the investment with a resource flow reduces the risk and allows the interest rate to be lower, and the loan to be cheaper" (Brautigam 2011:5). Under this

arrangement, the funds earmarked for specific projects are not directly transferred to the recipient government (as illustrated in Figure 3 below). Instead, China signs a framework agreement with the recipient government covering a certain program of infrastructure investments. The projects are then contracted to a Chinese construction firm. At the same time, a Chinese company is awarded rights to begin procurement or production of the natural resource, be it oil or any other minerals. The Chinese contractor undertakes infrastructure works supported by a credit from Chinese bank, usually Exim Bank. As a guarantee, repayment is in the form of oil produced or other natural resources directed to a Chinese company (Foster et al 2009). This commodity-backed mode of financing has been used across Africa (oil in Congo-Brazzaville, sesame in Ethiopia, even tobacco in Zimbabwe) (see Brautigam 2011: 3). It was used to build the Atuabo Gas project in Ghana as discussed above.

This Chinese approach to development assistance and economic cooperation differs from the methods of other economic actors in Africa, both in their content and in the norms of aid practice, and is part of an increasing phenomenon of South-South economic cooperation among developing nations. Key principles espoused under China's support include mutual benefit, reciprocity, and complementarities and the stipulations are grounded in bilateral agreements among states (Foster et al 2009: xvi). Unlike traditional Official Development Assistance (ODA) discussed in Chapter Three, Chinese infrastructure financing is channelled not through a development agency but through state supported institutions such as the Exim Bank (Foster et al 2009: xvi).

Figure 3: Structure of ‘Angola Mode’ arrangement



Source: Adapted from Foster et al (2009)

Influenced mainly by its own experience of development and by the requests of recipient countries, the Chinese aid and economic cooperation programs have emphasized infrastructure development at a time when traditional donors, including Washington and other Western countries and organisations, have downplayed these arrangements. While Western development assistance has rarely focused on infrastructure, Chinese assistance focuses on the infrastructure sector as China sees sustained development as a key prerequisite for mutually beneficial economic development.⁹⁶ As one analyst observes, since Africa’s independence “there rarely has been such rapid and intense investment in African infrastructure as is going on today” (Reisen 2007: 8).

Chinese assistance for infrastructure is not without strings. The Angola Mode deals typically favour the Chinese. As long as the borrowing countries have not covered their debts,

⁹⁶ Interview with Chinese academic, Peking University, Beijing March 28, 2014

their obligations to China rise. Chinese authorities may extend the length of the loans instead of writing off part of the principal. This approach means countries will have to hand over their natural resources for additional years, limiting their governments' subsequent abilities to borrow money and pursue other development opportunities. Along with steep interest payments, borrowers are largely required to use Chinese companies and technologies on the projects. Many loans and grants are tied to considerable use of Chinese inputs. China may be entitled to secure reliable sources of oil from Africa and elsewhere; however, the worry is that Beijing's approach encourages oil-producing countries to mortgage their long-term future through oil-backed loans. This arrangement has adverse effect on natural resource sustainability in Africa. Thus it is important for Africans to be wary and critical of China's extraction of natural resources through the mechanism of the Angola Mode.

Moreover, China's practice of bundling together aid, trade and investment makes it difficult for researchers to determine their respective effects. This problem is also complicated by the lack of Chinese transparency in Chinese deals in Africa. Consequently, some analysts lump loans, investment and aid into one category, which may project an inaccurate image of Chinese influence in Africa. As Brautigam (2009) rightly points out, the amount of Chinese aid reported is often inaccurate, including the confusion of Chinese renminbi (RMB) for US dollars.

These problems associated with China's infrastructure investment, however, do not negate the fact that such projects are crucial and make significant contributions to infrastructure development in Africa. Given the scale of infrastructure deficit across the continent, Chinese infrastructure investments represent a vital contribution to the continent's development. Certainly without roads, affordable telecommunication, and electricity, businesses in Africa cannot operate and African economies will continue to experience severe development hindrances. In many

African economies, including Ghana, deficient infrastructure has been identified as one of the key obstacles hampering economic development objectives (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

Overall Infrastructure Spending Needs for Sub-Saharan Africa (US\$ billions annually)

Infrastructure	Capital Expenditure	Operation and Maintenance	Total Spending
ICT	7.0	2.0	9.0
Irrigation	2.9	0.6	3.5
Power	26.7	14.1	40.8
Transport	8.8	9.4	18.2
Water Supply and Sanitation	14.9	7.0	21.9
Total	60.3	33.1	93.4

Source: Foster and Briceno-Garmendia 2009

Item US\$ billion annually	Power	ICT	Irrigation	Transport	Water	Total
Infrastructure spending needs	-40.8	-9.0	-3.4	-18.2	-21.9	-93.4
Existing Spending	11.6	9.0	0.9	16.2	7.6	45.3
<i>Infrastructure Financing gap</i>	29.2	0.0	2.5	2.0	14.3	48.1
Efficiency gap	6.0	1.3	0.1	3.8	2.9	17.4
<i>Funding gap</i>	23.2	-1.3	2.4	-1.9	11.4	30.7

Source: Foster and Briceno-Garmendia 2009

Sub-Saharan Africa lags behind other developing regions on most standard indicators of infrastructure development (Foster et al 2009). The infrastructure gap is a challenge for African countries as it is estimated at about US\$10 billion a year for minimum investment needs and US\$22 billion required to meet the Millennium Development Goals (Bosshard, 2007; see also Foster et al 2009). Against this backdrop, many African governments including Ghana have welcomed China's new role as a partner and a source of infrastructure finance. But Chinese investment and assistance offer more than just infrastructure financing. According to Ghanaian officials, China gives Ghana another option with regards to its development partners and increases its negotiation powers with other actors involved in Ghana's economy. This new leverage to Ghana is explored in the next section.

3. Chinese intervention increases Ghana's Leverage

The third and final factor that accounts for the increase in the Ghana-China interaction is the increased leverage China's engagement with Ghana offers the latter in relations with other donor countries and institutions. Here again, President Mahama's remarks on the CDB loan are instructive:

The process for accessing World Bank and IMF credit unfortunately has been quite tiresome. They come with a lot of strings, and the procedure for accessing the credit goes through quite a bit of rigmarole, and so it's not easy. We still continue to rely for multilateral funding on the World Bank and the IMF. But we still [need] quite some massive amount of money for investment in infrastructure and we find it's easier to go to the BRIC countries [Brazil, Russia, India, and China].⁹⁷

Other Ghanaians share this sentiment of Ghana's increased leverage as a result of Chinese intervention. One Ghanaian academic put it this way: "with the 'China option', Ghana can hopefully avoid some of the financial assistance with intrusive conditionalities that has been

⁹⁷ President Mahama, cited in Sanderson and Forsythe, 2012

bad for the long-term development of the country.”⁹⁸ Some interviewees were also of the view that the rise of China and other emerging economies such as India, Brazil and South Korea had further increased the government’s negotiating power in relation to traditional donor countries. They believe the additional options offered by these ‘new entrants’ will enable government to implement more heterodox policies than would usually be possible under traditional partners such as the IMF and the World Bank. The interviews indicated that the Ghanaian government was increasingly using China to bolster its negotiating power. Interviewees suggest that growth in Ghana-China interactions is not because Ghana wants to ‘dodge accountability,’ but rather it is part of a considered strategy that recognizes China and other emerging partners as providing alternative support so important to the country’s balanced development.

The interviews also reveal that this increasing reliance on Chinese support arises from a deep dissatisfaction with traditional partners from Europe and America, resulting in increasing assertiveness among Ghanaian policy makers in their engagement with traditional donors. One example of such assertiveness relates to the discussions between Ghana and the IMF in 2010/2011 regarding Ghana’s eligibility for the \$3 billion China Development Bank (CDB) Loan.

In 2009 Ghana signed with the IMF a three-year extended credit facility. One of the conditions of the credit facility was that Ghana’s non-concessional debt had to be within a limit of \$800 million. But since the CDB loan was a non-concessional loan and was over the set limit (loan was \$3 billion), Ghana had to request the IMF to waive the limit before the facility could be approved (see Hardus 2014: 600). This request delayed the signing of the loan for several weeks. The request for waiver generated long discussions with the IMF as the latter was hesitant to agree to a raise. After heated debates about Ghana’s debt sustainability among other concerns,

⁹⁸ Interview with Ghanaian academic, Accra, September 2012

Ghana threatened to step out of the IMF program if IMF would not approve the raising of the ceiling. The IMF finally raised the ceiling from \$800 million to \$3.4 billion. Two days after the raise the loan was signed on December 6, 2011.

Perhaps the most important example of Ghana's new leverage over traditional donors as a result of its growing relations with China was evident following the World Bank's refusal to fund the Bui Dam Hydro project. The Ghanaian government moved to have China fund the project instead in 2007. The details about Chinese funding of the Bui Dam project and the related innovative approach China accepted for the repayment of the loan pose several implications for Ghana and therefore warrant further discussion.

The Bui Hydro Dam in Ghana

The Bui Dam is one of the largest Chinese-funded projects in Ghana. The dam is located on the Black Volta River at the border of Bole (Northern Region) and Bamda (Brong-Ahafo region) districts in the North-western Ghana with portions of the dam project falling within the Bui National Park (see dam location on Ghana map, Figure 4).⁹⁹ According to the Bui Power Authority, although the vision to construct the dam gained momentum in the 2000s, the development of a hydropower scheme on the Black Volta River at the Bui Gorge had been the subject of many studies: the Russian firm J.S Zhuk Hydroprojekt conducted detailed studies in 1966, a feasibility study was undertaken by Snowy Mountains Eng. Corp (SMEC) of Australia in 1976, and Coyne and Bollier of France undertook a feasibility study in 1995 (Bui Power Authority, 2012).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Bui Power Authority-Ghana website, available at: <http://www.buipower.com/> accessed March 6, 2015

¹⁰⁰ For a history of the Bui Dam see Fink M (2005). Integrating the world commission on dams recommendations in large dam planning processes: The case of Bui, Ghana. Dortmund: Mimeo. See also Habia, 2009.

Figure 4: Map of Ghana (showing Bui Dam location)



Source: <http://ghanamap.facts.co/ghanamapof/ghanamap.php> (with author's insert)

The aim of the project was to bring electricity to rural communities beyond the reach of the national electrical grid. However, the project did not receive the needed funding from Ghana's partners, including the World Bank, which declined financing it. In October 2006 Coyne and Bellier updated their 1995 feasibility study to enable the commencement of the project after the Chinese government in 2005/06 expressed willingness to fund the Bui Dam and Sinohydro agreed to build it. In 2007 the Bui Power Authority Act (Act 740) was enacted by the

Parliament of Ghana and received the assent of the President in July of the same year to establish an authority known as the Bui Power Authority (BPA) to plan, executive, and manage the Bui Hydroelectric Project (Bui Power Authority, 2012).

President of Ghana, John Kufuor, cut the sod for the commencement of the project on August 24, 2007 and Sinohydro started construction of the main Dam in 2009. The current President, John Mahama, commissioned the first generator in May 2013 and the dam was inaugurated in December 2013 with a capacity of 400 megawatt.

Finance Plan

Finance plan Funding for the Project was based on a hybrid credit facility comprising a concessional loan from the Chinese government and buyers' credit facility from the Export and Import Bank of China (Eximbank). The original total project cost was about US\$622 million, consisting of a concessional loan of \$263.5 million (with a fixed interest rate of 2 percent with a grace period of 5 years and a maturity period of 20 years); a buyers' credit of \$298.5 million (with 12 years' maturity, a grace period of 5 years, and an interest rate set at a margin of 1.075 percent over the prevailing Commercial Interest Reference Rates [CIRR]); and US\$60 million from the Government of Ghana. According to the officials of the Bui Power Authority (2012), the project experienced a funding shortfall due to the unanticipated effects of the global financial crisis of 2009 as well as to the unforeseen costs of essential works including the diversion of a power line, reservoir clearing, and development of fisheries in the Bui reservoir.

The Bui Dam finance plan is outlined in Table 3. The bilateral agreement between Ghana and China meant that the concessional loan did not attract a guarantee or security, as it was treated as a full faith credit of the Government of Ghana. The buyer's credit, however, was

treated as secured facility and secured through net revenue from a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and receivables from the sale of cocoa beans to China (see Habia, 2009).

Table 3: Bui Dam Finance Plan	
Source	Amount in \$ US
Concessional loan (CHINA Government)	263.5
Buyers Credit (EXIMBANK)	298.5
Sub Total	562.0
Government of Ghana Counterpart fund	60.0
Original Total Project Cost	622.0
Additional funds ¹⁰¹	168
Final Total Project Cost	790.0

Source: Bui Power Authority, 2012

Cocoa and Loan Repayment Arrangement

As in other China EximBank resource-secured loans, the Bui Dam project (Figure 5) finance was guaranteed not through oil or minerals, but through export sales of cocoa beans. The Ghana Cocoa Board entered into a Cocoa sales agreement with China's Genertec International Corporation of Beijing. According to a BPA official, the Chinese guaranteed to purchase 30,000 tonnes of cocoa per year from the Ghanaian government at current world market prices – rather

¹⁰¹ It was confirmed in an interview with BPA official, in September 2012 that the government of Ghana secured an unanticipated \$168 million in 2013 to complete the project.

than a fixed price – until the dam became operational.¹⁰² Cocoa revenues were deposited in an escrow account with the EximBank back payments from Ghana. Until the Bui Dam becomes operational and begins to generate revenue to service the loan, cocoa revenues are deposited in this EximBank account as security for loan repayments (note that during the construction period there is a moratorium on the payment of the principle, which means that only interest has to be paid in that period).¹⁰³ If all the funds in the escrow account are not needed to pay the interest, then the excess amount reverts to the Ghanaian government (Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank). Once the dam is operational within five years of the signing of the loan agreement, the cocoa agreement ends. Other details from BPA officials suggest that when the Bui Dam is operational and the cocoa agreement expires, 85 percent of the proceeds from sales of energy generated by the Bui Dam will be placed in an escrow account held by China EximBank to service the debt. The remaining 15 percent will meet the Bui Power Authority’s administration costs. If not all the 85 percent is needed for debt servicing, the excess amount will revert to the Government of Ghana. If Ghana decides not to withdraw the excess money from the escrow account, the funds will earn interest. As stated earlier, the loan agreement also required Ghana’s Ministry of Energy to enter a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) for the purchase of the energy to be generated from the Bui plant. The price was tentatively set within the range of 3.5–5.5 US cents/KWh.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Interview with Bui Power Authority Official, Accra September 2012.

¹⁰³ Based and interview with Bui Power Authority official September 2012; and Report by Ghana’s Parliamentary Finance Committee July 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Report by Ghana’s Parliamentary Finance Committee July 2007 cited in Habia, 2009: 63

Figure 5: Bui Hydro Dam



Source: Bui Power Authority (2013)

Bui Dam: Benefits for Ghana and China

The Bui Dam reveals several aspects of Chinese recent engagements in Ghana and Africa as a whole. The interaction leading to the construction of the dam is symbolic of the new era of Ghana-China relations. The arrangements also represent the changing nature of the relationship between Ghana and its traditional western financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF. As it was revealed to me during interviews with key officials,¹⁰⁵ the Ghanaian government initially sought financing from the World Bank, but the bank withdrew its support for the project following an environmental and social impact assessment in the Bui National Park area that apparently revealed adverse environmental impacts, such as loss of fauna and flora, as well as the social cost of displacing local inhabitants. Not long after this assessment that triggered the

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Ghana Government official, Accra, August 2012

World Bank's refusal to finance, the Chinese government agreed to take up the project following President Kufuor's visit to China in 2006.¹⁰⁶

Notably, the Bui Dam project was financed through a resource-secured loan and a hybrid finance facility. This innovative financing scheme shows how Chinese officials can combine different financial instruments to support a large project. Part of the finance might qualify as ODA, but not the entire package. This financial structuring also gives some insight into the way in which Chinese banks can secure their loans with decreased risk—a resource-backed arrangement that allows them to provide more debt finance than might otherwise be the case.

Moreover, China and Ghana see the project as an example of the so-called win-win approach to development cooperation espoused by the Chinese in their engagements across Africa. Since the government of Ghana faces a persistent energy crisis, Ghana's growth potential has significantly slowed with businesses scaling back or shutting down operations. Thus the government of Ghana is desperate to relieve its energy crises that have saddled it in the last several years, but lacks the financing resources to increase the country's energy supply capacity. China's willingness to fund the Bui Dam and Sinohydro's commitment to build at the time when Western donors and financial institutions declined came as relief to the Ghanaian government.

The Ghanaian government hails the addition of 400 megawatts of electricity to the national capacity as an important step towards bringing the energy crises under control. The government believes that 'the energy crises in Ghana could be a lot worse had it not been the Bui Dam coming on stream.'¹⁰⁷ Although the project was designed primarily for hydropower generation, it also includes the development of an irrigation scheme for agricultural development and presents an opportunity for enhanced ecotourism and fisheries. The Bui project also includes

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Ghana Government official, Accra, August 2012

¹⁰⁷ Minister of Power, Dr Kwabena Donkor, at a press conference in Accra in February 2015

a Resettlement and Community Support Program.¹⁰⁸ According to the Bui Power Authority (2012), in addition to the electricity generated, close to 6,000 Ghanaian artisans / labourers have been employed on site at the peak of construction, and others will benefit from the improvement in health, educational, and social facilities, as well as increased irrigation and fisheries development potential at the site.

There are other wider benefits of Bui for Ghana's economic development. Although electricity generation is the central aim, Ghanaian authorities hope to boost consumption of Ghana cocoa and their overall exports to China. Over the last several years, chocolate consumption in China is increasing, particularly at the higher end of the market. Ghanaian cocoa is a major export and therefore source of revenue for the Ghanaian government (see Hensengerth, 2013: 295).

For China the Bui Dam project fits into its own economic and political interests in Ghana. China's increasing need for energy and political support and Ghana's ability to repay China's loans with guaranteed arrangements were attractive to the Chinese. Sinohydro, a China's state-owned construction and hydro engineering company, profits from the project, and China is virtually guaranteed repayment, because Ghana can sell its cocoa and the excess energy produced by the dam. Furthermore, according to BPA, at its peak, the project employed close to 300 Chinese and 80 Pakistani expatriate staff. The project also gave access to Ghana's local market for Chinese imported machines and equipment. Aside from the strategic considerations of energy security and employment creation, other economic and political arguments apply. The Chinese government has been encouraging labour and energy-intensive Chinese companies in particular to move abroad, since companies at home are meant to move up the value chain,

¹⁰⁸ See 'Bui Power Authority-Ghana' website. Available at <http://www.buipowerauthority.com/> accessed march 6, 2015

pollution laws are becoming stricter, and labour costs are on the rise in the booming coastal provinces (Brautigam, 2010). Importantly, as Chen and Orr (2009: 1207–1209) argue in a survey of Chinese construction companies, Chinese firms are looking for long-term engagement in foreign markets and Africa presents China a sustained and substantial opportunity for improving revenue and international competitiveness.

The Chinese agreed to fund this project at a time of increasing international criticisms of China's engagement with African countries. China has been perceived as indifferent to or even supportive of repressive regimes and for undermining progress made in good governance across Africa with its policy of non-interference in domestic politics and support for so-called repressive regimes such as Zimbabwe (see Manji and Marks, 2007; Vines and Campos, 2010). China has focused on Ghana since the last decade to give visibility to its Africa policies. Thus, as Ghana is clearly one of Africa's successful democracies, China points to its relations with Ghana to support its denial that Beijing engages African despots. China has thus used this project to highlight the practical nature of co-development, mutual benefit, and win–win approaches to development cooperation. This assertion of mutual benefit is predictably recognized in some important quarters in Ghana. For example, the win–win understanding is echoed in a speech delivered by Mr Ken Dapaa, the former Minister of Energy under the government of John Kufuor, at the sod cutting ceremony of the Bui Dam. Mr Dapaa said, “Mr Chairman... as for the President and the members of Sinohydro corporation team, I would like to say that the negotiations were tough, but both sides worked with the spirit of a give and take to make the Engineering, Procurement and Construction contract a win–win contract. This spirit has brought us together as one family and I am very certain that this relation would be maintained during the development phase” (quoted in Habia 2009: 112–113). These expressions suggest the Ghanaian officials' sense of China's economic value to them and the role they are willing to play to allow

China in the country. In the next section I explore the implications of China's approach to infrastructure development investment in Ghana/Africa.

Implications of China's Approach to Infrastructure Development in Ghana/Africa

China's increasing involvement in the energy infrastructural sector in Africa can represent a critical entry point to understand the broader implications of the Africa-China relationship and how China's approach to the continent differs from those represented by other donors. The two cases discussed above (Atuabo and Bui Dam projects) reveal a number of important features in China's engagement in Ghana and Africa in general. First, China increasingly favours a deal structure now called the 'Angola Mode' or 'resources for infrastructure' system in which the borrowing country repays the infrastructure development loan through natural resources. As discussed, with this arrangement the funds for the infrastructure are not directly transferred to the government (as the case of the Bui Dam and Gas plant project show). Instead, China signs a framework agreement with the government covering a specific program of infrastructure investments (Brautigam, 2009; Foster et al., 2009). The government of the beneficiary country awards a Chinese contractor to undertake infrastructure works (determined by the receiving government), supported by a credit from China EximBank. Repayment of the loan is in the form of commodity provided to China. This commodity-backed loan, based somewhat on a barter system,¹⁰⁹ has a long history on the African continent (Azarya and Chazan, 1987: 117,127). It seems Chinese officials have found a common economic language with African governments in their negotiation over resource backed loans. Evidently, while Western countries and companies will normally expect hard currency in return for their

¹⁰⁹ Barter system describes an alternative form of trade, independent from the exchange of money. It works in such a way that rather than goods for money, goods are exchanged for other goods or for natural resources

investments or loans (see SieberGasser, 2011; Teunissen, 2005), this deal structure shows that Chinese officials are happy to accept ‘innovative’ ways of payment from their African counterparts. Moreover, this approach of the Angola Mode corresponds to the Chinese interest in natural resource supply from Africa, and at the same time meets African interests in access to finance and infrastructure development. This exchange method allows countries with resources but limited credit-worthiness to use the exploitation of natural resources with the development of infrastructure assets.

China’s joint state-business approach to project funding in Africa has implications on the receiving country’s ability to determine fund use. Since the Chinese government has close relationships with many Chinese companies, Beijing provides aid and then requires the funds be spent on specified Chinese contractors. This arrangement, however, will likely result in the receiving government often being side-lined or forced to deal with new partners, resulting in lack of local control. In the case of Ghana, the sole source negotiation that characterises the Angola Mode arrangement circumvents the 2003 Public Procurement Act. Moreover, despite a Local Content Bill being debated in Ghana’s parliament targeting 90 percent local content in the petroleum industry by year 2020, the Ghanaian negotiators accepted 60 percent of contracts going to Chinese vendors in the MFA regarding the Gas project. Also, as mentioned above, cheap credits from the Chinese government allow Chinese companies to underbid their competitors and engage in possible collusion. This criticism unfolds against the political backdrop that Chinese aid has raised concerns in the donor community for its lack of transparency on the loans provided and missing provisions for improving aid effectiveness. Moreover, some charge that China is only focused on building African infrastructure with little

attention to the institutional and operational considerations; and it has refused to adopt the environmental and social safeguard standards adopted by others, such as the World Bank.¹¹⁰

Concerns about Chinese development assistance and the ‘Angola Mode’ financing structure reveal that China’s intervention in Africa present real challenges. However, China’s approach in its engagement with Ghana and other African countries suggests that it is charting a different path in relation to development cooperation and assistance to African countries. Influenced mainly by its own experience of development, its needs and those of recipient African countries, the Chinese government shows innovative understanding and practices of development. The ‘Angola Mode’ of backing infrastructure deals with natural resources, the mixed-package financing mode of commercial and concessional loans, and the so-called no-strings policy regarding political and economic governance are all in sharp contrast to the practice of the countries of the global North (Davies, 2008; Rotberg, 2008; Grimm et al., 2011; Hensengerth, 2013). Chinese economic cooperation and assistance emphasise infrastructural development that has been neglected by Western countries and institutions over the years. China is increasingly becoming a partner and an actor that provides resources to African countries to implement projects that are deemed important for social and economic development.

The contribution of infrastructural development to broader economic and social development, particularly in Africa, is now widely acknowledged (see Foster et al., 2009; Amoah, 2014). China’s focus on infrastructural development in Africa, which includes the construction of hydroelectric dams, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, health centres and other government buildings, contributes to improving the wellbeing of some people in Africa.¹¹¹ Moreover, the involvement of Chinese multinational companies in Africa means that there is the

¹¹⁰ See Bosshard (2008) for a critique of Chinese investments in Africa.

¹¹¹ Interview with Ghana Government official Accra, August 2012.

potential for China's engagement to benefit not just African countries but China and Chinese commercial interests as well. There will also be more job creation and access to cheaper goods and services than Africans would have from their traditional partners, as well as the possibility of technology transfer.

There are several issues that need to be resolved in order for the aforementioned benefits to be fully realised in Africa. As discussed through this study, the developmental benefits of Chinese engagement in Africa will require responsible African agency. While China's engagement, based on developing win-win outcomes, may provide very substantial resources for critically needed infrastructure, at the same time, the nature of China's development assistance raises concerns about debt sustainability and natural resource management. To ensure that Chinese investments have a positive impact, African governments need to, as a matter of urgency, establish and enforce an adequate regulatory framework to ensure transparency in decision making and the implementation of environmental and social safeguard policies, to encourage the transfer of skills and technology, and to require foreign actors to use local labour and construction materials. These broad regulations should be applied to all investors, whether from China, Europe or America. If the issues are not properly addressed, African economies will not only miss out on much needed infrastructural development, but worsen their overall socio-economic condition. Ghana like many other African countries has many development partners, but evidence suggests that China's increased involvement in Ghana encourages other nations to step up their engagement in Ghana (Harrison, 2012). This may bode well for Ghana's development and Ghana seems to welcome this 'competition' between foreign nations that results in more development assistance.¹¹² Yet there are valid concerns that because of the

¹¹² Interview with Ghana Government official Accra, August 2012.

infrastructure challenge in Ghana and China's assistance in that sector, Ghana seems desperate to take anything from China:

It's like we [Ghana] are so desperate.... [W]e have opened our doors too wide for China to enter.... [O]ur own backyard has not been tightened. We don't have a Ghana-policy. The way China does things is different; they come with carrots without the cane.... [T]hey say we can help you, we are just like you, and this is what the Ghana government seem to buy in. This behaviour in our approach towards China is wrong, we need a government that will engage China properly to our advantage.¹¹³

These concerns call on Ghana to ensure that they engage China strategically and require Beijing to provide financing within a framework consistent with Ghana's long-term debt sustainability and in line with its strategic development plans.

Conclusion

This chapter presented findings of the study as it pertains to the drivers of Ghana's recent engagement with China. The chapter focused mainly on the factors that inform Ghana's increasing engagement with China since the mid-2000s. The findings of this research show that Ghana has embraced the Chinese option, not necessarily as an alternative to the traditional partners but as supplementary to engagement with the Western partners and other emerging partners. The chapter argued that Ghana's engagement with China presents both opportunities and threats and must be appropriately managed. The onus falls on the Ghanaian government to engage the Chinese in order to maximize opportunities and minimize threats. The next chapter specifically investigates how Ghanaian state and non-state actors interact and engage their Chinese counterparts.

¹¹³ Interview with Ghanaian Academic, Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy, Accra August 2012.

Chapter 5

Agency in Tight Corners?: Locating Ghanaian Agency in Ghana-China Energy Relations

Introduction

This chapter deals with the theme of Ghanaian agency in Ghana-China relations. I examine the question of how Ghanaian officials and publics react/respond to Chinese engagement. As discussed in Chapter One, in the burgeoning literature on China's growing role in Africa, less attention has been paid to how Africa's diverse actors respond to and influence Chinese engagement. Based mainly on information gathered from field research and other secondary sources, this chapter examines two Ghanaian case studies to underscore the varied ways Ghanaian actors express their political and social agency in Ghana-China engagement.

The first case study investigates how Ghanaian state officials respond to Chinese engagement in Ghana's energy sector particularly the oil and gas industry. How does China get access to Ghana's oil? Are Ghanaian actors able to influence China's engagement in Ghana's oil industry? I attempt to provide answers to these questions, first by explicating China's involvement in Ghana's oil and gas sector, specifically focusing on China National Offshore Oil Corporation's (CNOOC) interest in Ghana's Jubilee oil field and China Development Bank's \$3 billion loan facility to Ghana. The goal is to highlight ways in which Ghanaian actors influence the outcome of their engagement.

Second, contrary to some studies that argue that international rather than locally centred civil society organisations have been active in contesting China's involvement in Africa, the second case study interrogates how state institutions collaborated with Unionists and Ghanaian employees of the Bui Dam Project to reverse unacceptable behaviour of Sinohydro (a Chinese company) and push for reforms for the compensation and treatment of Ghanaian workers. The chapter aims to show that in Ghana, parliamentary scrutiny, pressure from civil society and

enforcement of contractual agreement and labour laws can overturn unacceptable Chinese corporate behaviour, minimising the negative impact of Chinese enterprises and state interests in Ghana.

Before examining the case studies, I will situate the rise of China, particularly Chinese Transnational Corporations (TNCs), in Africa within the broader perspectives on the role and impact of TNCs in Africa. The discussion on TNCs in Ghana is very important as it offers the opportunity to interrogate their developmental impact in Ghana and in Africa and to understand their interaction with Ghanaian/African institutions and actors.

The Impact of (Chinese) TNCs in Africa

As the discussion in Chapter Three on the spread of global capitalism shows, African countries are an integral part of the global capitalist economy. Their integration into the global system historically through colonisation and through economic liberalisation reforms after independence has meant that capitalist interest (including TNCs) from the metropolis but also from other regions have long had a foothold in African economies. The presence and role, particularly, of TNCs in Africa have increased with intensification of globalisation, but especially since the economic reforms and trade liberalisation in the 1980s. Being part of the global capitalism, TNCs continue to play an increasingly dominant role in Africa and the developing world in general (Dickson 2007; Andebo 2014). The growing number and size of TNCs since the 1950s have raised controversy through both their economic and political power in especially weak states and the complexities in their operations.

There are varying perspectives on the role and impact of TNCs in the developing world. Some suggest that TNCs provide the capital, technological and entrepreneurial capacity to spur economic growth and reduce poverty (Gilpin 1987; Buckley and Casson 1991; Altenburg 2000;

Wint 2006). Others are more sceptical of the role of TNCs and denounce their activities in developing countries. These scholars suggest that TNCs do not only exploit their host countries, but they actually hinder the development of structurally weak countries, creating *underdevelopment* (Rodney 1973; Frank 1967; Lall and Streeten 1977; Onimode 1982). As market-driven entities, proponents of this school of thought argue that TNCs are solely interested in maximising profit for themselves, with no interest in the development of the host countries and no loyalty to the countries in which they are incorporated.

There is a third perspective that holds that TNCs can have developmental effect in host countries under certain conditions (Jain and Vachani, 2006; Buckley, 2006; Chan and Clark 1995). These scholars argue that TNCs are capable of ensuring economic growth and alleviating poverty, but at the same time can cause destruction in host states and societies. Thus, the activities of TNCs are not necessarily negative or positive; a lot depends on the conditions in the host countries and the agency of the local actors (Chan and Clark 1995). In a comparative study of East Asian and Latin American countries, Chan and Clark (1995: 187) argue that TNCs “can be either enabling or disabling in the pursuit of national development, depending on the coping capacity of the host state and society,” a claim with direct significance for this study.

As I have argued in previous chapters, neither the traditional liberal nor the critical theoretical perspectives adequately explain China-Africa or Ghana-China political and economic relations, and this is certainly true with regard to Chinese TNCs. The Chinese TNCs in Africa present both opportunities and challenges. Therefore their developmental impact has to be seen within the third perspective. Chinese TNCs have become major actors in on-going relations between Africa and China. Before 1979, Chinese SOEs as well as other institutions were not

permitted to operate outside China. Following the launch of the ‘Going Abroad Strategy’¹¹⁴ and consequently, the intensification of China’s economic engagements in Africa, Chinese TNCs, mostly State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) but also private firms, have increased their investment across Africa (Chen and Orr, 2009). These companies come in various sizes and capacity regarding ownership structure, methods of operation, overseas experience and the level of capital and technology available to them (Burke, 2010: 327). At least five categories of transnational actors from China compete in African economic spaces: SOEs closely controlled by the Chinese government; private Chinese investment banks with government connections; PRC sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) such as the China-Africa Development Fund; medium-sized enterprises owned by Chinese local government structures; and small, private companies and individuals.

Some of these firms have decades of experience in the construction of large-scale infrastructural projects across urban and rural areas in China. It is therefore not surprising that some of these companies are at the forefront of China’s efforts to engage Africa (Burke 2009: 327). As noted, China’s approach to development financing which involves the participation of these entities (including petroleum and construction companies), has become a mainstay for Chinese contractors to enter African countries (Chen and Orr, 2009: 1209).

The developmental impact of these entities in Africa and Ghana is not automatic. Much depends on agency of local actors (whether the state or society) who need to put in place the necessary conditions such as laws, policies and subsequent enforcement in order to check the excesses of foreign corporations and by extension governments. This enforcement of policies and laws must apply to all foreign actors, whether Chinese or not.

¹¹⁴ China's ‘Going Out Strategy’, (invest abroad), was a major step in China's economic and diplomatic expansion from the early 1990s and spurred on with the accession of China to the WTO in 2001 (Cai, 2006; Berger, 2008). The aim of the strategy was not only to encourage but to support Chinese firms to invest overseas. It was designed to meet the challenges of overcapacity in production within the Chinese economy and to strengthen processes of industrial structural adjustment (Gu 2009:580).

In many ways the Chinese government courts Chinese companies to promote Beijing's so-called 'win-win' strategy in Africa. As a Chinese official claims, "China's approach is to try to encourage both Chinese SOEs and private SMEs to cooperate in the development of Africa. SOEs and SMEs are believed to better understand local African needs, and, when they report to the Chinese government, it will then try to address those issues" (cited in Gau 2009: 581). The Chinese government (whether national or provincial) is clearly very supportive of companies or will like to work with them in Africa, yet few Chinese private "firms share a sense of being part of an overall project, strategy or expectation" in Africa, leading to differences between the expectations of how Chinese firms' investments in Africa are supposed to bring developmental benefit to African societies (Gu 2009: 581). Thus, regardless of the policy instruments put in place by the Chinese government, Beijing is incapable of controlling Chinese firms, especially small and private companies.

Contrary to some expectations of Chinese benevolence in Africa, the investment motives of these TNCs are purely market-driven. Their "investment motives reflect both the intensive competition being experienced in the Chinese marketplace today, as well as the attractiveness of African markets and the growth potential identified by the enterprises themselves" (Gu, 2009: 582). This is not to suggest that activities of Chinese firms cannot or should not contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction in their host societies. Far from that, Chinese investments can potentially deliver a number of benefits ranging from providing additional source of capital infrastructure investment to local employment to technology transfer to contribution to the alleviation of poverty. The point is that whether or not the development benefits of Chinese SOEs and private investments in Africa can be effectively realised rests with African actors, be it government, civil society or individuals. The contractual setting in which Chinese companies operate and the governance setting of the host country are key factors that

determine whether or not, for example, strict environmental protection measures or labour laws are implemented in projects with Chinese involvement (Hensengerth 2013: 287).

Lack of relevant policies and in some cases the lack of the will and capacity for their implementation presents a tremendous hindrance for realising any benefits from (Chinese) investment. The onus lies with African governments and civil society. As this study shows, they need to work together to establish and enforce constructive national policy frameworks that ensure that FDI helps to make a net positive contribution to their economies and societies. Instruments like tender requirements, work permits, labour laws and investment conditions (translated into Chinese language) can be used to achieve these desired outcomes. More importantly, African policy makers must strengthen their bargaining position and insist on mutual benefits in their negotiations with their foreign interlocutors. They must set their own agenda and then negotiate the best possible deals with TNCs and potential investors, including those from China. In the absence of a strategic approach by African governments, civil society and individuals, Chinese investments in Africa will have very limited benefits for the state and societies.

It is within this framework that the rest of this chapter discusses Ghanaian interaction with Chinese state and transnational actors. What does the Ghana case tell us about the nature of interactions between African actors and Chinese state and transnational actors in China's search for overseas oil resources and opportunities for its construction companies? And what insight does it offer on the role and agency of local political and economic institutions in Ghana?

Case Study 1: Chinese Interest in Ghana's Oil Sector

The CNOOC and GNPC bid for Kosmos stake in Ghana's Jubilee oil Field

In 2010 Ghana became an oil producing country with a great potential for the industry to enhance the country's development prospects. The Jubilee oil Field¹¹⁵ was discovered through exploration by a UK oil company, Tullow, and a US oil company, Kosmos. EO group, a Ghanaian private company, and the state-owned Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) were the other two parties involved in the exploration from the beginning. Production of crude oil started in December 2010 with an estimated deposit of 1.2 billion barrels of oil. Present production estimate is approximately 104,000 barrels per day (Kosmos Energy 2014). It is expected that oil production will rise to about 600000 barrels per day by 2018 (KPMG 2014). The Jubilee Field's potential revenue estimate is about \$1 billion per annum on an average crude oil price of \$60 per barrel, and the IMF has predicted that over the period 2012-2030, the Ghanaian government revenues from the field's oil and natural gas production could reach as high as \$20 billion (IMF 2008).

The discovery and production of offshore oil provided the opportunity for TNCs to invest in Ghana's energy sector. Since Western companies have long dominated most oil fields in Africa, Chinese National Oil Companies (NOCs) have used a practical strategy of seeking access to newer discoveries in Africa where the competition is relatively more open, as in Ghana but also Sudan and Uganda (Mohan, 2015). China's first attempt to secure access to Ghana's oil came in the form of a partnership with the state-owned Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) to make a bid for Kosmos' stake in Ghana's Jubilee field.

¹¹⁵ The name "Jubilee" was chosen by former President John Kufuor (2001-2008) in commemoration of discovery of oil in commercial quantities in the same year as Ghana's 50-year independence celebration in 2007.

In 2010 Kosmos Oil wanted to sell a significant part of its stake in Ghana's operations. In September 2010 Kosmos signed an exclusive binding agreement with ExxonMobil to sell its stakes. But the GNPC, a partner in the Jubilee field, was unhappy about the deal and reacted negatively about the news of the Kosmos agreement with ExxonMobil, as GNPC was interested in buying the stake. Furthermore, GNPC accused Kosmos of breaching the Jubilee Agreement by sharing confidential geological data of the Ghana's Jubilee field with other parties without Ghana's approval (Cook 2010).¹¹⁶ GNPC claimed that per the jubilee agreement all stakeholders who wish to sell their stake in the field to an external entity can do so only if none of the Jubilee partners was interested in buying (Cook 2010).

GNPC's negative reaction to the ExxonMobil deal led to several months of high-level negotiations over the approval of the deal. On the one hand, the government of Ghana and the GNPC increased their pressure to have Kosmos consider GNPC as a potential buyer. On the other hand, intense pressure came on the Ghanaian government from lobbyists supported by the US embassy in Accra to accept or at least not block the deal between Kosmos and ExxonMobil (Cook 2010).¹¹⁷ As negotiations were ongoing, China's Sinopec and CNOOC had expressed interest in purchasing the Kosmos stake. Similarly, several other major International Oil Companies such as Chevron, Total, BP, among others, were interested in buying stakes in Ghana's oil sector (Cook 2010: 24).

In August of 2010, an advisory group set up to examine the deal by Ghana's President at that time, John Evans Atta Mills, advised the president to reject the deal between Kosmos and ExxonMobil. The committee also suggested to the government to support GNPC to raise finance

¹¹⁶ See Cook 2010: available at http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RS22809_20101201.pdf . See also http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/crsreports/crsdocuments/R42874_01042013.pdf accessed June, 23 2015

¹¹⁷ Interestingly, reports suggest that CNOOC, and other international companies who were interested in proposing rival bids were warned off the deal by ExxonMobil's lawyers, who sent letters threatening action against them in the Texas courts for 'tortious interference' (unlawful interference with trade). See "The Politics of No", African Confidential; <http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/3638/The-politics-of-no> accessed June 23, 2015

through either partnership with CNOOC or other Western banks, to enable it buy the stake direct from Kosmos and select its own technical partner for the Jubilee project (African Confidential, 2010). The exclusive binding agreement between Kosmos and ExxonMobil expired in August 2010 following the GNPC's refusal to allow the sale agreement, thereby negating the sale. Consequently, Exxon announced on August 18, 2010 that it had decided to terminate its agreement with Kosmos (Hardus, 2014). Kosmos blamed the termination on the government of Ghana, which refused to approve the deal. Although it could be interpreted that ExxonMobil's decision to abandon its campaign to acquire stakes in Ghana's oil field was a temporary victory for China against big Western oil companies, it is instructive to say that ExxonMobil and Kosmos had to abandon the deal due more to Ghana politics than geopolitics, namely the stiff opposition of the GNPC, the Ministry of Energy and ultimately, President Atta Mills (Hardus, 2014).

Following the termination of Kosmos agreement with Exxon, in October 2010 CNOOC submitted a joint \$5 billion dollar bid with GNPC for Kosmos' 23.5 percent stake in the Jubilee field. In November of 2010, Kosmos rejected the offer claiming that it was committed to staying on as an oil-producing firm in Ghana (Cook 2010). Although it is not clear why Kosmos rejected the bid considering that the offer was \$1 billion more than the initial bid from ExxonMobil, two speculations have been adduced. On the one hand, it is suggested that the U.S. government pushed Kosmos not to sell its stakes to the Chinese company for unstated geopolitical reasons (see Hardus 2014: 599). These are unconfirmed rumours but reports suggest that there were intense discussions by US officials about the Kosmos-ExxonMobil deal with the government of Ghana (Hardus 2014: 599). On the other hand, another potential reason suggested is that, considering on-going new oil discoveries in Ghana at the time, the projected value of Kosmos

shares would increase and so it would not make economic sense for Kosmos to sell its stake at the time (Hardus 2014).

After CNOOC/GNPC bid was rejected, CNOOC entered an agreement with BP and made another offer to Kosmos and was also rejected in March 2011. To date, Kosmos' share of the field remains at 23.49 percent. Tullow Oil, the led operator of the Jubilee Field, holds 36.05 percent; Anadarko Petroleum Corp has 23.49 percent, GNPC has 13.75 percent and Sabre oil and GAs has 2.81 percent.

The \$3 billion CDB loan and China's access to Ghana's oil

Chinese interest in Ghana's oil remained after the failed bid as relations between CNOOC and GNPC continued. In September 2010, President Mills visited Beijing on the invitation of China's President Hu Jintao. During his visit the government of Ghana and the China Development Bank signed the Master Facility Agreement (MFA) for a \$3 billion loan dedicated to the Western Corridor Gas Infrastructure Development Project in Ghana involving the construction or rehabilitation of roads, ports and oil and gas processing infrastructure. The loan facility was secured from the Chinese Development Bank (CDB) on a non-concessional basis through Ghana's Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The loan is to be paid at London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) plus 2.95 percent (for Tranche B) with an upfront fee of 0.25 percent and commitment fees of 1 percent per year. Additionally, the MFA required a minimum of 60 percent of all project contracts to be given to Chinese firms, as Ghana was only beginning to develop and build the skill and capacity in the petroleum sector (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 2012). Details of the terms and conditions are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Terms and Conditions of the Original Master Facility Agreement (2011)		
Full loan		
Availability Period	6 years	
Upfront fee	0.25%	
Commitment fee	1% per year on the unwithdrawn and uncanceled amount ¹¹⁸	
GoG Contribution	15% of each subsidiary agreement amount	
	Tranche A	Tranche B
Amount	US\$ 1.5 billion	US\$1.5 billion
Interest rate	6 months LIBOR + 2.95% per annum	6 months LIBOR + 2.85% per annum
Repayment period	15 years	10 years
Grace period	5 years	3 years

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Ghana, 2012

The approval of the \$3billion CDB loan took much longer than expected. At least two major issues account for the delay in the MFA becoming effective. The first was that as required by law Ghana's parliament needed to approve the terms of the loan. As was revealed to me in an interview, the CDB loan was one of the most debated loan agreements in Ghana's parliament. The opposition (NPP) minority caucus in parliament were very critical of the terms of the loan as well as the entire process leading to the agreement with the Chinese. The main problems or criticisms of the opposition in parliament and outside parliament were the commitment fee, the

¹¹⁸ Note that this part of the agreement has been expunged following agreement between Government of Ghana and the CDB team in Beijing in March 2014.

lack of local content and the use of Ghana's oil as collateral.¹¹⁹ They also claimed it was not value for money. One senior party strategist had this to say:

There was absolutely no way that the government would have found difficulty in getting sponsorship or funding for the gas infrastructure if it had done an open tender. Because the gas project will pay for itself, you do not have to have an off-taker agreement... gas plant is a profitable venture, we [Ghana] had previous proposals from countries that are known to have experience in building gas plants. Countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Italy, Japan, etc. All these countries have brought proposals costing around \$500 million and yet [government] rather go for a Chinese project of \$850 million, which has no ground element and is a purely commercial arrangement.¹²⁰

Moreover, as the MFA was negotiated and signed months before the 2012 general elections, it became one of the talking points on campaign platforms, igniting heated political discussions on radio, at political rallies and public forums. The leadership of the opposition NPP warned of the possibility of renegotiating the loan should it win power in the December 2012 elections.¹²¹ In an election year, other party functionaries feared that the NDC government would redirect the loan into its political campaign.

Despite the opposition from the minority in parliament—they abstained from voting on the loan—the loan was approved in August 2012 by a majority vote. The approval of the MFA by parliament was on condition that each of the separate components of the projects would be brought to parliament for approval.

Another major issue that delayed the signing or approval of the loan as mentioned in Chapter Four was the existing ceiling for non-concessional lending imposed on Ghana by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In 2009 Ghana had signed with the IMF a three-year extended credit facility. One of the conditions of the credit facility was that Ghana's non-

¹¹⁹ Interview with party official in Accra, 2012

¹²⁰ Interview with Gabby Otchere Darko, NPP Party Strategist and Director of Danquah Institute, a policy Think Tank with affiliation to the NPP party, August 2012

¹²¹ Interview with Gabby Otchere Darko, August 2012. The NPP did not win the presidential elections in 2012

concessional debt had to be within a limit of \$800 million. Since the MFA was a non-concessional loan and was over the limit, Ghana had to request the IMF to waive the limit before the facility could be approved (see Hardus 2014: 600). The request for waiver generated long discussions about Ghana's debt sustainability, but was eventually approved by IMF board and the limit was raised to \$3.4 billion.

While the MFA was finalised in December 2011 and parliament approved the loan in August 2012, the disbursement of the loan was not steady. Some have suggested that internal factors threatened the release of the bulk of the funds (Arhin 2014). Among other things, as one interviewee claimed, Ghana was not meeting its part of agreement in time:

We [Ghana] have to be serious and meet the requirements. If you don't, no cent will come from the Chinese. The fact of the matter is, we are talking about timelines, schedules... the fact is that Ghana also needed to put up some money and so all the things you are seeing like the gas pipeline is Ghana money. They want to make it look as if it's the Chinese money; it is Ghana. That is part of the bargain, we start and they continue. Even on our own terms, we aren't even there yet. We've imported pipes and others will be coming, but that's just a little part. We [Ghana] had to do our part of the bargain. They wouldn't want to give you the money ahead... Not even in a crucial election year.¹²²

The Ghana Government denied claims that it had defaulted in providing counterpart funding to allow disbursement of the loan.¹²³ However, there are still concerns that some of the projects financed by the MFA lack the required feasibility studies. This feasibility study was to be conducted by the government and its inability or unwillingness to perform it caused delay in the disbursement of the funds (Arhin 2014).

As part of the requirement of the MFA, the GNPC signed a commercial agreement with UNIPEC in March 2012 for the sale and purchase of oil from the Jubilee field. This agreement committed Ghana to supply 13,000 barrels of crude oil per day to the Chinese for the period of

¹²² Interview with Mr Franklin Cudjoe, CEO of IMANI Ghana (a policy think tank), August 2012

¹²³ See "Gov't access US500 CDB Facility" available at <http://www.myjoyonline.com/business/2013/September-18th/govt-accesses-us500-million-cdb-facility.php#sthash.oSD2XjHg.dpuf> (accessed June 25, 2015)

fifteen and half years to repay the \$3 billion loan. The payment by UNIPPEC goes into a special escrow account at the Bank of Ghana meant for the repayment of Ghana's debt under the MFA. The oil agreement will end if Ghana is able to repay all outstanding amounts before the expiration of the MFA or if the GNPC discharges the agreement amount of oil to be delivered (Government of Ghana 2011).

Ghana contracted Sinopec to undertake the first project under the MFA: the \$850 million Atuabo Gas Infrastructure project discussed in Chapter Four. The Atuabo Gas project located on the coast of western Ghana is part of the Western Corridor Gas Infrastructure Project of the government of Ghana. The project, as discussed previously in Chapter Four, includes the installation of offshore pipeline from the Jubilee Field; a gas processing plant with a capacity to process 150 million standard cubic feet of gas, a Natural Gas Liquids export system for the export of LPG; a construction of a 120 kilometre pipeline to further transport processed gas to the Aboadze thermal power station; and an office complex. Construction work on the gas plant started in August 2012 with the Chinese state owned enterprise Sinopec International Petroleum Corporation as the lead contractors. The plant will receive and treat raw gas from the offshore Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) facility named "Kwame Nkrumah" after Ghana's first president.¹²⁴

The Atuabo Gas plant has since began processing gas¹²⁵ but not without controversy regarding the disbursement of money for its construction as part of the \$3 billion dollar loan. In 2012 CDB made an advance payment of \$225million to Sinopec to pre-finance the project awaiting parliamentary approval. However, Sinopec temporarily halted work on the Atuabo

¹²⁴ Interview with Ghana Gas Official in Accra, September 2012. See also: Atuabo Gas Processing Plant: Solution to energy crisis? Available at <http://graphic.com.gh/features/features/24155-atuabo-gas-processing-plant-solution-to-energy-crisis.html> accessed May 1, 2015

¹²⁵ SpyGhana: "Ghana's Atuabo gas plant begins commercial production" <http://www.spyghana.com/ghanas-atuabo-gas-plant-begins-commercial-production/> accessed May 1, 2015

project in April 2013 awaiting payment of \$309 million from the Ghana Gas Company (managers of the Gas Project).¹²⁶ But Ghana Gas Company claimed that because CDB had only disbursed a little over \$200 million (out of \$850 million), they are unable to pay Sinopec. The CDB, on the other hand, was awaiting the approval of Ghana's parliament for proposed amendment to the original MFA. This amendment became necessary following the need to resolve conflict between the MFA and Ghana's newly passed Petroleum Revenue Management Act 2011, (Act 815). Originally the Bank of Ghana (party to the MFA) was required under the MFA to transfer 70 percent of the commercial invoice value of the crude oil lifted by UNIPEC into the Collection Account, but the amendment now requires the Bank of Ghana to transfer a defined amount into the Collection Account after each lifting, and will also be limited to Ghana's debt service obligation in each interest period (see Parliament of Ghana 2013).¹²⁷

By January 2014 the full disbursement of Tranche B of the MFA was still not coming forth. President Mahama made an appeal to the CDB to expedite the process for the release of the \$3 billion loan to Ghana to support infrastructure development. The President made the call during a courtesy call on him by the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr Wang Yi, at the Flagstaff House (office of the President). Mr Mahama said that although Ghana had received only about \$600 million from the \$3 billion loan, the country continued to pay commitment fees on the whole loan. In response the Chinese Minister expressed the hope that the CDB team would help address the challenges confronting the loan during their visit to Ghana in February. According to minority spokesperson on finance, Dr. Akoto Osei, Ghana had accrued up to \$54 million in

¹²⁶ Ghana Gas Company was created following Ghana's discovery of oil and a task force commissioned to review and make recommendations on how best to use Ghana's oil and gas resources for national development through gas commercialisation infrastructure system. It was that was assigned the responsibility "to build, own and operate infrastructure required for the gathering, processing, transporting and marketing of natural gas resources." See Ghana Gas Company website: <http://www.ghanagas.com.gh/en/about-us/profile.php> accessed Feb 24, 2015.

¹²⁷ See "Report Of The Finance Committee On The Term Loan Facility Amounting To Three Billion United States Dollars (Us\$3.0 Billion) Between The Government Of The Republic Of Ghana And China Development Bank (Cdb)" available at <http://www.parliament.gh/publications/44/549> accessed Feb 24, 2015.

commitment fees after receiving only about \$600 million of the loan.¹²⁸ As expected, the payment of the commitment fee had raised much criticism from the opposition party and civil society organisations that wanted Ghana to re-negotiate for the commitment fees to be waived and the disbursement mechanisms streamlined. The CDB team's visit to Ghana in February did not lead to a negotiated terms on the loan. Instead it came out after days of speculations that they wanted an increase in the daily quota of Ghana's oil from 13,000 barrels to 15,000 barrels. The team argued that on-going downward pressure on international oil prices has meant a reduction in the value of the amount of oil originally agreed. Furthermore, it was said that the fall in both Ghana's gold revenues and its cocoa revenues, leading to US\$1.3 billion in foregone foreign exchange revenues in 2013, has made the loan riskier than the Chinese originally imagined.¹²⁹

This latest call for revision to the MFA did not go well with opposition party. In February the minority caucus in parliament increased their call and urged President Mahama to fly to China as a matter of urgency to renegotiate the terms of the loan. In mid-March 2014, Ghana's Finance Minister led a high-level government delegation to China to facilitate an agreement on the release of the remainder of the loan. The Ghana team were able to convince the CDB team to expunge the controversial commitment fee clause in the agreement. This mitigation meant that government of Ghana would no longer be required to pay for a loan it has not fully received. The government was to pay \$12.5 million commitment fee under the former terms, but only paid \$2.5m under the new changes.¹³⁰

In a rather surprising and unprecedented twist to the saga of the \$3 billion CDB loan, on July 16, 2014, the Finance Minister, Mr. Terkper, announced during his mid-year budget review

¹²⁸ See Ghanaweb: "\$1.5bn CDB loan: Commitment fee successfully re-negotiated" available at <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/business/artikel.php?ID=317679> accessed Feb 24, 2015

¹²⁹ See Ghanaweb "CDB loan: To be or Not to be," (February 23, 2014), <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=301563> accessed July 2, 2015

¹³⁰ See Ghanaweb, "\$1.5bn CDB loan: Commitment fee successfully re-negotiated" <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/business/artikel.php?ID=317679> accessed July 2, 2015

to parliament that based on the advice of the Attorney General's department and approved by Cabinet, he is requesting parliament to approve the proposal to take only \$1.5 billion instead of the \$3 billion as originally signed. The Finance Minister later explained that unrealistic demands by CDB forced government to abandon the \$1.5 billion of the \$3 billion loan facility. He said the Chinese were unwilling to re-negotiate the terms of the loan but instead insisted on using \$85 dollars per barrel as the price to pay back the loan, although the oil price has gone beyond \$100.¹³¹ Moreover, the Minister announced, “CDB has introduced a new condition precedent to the effectiveness of the subsidiary agreements of the two additional projects, namely a side agreement to amend some of the terms of the MFA as well as the five-party agreement and account agreement.”¹³² He further explained that:

The Side Agreement is to primarily ensure that starting from the 10th shipment of crude oil to Unipeac Asia, in support of the facility, GoG [Government of Ghana] will transfer an amount equal to 49 percent of the price of the shipment into the debt service account to ensure that GoG has sufficient funds to service the debts when principal repayments become effective in 2015; and the CDB facility is recognised as an oil-backed transaction contrary to the agreed position between CDB and GoG during the initiation of the transaction that the facility is not an oil-backed facility¹³³

The Minister therefore submitted the Side Agreement to parliament for approval and concluded that because the government did not agree with the new requirements, it had decided not to draw the second tranche of the loan.

¹³¹ See Myjoyonline: “Chinese asking for too much oil - Finance Minister explains abandoned \$1.5bn CBN loan,” (July 17, 2014), <http://www.myjoyonline.com/business/2014/July-17th/chinese-asking-for-too-much-oil-finance-minister-explains-abandoned-15bn-cbn-loan.php#sthash.qaQ6zTf4.dpuf> accessed July 3, 2015

¹³² See, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning “2014 Mid-Year Review and Supplementary Estimates” <http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/2014%20Mid%20Year%20Review%20and%20Tables.pdf> see also News Report: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/business/2014/July-16th/terpker-to-see-parliaments-approval-to-reduce-3bn-cdb-loan-to-15bn.php> accessed July 16, 2014

¹³³ See Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Seth Terkper “2014 Mid-Year Review and Supplementary Estimates” p. 38 available at: <http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/2014%20Mid%20Year%20Review%20and%20Tables.pdf> accessed on July 16, 2014

The Politics of Saying ‘No’: Legal framework, local politics and parliamentary scrutiny

To return to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, what insight does the interaction between Chinese state actors, companies and local political and social actors and institutions in Ghana offer us about how they influence each other? What role do Ghanaian actors play in this influence? And what are the implications of China’s entry into Ghana’s oil industry? With regards to the strategies Chinese actors use to achieve access to Ghana’s oil, it is evident from the above that their first preference was direct access to the oil. But since GNPC was itself interested in buying the Kosmos stake in the Jubilee field, CNOOC had no option than to partner with GNPC to make a competitive rival bid. The bid was rejected. Yet, the Chinese used another strategy for access. The Chinese offered credit lines to the Ghanaian government in return for a long-term supply of oil. Thus although Chinese companies failed to secure upstream oil access through the MFA, they achieved access to Ghana’s oil through the off-take agreement under the MFA (see Hardus, 2014). The success of Chinese actors’ access to Ghanaian oil was thereby dependent on a number of factors. In the case of the direct acquisition, it was dependent on the role of other oil companies that are already in the market and the existing legal framework with the industry.

In the case of the resource-backed loan (MFA in Ghana), it is fair to say that local politics was the biggest threat to its success. Chinese access to oil through the MFA shows that in relatively stable democracies like Ghana, Chinese actors need more than a good relationship with government functionaries; the capacity and role of parliament, civil society and other institutions is crucial and could make or unmake any deal with a government for access (see Hardus, 2014). These variables suggest that Chinese actors do not always make their way easily in getting access to resources in Africa as conventional assumption suggests.

The interaction between Chinese actors and Ghanaian political, social and economic actors and institutions is clear evidence that domestic politics in host African countries are capable not only of complicating the strategies of Chinese actors, but could actually determine some of the realities. Domestic politics in Ghana and the influence and agency of Ghanaian elites were evident in the MFA. The adjustment of the MFA to solve the conflict with the PRMA and more importantly the Cabinet decision not to take the second half of the MFA show that in democratic Ghana, parliamentary scrutiny and civil society pressure could lead to adjustment in the host's country's engagement with China.

The decision to say no to the second part of the MFA further supports the emerging evidence of African agency in interaction with Chinese state actors. By arranging partnership with CNOOC, Ghana increased its bargaining power and position towards powerful multinationals like ExxonMobil. Furthermore, Ghana's parliament was able to push for adjustment to already signed agreements under the MFA. The government's success on the commitment fee waiver is another indication that African government can bargain and amend their deals with Chinese actors. The Cabinet proposal to cancel half of the MFA and the parliament's subsequent approval are yet further evidence of Ghanaian agency.

Chinese and Western oil companies in Ghana: What difference? What impact?

While Ghanaian actors wield influence in their engagement with the Chinese, the involvement of both Chinese and Western oil companies in Ghana's nascent oil and gas industry holds implications for the management of the sector and developmental impact on Ghanaians. Since the discovery and subsequent production of oil, most analysis of Ghana's oil and gas sector have been framed within the 'resource curse' or blessing framework (see Gyampo, 2011; Dagher et al., 2010; Kopiński et al., 2013; Alagidede and Akpoza, 2012; Okpanachi and Andrews, 2012;

Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, 2012). Some scholars have challenged the resource curse analysis in at least two ways: a) that the resource curse focuses on only the local state for causes and solutions to ‘oil-related problems’ (Ayelazuno, 2014); b) that curses and blessings are not necessarily independent, in most cases co-existing (Obeng-Odoom, 2012 and Obeng-Odoom, 2014). Some observers also point out that there is actually a resource cure (Bazilian et al., 2013).

While domestic factors play a large role in conditioning the developmental impact of natural resources, sometimes the causes of resource related problems in host countries are externally driven through exploitation by global capital, which perpetuate the existence of enclave extractive industries and a dependence on the export of low-value commodities (Ayelazuno, 2014). In this sense, whether a TNC is a Chinese or Western Company says less about the potential benefit of its activities in the host country. It can be argued, of course, that the presence of Chinese companies in Ghana and Africa in general challenge the dominance of Western companies who have had undisputed command over natural resources exploration and production with their accompanying political ties over the years. Within that logic, Chinese companies may offer Ghanaian policy makers yet another choice and also open an avenue for competition in the oil and gas sector that may be of some benefit for Ghana.

Chinese companies’ interest and involvement in Ghana or elsewhere in Africa, however, should not be seen as mere altruistic gesture or some sort of magic bullet for Ghana’s development. In many ways Chinese companies are no different from other large multinationals operating in Ghana and Africa who both engage with the state, on one hand, and abstract themselves from local responsibilities, on the other hand (Mohan, 2015:51). Certainly Chinese state-owned multi-nationals, like Sinopec and CNOOC, have a hybrid position of being both profit-seekers and state-influenced entities, thereby becoming involved in Chinese development assistance in Ghana. Yet, while Beijing’s influence over Chinese SOEs is obvious, Hardus

(2014) shows that Chinese oil companies in Ghana are fairly independent of the Chinese state and are driven by profit motives. They are as opportunistic as other Western companies. This finding challenges the assumption that Chinese companies are merely part of some kind of large scale Chinese strategy to help with Ghana's development.

In the case of the \$3 billion CDB loan to Ghana, it may appear on the surface as a win-win agreement for Ghana and China: Ghana uses its new oil find as a guarantee to get loans that significantly help to develop its energy infrastructure, especially the construction of a gas plant for uninterrupted supply of electricity to businesses and homes in Ghana; China obtains the much needed oil to fuel its economy and is also guaranteed that the loans will be repaid. However, as parliament, think tanks and opposition parties in Ghana have highlighted, aspects of the terms of the loan agreement (such as the upfront management fees, the requirement that 60 percent of the work must go to Chinese firms or vendors, and the fact that the loan had serious implications on Ghana's debt sustainability) were not favourable to Ghana, suggesting that the terms could have been better negotiated from the onset.

The discussion above shows that in relatively democratic states like Ghana, parliamentary scrutiny and civil society pressure may not only lead to adjustment to harmful contractual agreements with Chinese institutions, but also state institutions can ensure that existing legal frameworks for public procurement are followed. There is, nonetheless, an urgent need for Ghanaian policy makers to be conscious of the long-term implications of when they mortgage huge volumes of oil against the acquisitions of commercial loans, even if such loan agreements have some developmental benefits such the CDB loan. They must be circumspect in scrutinising offers from transnational corporations, whether from China or any other foreign investor. This need for due diligence is consistent with the wider calls to study the procurement strategies of Asian oil companies in Africa (Barclay and Smith, 2013).

This study substantiates that the outcomes of the cases examined support the evidence of Ghanaian actors' capacity to engage Chinese state actors. But Ghanaian influence and agency are not only limited to state actors re-negotiating deals or blocking unsatisfactory conditions. With the support of state institutions, Ghanaian workers employed by Chinese construction companies on Chinese sponsored projects have been able to push for reforms with regards to their treatment at the workplace. This agency is the case of the Ghanaian workers at the Bui Dam Hydro project constructed by China's Sinohydro, and is discussed next.

Case Study 2:

Ghanaian Workers, Sinohydro Construction Ltd and the Politics of Unionisation

For some time now, scholars have documented the unsustainable practices of some Chinese investments in selected African countries (see Lee 2009; Aklilu, 2014). What is equally true is that, in some cases/countries, unsustainable corporate behaviour by Chinese companies has been received with a coordinated response and, sometimes, assertive actions by various actors. These responses have proven to be instrumental in improving the behaviour of these companies. The case of the Ghanaian workers in a Chinese construction firm is illuminating and is discussed next.

This section is based on data from my field research at the Bui Dam site in Ghana in September 2012 as well as interviews with Ghanaian workers and officials of BPA—the body mandated to manage the Bui Hydro Dam. The findings from the field research are supplemented with two reports on Ghanaian workers at the Bui Dam and other companies in Ghana: the first report released in 2009 was conducted and published by the African Labour Research Network (ALRN) working in collaboration with the Labour Research and Policy Institute (LRPI) of the

Trades Union Congress (Ghana); the second report was produced by the LRPI of the Ghana Trades Union Congress in 2013.

In Chapter Four, I discussed the Bui Dam project which was constructed by China's state-owned Sinohydro. The project is owned and supervised by Ghana's Bui Power Authority (BPA). The BPA was created by an Act of Parliament in 2007 to ensure that the construction of the Bui Dam was undertaken to conform to the contract document, including adherence to the laws of Ghana and respect for international environmental standards. The BPA does not directly employ workers but has the responsibility to ensure that the contractors respect the right of workers, including their right to fair wages and health and safety needs. Additionally, the BPA is responsible for proper resettlement of the communities affected by the construction.¹³⁴

Employment and working conditions at the Bui Dam in 2008

In their 2009 report, the African Labour Research Network (ALRN) and the Labour Research and Policy Institute (LRPI) of the Trades Union Congress (Ghana) raised concerns about the labour practices of Sinohydro Company at the Bui Dam site. Comparing their findings with two non-Chinese construction companies, the authors showed that labour practices and employment conditions of Sinohydro (and Shanghai Construction) were poor and not up to standard (Baah et al 2009). The Chinese company denied the workers' right to form or join unions and engage in collective agreement/bargaining, resulting in poor working conditions, low wages and job insecurity. The report also said that most workers were required and forced to work long hours without pay for overtime work. Management also determined wages unilaterally and workers were sacked indiscriminately (Baah et al 2009).

¹³⁴ Interview with Mr Awumbilla, Community Resettlement Coordinator, Dam Site September, 2012

Most of the Ghanaian workers employed by Sinohydro were, in fact, casual workers. They did not have formal contracts of employment. As a result, there was no job security and little or no benefits. The Chinese contractors engaged in various anti-union strategies, such as intimidation and victimization. Sinohydro's actions were in direct violation of Ghanaian Constitution and other existing laws. Section 24 (3) of Ghana's Constitution provides that "every worker has a right to form or join a trade union of his choice for the promotion of his economic and social interests."¹³⁵ In addition, Section 70 (1) of the *Labour Act* (Act 651) also guarantees workers the right to form or join unions.

As a result of the lack of respect for workers' rights, labour-related disputes were frequent and received far more media attention than the economic significance of the project.¹³⁶ Some workers had resigned and others sought attention through the mass media because they had no channel to communicate their concerns. Their concerns were published and discussed in some of the major local newspapers, national television and radio stations across the country.

The poor working conditions were affecting the workers' morale at the site and had other negative implications. The mass resignations on a daily basis also had significant negative impact on operations because those who were resigning were those who had already attained an appreciable level of experience on the job (Baah et al 2009: 104). The report concluded, "the key to improving working conditions in Chinese companies may lie in unionisation. Once workers are able to form or join a union they can exercise other labour rights including collective bargaining rights which most workers employed in Chinese companies are denied" (Baah et al 2009: 119).

¹³⁵ "The Constitution of Ghana" - Political Science Resources." 2009. Accessed 15 May. 2015
<<http://www.politicsresources.net/docs/ghanaconst.pdf>>

¹³⁶ Interview with BPA official at Dam site September 2012

By the middle of 2008 Ghanaian workers at the Bui Dam site started to fight for their right to form a union. The workers held two public demonstrations. The first demonstration was over the alleged insensitivity of the Chinese management to the plight of three workers who got drowned in the river on which the dam is being built. The second demonstration was over a pay increase for the mechanics that, according to the workers, was unfair and discriminatory (see Baah et al 2009).

The workers got the support of the Ghana Trade Union Congress and the Bui Power Authority. The BPA eventually asked the Sinohydro Management to encourage the workers to form a union. The Ghana Trades Union brought in the Brong Ahafo Regional secretariat of the Congress (TUC) as well as the Industrial Relations Officer of the Construction and Building Materials Workers Union (CBMWU) of Ghana TUC to help the process of organising the workers into a union. At this point the Chinese contractors had themselves recognised the need to act on the on-going labour crisis. Sinohydro Management agreed to bring in a labour expert to help address the challenges the project faced.

The understanding between the workers and the management of Sinohydro was that forming the union would help to improve their relationship and get the work done. For the workers, formation of the union was going to help in their relationship with the Chinese managers. One worker said: “we have been waiting for you [TUC] far too long. Now that you here you have to help us to talk to the Chinese. You are our last hope”.¹³⁷ Another worker was of the view that the involvement of the umbrella union body was a useful intervention: “I have been telling my colleagues to be patient and wait for TUC. Once they come in the Chinese can no longer cheat us.”¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Cited in Baah et al 2009: 105

¹³⁸ *ibid*

In 2009, the workers' demands and efforts resulted in the formation of a union, which is affiliated to the CBMW of the TUC. It became the responsibility of the CBMW to organize the Ghanaian workers (junior staff) of Sinohydro at the site. Sinohydro and the CBMW have signed a Collective Agreement on behalf of the Ghanaian employees at the site (Ampratwum et al 2013). A visit to the site in July 2012 revealed that all communications related to conduct of employees are done through letters on official letterheads. Copies of letters of dismissal, notice, warning and termination of contract are copied to the representatives of the TUC and posted on notice boards at the site (see pictures taken onsite: Figure 6).

A Ghanaian staff interviewed at the site elaborated on how the creation of the union has eased the tension between workers and management and the bad media reportage the Bui Dam got in the early stages of the construction. He was positive of the union's role:

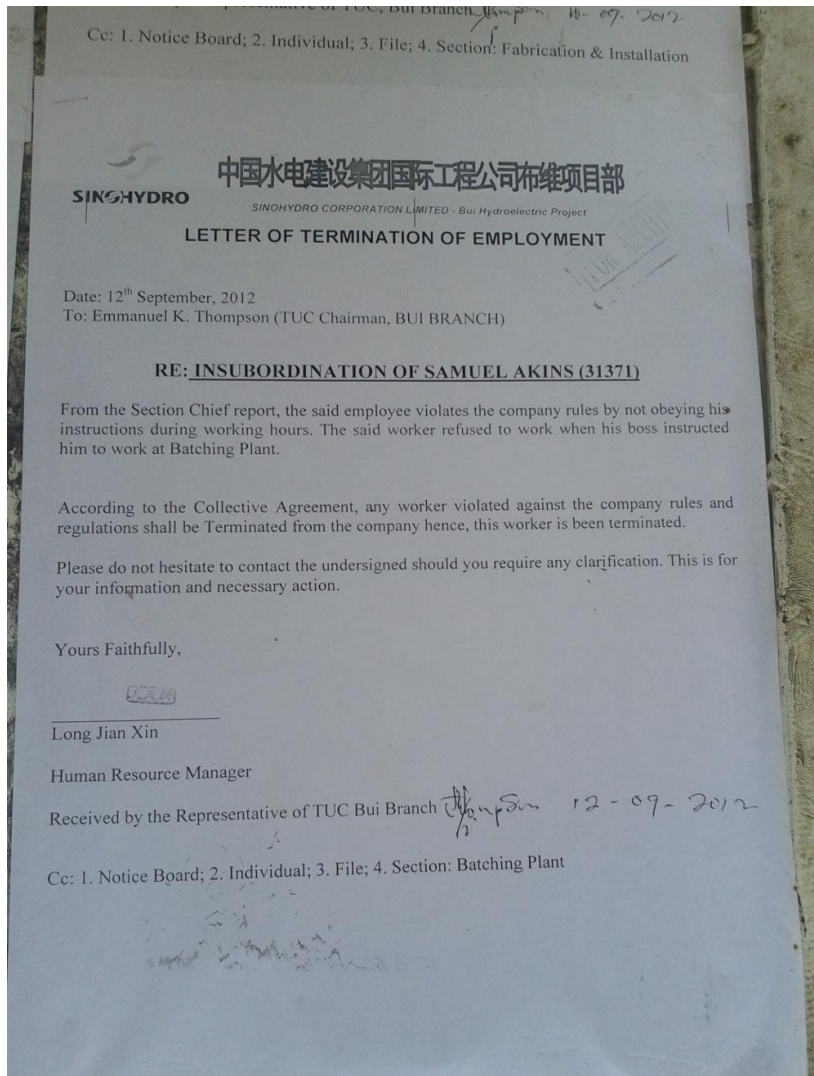
The union is playing their part. You see one of our colleagues was injured by his supervisor and they wanted to terminate his [worker's] appointment. The union fought for him. He was not compensated for the injury but at least his appointment was not terminated.¹³⁹

Workers' responses showed considerable improvements in the relations between the Ghanaian workers and their union, on one hand, and the management of Sinohydro, on the other. There is an office provided by Sinohydro for the local union at the dam site. As well, the head of the local union is relieved of his Sinohydro work schedule, allowing him to dedicate full time to union work.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Cited in Ampratwum et al 2013: 23

¹⁴⁰ Ampratwum et al 2013: p. 24

Figure 6: Sample Letter of termination of employment



Source: Picture taken by author on notice board at Bui Dam site, 2012

The Union (CBMWU) has been very useful for the management of Sinohydro in promoting industrial harmony. A representative of Sinohydro said that: “Mr Quainoo (General Secretary of CBMWU) always keeps an eye on us. We have good relations with the workers through the union. It is better with the union. Any problem, you can talk, negotiate and you can know the demand of the workers. This eases tension.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Ampratwum et al 2013: 23

The workers, however, reported of issues of non-compliance with some provisions of the Collective Agreement (aspects of which are captured in an employee booklet given to employees upon appointment).¹⁴² Their main concerns had to do with the lack of flexibility and the high expectations on the part of Chinese supervisors as well as other conditions of service. These concerns remained despite (and in some cases because of) the formation of the union and the adoption of the collective agreement.¹⁴³ These concerns suggest that while part of workers' demands has been met, the challenges Ghanaian workers face at the workplace have not all gone away. This 'constrained' agency exemplifies the nature of agency discussed in Chapter Three. Although the workers are capable of altering the behaviour and initial posturing of the Chinese company, the union still encounters considerable constraints on achieving total compliance with existing standards on the part of corporations.

A study conducted by LRPI of the Ghana Trades Union Congress in 2013 on Ghanaian workers at the Bui Dam came to similar conclusions. Workers had a positive assessment of the impact of the Union. They were "upbeat about the union's ability to fight against unfair treatment, terminations and dismissals. The union also supports workers in accessing their benefits and entitlements" (Ampratwum et al 2013: 23). The formation of the union has made:

important difference in the working and living conditions of the Ghanaian workers employed by Sinohydro. Equally importantly, the formation of the union has significantly improved the relations between the Chinese and the Ghanaians working on the project. This has enhanced and sanitized the industrial relations atmosphere and considerably reduced tension. The workers have been able to exercise their constitutional right to form a union. A collective agreement has been negotiated. Employment security of the Ghanaian workers has improved.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Author interview with workers on site, September 2012

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ampratwum et al 2013: 36)

As Ampratwum et al (2013) note, challenges remain with regards to the treatment of some Ghanaian workers. Sinohydro had not complied with some of the provisions of the collective agreement. Workers' health and safety issues were pending and "the issue of compulsory overtime work has not been completely resolved and a sense of job insecurity remains among sections of the workforce" (Ampratwum et al 2013: 36). These conclusions are consistent with the findings of this dissertation: workers and civil society groups have agency even if they are expressed in tight corners. While interviewees suggest that some important improvement regarding the working conditions of the workers employed by Sinohydro have been seen as a result of the unionization, total compliance to aspects of collective agreement remain.

Unions can Make a Difference: The Collective Agency of Ghanaian Workers

As Chinese companies get more contracts across Africa for infrastructure projects, one of the main concerns has been their labour practices and environmental impact. The case of Sinohydro in Ghana is not isolated. Similar stories of bad labour practices including 'casualisation'¹⁴⁵ have been reported in Nigeria (Enoghase, 2014) and Zambia (Lee 2009; Beyongo 2015). For example, Lee (2009) has shown that through strikes and other labour actions, Zambian copper workers have resisted 'casualisation' and other unacceptable labour practices since the Chinese took over the Chambishi copper mines in the late 1990s. Tellingly, Lee's research also revealed that Tanzanian Textile workers at the Tanzania–China Friendship Mill in the port city of Dar es Salaam have not been successful at halting the tendency of 'casualisation.' Lee (2009: 653) concludes that the uneven outcome of the Zambia and Tanzania

¹⁴⁵ 'Casualisation' involves employment on 'casual basis' instead of full time or permanent status. It is certainly driven by a capitalist logic of accumulation and is not a practice unique to China.

cases is a result of “different imperative of the respective type of capital and varied pressure from workers and civil society in each locale,” suggesting that the collective agency of workers and civil society can make a difference: a claim which re-echoes findings of this study.

My research findings, as well as a follow-up study conducted by the Ghana Trade Union Congress and The Labour Policy Research Institute, reveal that since 2008, there has been general improvement in the rights of workers as a result of the opportunities provided by unionisation. The union has also facilitated the negotiation of collective agreement and helped to improve the employment security of the Ghanaian workers. Although there are some labour issues, not least of which are the safety and health needs of the workers, there is an observable improvement in the relationship between the Chinese employers and the Ghanaian workers. Sinohydro admits that the union has been useful in resolving disputes and easing tension at the work place, saving it time and money.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to examine Ghanaian political agency in Ghana-China relations. Media reports and the growing ‘China in Africa’ literature highlight increasing volume of Chinese investment in Africa, projecting China (and Chinese enterprises) as a formidable competitor for African energy resources and diplomatic influence across Africa. Yet, as this chapter shows, only through grounded analysis on how these investment projects operate, on how the diverse agents and local conditions enable their interplay with workers, unions and communities can we properly contextualise and understand the dynamic of encounters between Chinese investments and African actors on the ground. Findings from the labour politics of Chinese projects and Ghanaian workers at the Bui Dam challenge the view that there is a dominant Chinese entity always capable of imposing its rules on a singular and vulnerable

African who does not wield any political leverage in its encounters with the Chinese. Instead of domination and imposition, these case studies show interactions, influence, resistance and different forces from Ghanaian states and societies that shape the terms of Ghanaian and Chinese interactions.

The cases examined more broadly highlight at least two important issues for the developmental impacts of China in Africa. On the one hand, unsustainable corporate behaviour can be met with a coordinated response and, sometimes, assertive action by various actors and could be instrumental in improving the behaviour of these companies. Sustained civil society pressure has the potential for transforming behaviour of transnational corporations as the Ghanaian and Zambian cases have shown. On the other hand, where local laws are well elaborated and, more importantly, enforced, then expropriation by foreign enterprises is more difficult although full compliance may not be realised within the short term. This observation calls on Ghanaian/African actors (both state and non-state) to be vigilant and understand that while it is critically important to have policy regulations and investment laws to regulate local and foreign business activities, it is even more important for these laws to be enforced. There is little use for such investment laws if they are fraught with complications and worse still if they are not enforced at all. In the next chapter, I examine the roles Ghanaian civil society and local actors have played in enforcing state investment policies and regulations vis-à-vis Chinese business interests in Ghana's retail and mining economy.

Chapter 6

Resistance as Agency: Ghanaian Agency in Everyday Interactions with Chinese Actors

Introduction

This chapter probes the dynamics of social and political agency of Ghanaian civil society groups and local communities in their engagement with Chinese merchants and entrepreneurial actors. Specifically, I explore how Ghanaian civil society organisations, local communities, and governmental actors collaborate and/or resist the activities of both illegal Chinese traders in Ghana's retail sector and (illegal) Chinese miners in Ghana's informal small-scale mining sector. Research shows that some Ghanaians have welcomed, collaborated, assisted and even carved out opportunities from the Chinese presence in Ghana's economy (see Mohan and Lampert 2013). At the same time, some civil society groups and ordinary Ghanaians believe that the presence and activities of illegal Chinese traders and miners damage their personal, community and business interests. Like other actors across Africa¹⁴⁶ these concerned Ghanaians have variously sought to contest, protest and resist illegal Chinese business activities. The actions of these groups of Ghanaian actors, however complicated, have engendered concerted policy response from the state, leading to reforms of investment laws and triggering the process of reserving the exploitation of local communities, all the while challenging the notion of Ghanaian/African passivity in Africa-China relations.

The chapter starts with a brief discussion on conceptualisation of *resistance* as a tool for expressing social agency in Ghana. Next, two cases of resistance to Chinese activities in Ghana are presented. The first case explores how the Ghana Union of Traders' Association (GUTA) pressured the Ghanaian state to control the activities of Chinese traders illegally operating in

¹⁴⁶ See for example, Bredeloup and Bertonecello 2006 on Senegal; Kohnert 2010 on Nigeria and other cases; Ogen 2008 on Nigeria; Sylvanus 2009 on Togo. See also Dittgen 2010; Dobler 2008

Ghana's retail sector. The second case examines a recent phenomenon of the influx of Chinese (illegal) miners in Ghana. By examining the second case of Chinese miners, I will analyse how marginalized local communities attempt to resist appropriation of their lands by transnational Chinese actors and how such resistance elicits state response to deal with the perceived threat to the environment, safety and security.

Conceptualising Resistance as Agency

As I have elaborated in Chapter Three, resistance arises from and constitutes specific settings. Resistance comes in different forms; and it involves different actors and strategies. Contextualising and integrating local resistance within the national and sometimes the global setting can bring to the fore the conditions in which the different *forms, agents, sites and strategies* of resistance emerge (Chin and Mittelman 1997: 36). Resistance in the context of Ghanaian-Chinese encounters is conducted individually and/or collectively. It involves agents such as government officials, unionists, state institutions, communities and ordinary people. These acts of resistance are carried out through everyday life expressions in the public sphere involving protests, shop closures, confiscation of properties and non-cooperation.

The acts of local resistance that I will discuss below are directed at blocking further alienation, expropriation, marginalisation and environmental degradation in a sustained manner. In many ways these acts represent a project of restitution and self-determination arising from exploitation and perceived injustices perpetuated by the state, entrepreneurial migrants and transnational corporations. To further investigate the idea of resistance as agency, I draw upon the experiences of Ghanaian actors' resistance as social and political agency in the face of and in response to the adverse impact of Chinese presence and activities in Ghana's economy. Gramsci's argument on the 'ambiguity of resistance' (Mittelman & Chin, 2005:17-27) is of

importance here given the complexities and fluid dynamics of resistance in Ghana-China interactions. In this regard, I acknowledge that local resistance in the Ghanaian-Chinese interaction could be dialogical, ambiguous, and even contradictory depending on existing exigencies and the actors involved.

Case study 1:

Ghanaian Traders, Chinese Merchants and the Politics for ‘Space’

In 2007 the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA) organised what they call a ‘medium scale action’ that involved the closing down of shops and a protest march through the streets of central Accra and a final mass rally at Opera Square—a popular park in Accra central.¹⁴⁷ This march was meant to express their misgivings and frustration about the influx of foreign or non-Ghanaian traders who had ‘besieged’ the central business district of Accra, an area meant for local traders to sell their goods. As expected, this march brought the brisk business activities in the central business area to a halt. Subsequently, in order to fight off the threats posed to local commercial interests, the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), together with the Customs and Excise Services, Immigration Services and the Ghana Police set up a task-force to ensure compliance with the GIPC law.¹⁴⁸ However, according to GUTA the task force was not effective. Apart from raising awareness of the issue of foreigners’ presence in restricted areas, “it [task force] wasn’t up to the task.” It had become “essentially a toothless bulldog that could not bite.”¹⁴⁹ According to GUTA executives, something much stronger was needed in order to remove foreigners who were trading illegally in spaces reserved for Ghanaians.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with GUTA official, Accra, August 8, 2012

¹⁴⁸ Nonor, Daniel (2009), “GIPC Sets Up National Task Force...To Clampdown on Illegal Business Activities”, *The Chronicle*, 17 July

¹⁴⁹ Interview with GUTA official, Accra, August 8, 2012.

GUTA's protest was partly against illegal Chinese traders' importation of cheap and often fake Chinese consumer goods unto markets reserved for Ghanaians. The importation of Chinese consumer goods into the Ghanaian market has generated intense debate in the Ghanaian media and among the general public.¹⁵⁰ The importations and the involvement of Chinese traders in Ghana's retail sector are seen to present a direct challenge to the locals who operate in this informal retail sector. At the forefront of this resistance is GUTA, an umbrella organization made up of more than 32 commodity associations. GUTA has displayed, on many occasions, their frustrations and agitations of the activities of Chinese traders who are "taking over the main market of Accra central" and other markets reserved for the local traders. While GUTA targets all non-Ghanaian traders, most of their protest and resistance have focused on the 'infiltration' of Chinese businesses in the central business district in Accra, although they have recently targeted shops in other cities.

Chinese operated shops began to spring up in and around the Rawlings Park of the Accra central shopping area in the early 2000s. GUTA observed these developments and started to express its dissatisfaction against "many foreigners coming into that sector of Ghana's economy."¹⁵¹ GUTA officials believe that investors must adhere to the GIPC Act, which prohibits non-Ghanaians from engaging in retail trade in local markets.¹⁵² The GIPC Act 478 was first promulgated in 1994. This Act has recently been revised by an Act of Parliament (2013) due in part to the consistent pressure on government from GUTA and other civil society organisations. This Act is discussed in detail below; suffice to say that it listed a number of

¹⁵⁰ See Klutse, Felix Dela, and Emelia Ennin (2007), Shops Close in Accra, in: *Daily Guide*, 16 November. ; Nonor, Daniel (2009), GIPC Sets Up National Task Force...To Clampdown on Illegal Business Activities, in: *The Chronicle*, 17 July. *Ghana News Agency* (2007a), Government Urged to Enforce Investment Code, 14 November : complete *Ghana News Agency* (2007b), Shops Protest Foreign Invasion of Retail Trade, 14 November.

¹⁵¹ Interview with George Ofori, GUTA President, Accra, August 8, 2012

¹⁵² Ibid.

enterprises supposedly reserved for Ghanaian citizens only.¹⁵³ These exclusive economic domains involved “the sale of anything whatsoever in a market, petty trading, hawking or selling from a kiosk at any place.” The Act defined a “market” as “a public or open place established by local custom or by the appropriate local government council for the purpose of buying and selling and any other public place used substantially for that purpose” (Ghana Investment Act 1994). The law, however, provided exception in the application of the Schedule under section 19 (3), which relates to the exclusive economic domains for Ghanaians. The law stipulated that where trading involves someone who is not a citizen, the practice can continue if there is “an investment of foreign capital or its equivalent in goods worth at least US\$300,000 by way of equity capital” and if the enterprise employs at least ten (10) Ghanaian citizens. GUTA has long been pushing for compliance with the investment law since its promulgation.¹⁵⁴ They have also been very critical of the need to revise GIPC law 478 (1994) arguing that it no longer meets the aspiration of the Ghanaian retail traders, as it is too lenient on non-Ghanaians and outmoded, considering that it was passed in 1994.¹⁵⁵

Not long after GUTA’s ‘medium scale’ public demonstration described above, the task-force became moribund. And within a matter of weeks the shops owned by non-Ghanaians, particularly those owned by Chinese, relocated to nearby streets and market places. The shop owners mixed with other Ghanaian and African retailers ostensibly to hide their activities from the Ghanaian authorities. Chinese shops selling cell phones, shoes, household items, electrical fittings, among other items, were growing by the day among the shops on the side roads near the central business area and other markets areas (Mohan and Lampert, 2013).

¹⁵³ “Ghanaians” refers here to Ghanaian citizens or any company, partnership or association in which citizens of Ghana own the capital majority.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with George Ofori, GUTA President, Accra, August 8, 2012

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

Throughout the year 2011 GUTA warned about the increasing rate at which Chinese and other non-Ghanaians continued to flout the investment laws. The executive members of the association indicated that they may not be able to contain the rage and frustrations of their members and therefore something needed to be done.¹⁵⁶ By early 2012 GUTA members could no longer restrain their frustration. According to the President of GUTA, “we [GUTA] have gone through this issue for some time now, and we decided enough was enough since we are the target group suffering under this situation.”¹⁵⁷ It seems GUTA and the state authorities were not in agreement about how to go about enforcing the GIPC law at the time. GUTA preferred the illegal businesses and shops owned by non-Ghanaians to be closed down and the owners possibly prosecuted for evading taxes and breaching other laws; however, the taskforce, according to GUTA, was seeking to ‘help’ the shops regularise their business operations. According to GUTA’s president, “if the institutions were not sitting up to do their job, we said to ourselves we will force them to do that. This task force started 3-4 years ago. GIPC was leading at the time, and we found it to be a toothless bulldog. They were rather coaching the foreigners”¹⁵⁸

In February 2012, following tremendous pressure from GUTA, a new Inter Agency Task Force was constituted by the Office of the President of Ghana and charged to ensure that foreign nationals complied with the investment laws. This time GIPC did not take a leading role due in part to GUTA’s demand. The taskforce was chaired by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and was made up of representatives from the Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority, the Ghana Immigration Service, the Ghana Police Service, the Social Security and National

¹⁵⁶ Interview with GUTA President, Accra, August 8, 2012. See also Lampert, Ben, and Giles Mohan. "Sino-African encounters in Ghana and Nigeria: from conflict to conviviality and mutual benefit." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 43.1 (2014): 16.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with GUTA President, Accra, August 8, 2012

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

Insurance Trust (SSNIT), GUTA, Registrar General's Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the GIPC. The terms of reference for the taskforce were to ensure compliance with the law and to deal with any emerging issues, including tax evasion and non-compliance with immigration regulations.

After their inauguration the taskforce began their work by sensitizing retailers in Accra's business district of the impending 'crackdown'. GUTA and the inter-agency taskforce gave the retailers four months notice to ensure compliance with the law or leave the markets. This period was used to educate and sensitise people about the impending enforcement.¹⁵⁹ As the four-month grace period was approaching, some of the shops owned by non-Ghanaians obeyed the call and started closing and folding up, although most owners did not.¹⁶⁰

Throughout this period it was generally perceived by the consumer public, due in part to the role of the media, that GUTA and the task force were targeting Chinese nationals. GUTA's President indicated that the directive was not targeted at any particular nationality, but merely seeking to 'deal with' all non-Ghanaians engaged in the retail business in market areas, such as Makola, Okaishie, Nkrumah Circle, among others:

GUTA's executives are not against foreign investment in Ghana, because the whole world is a global village, and so GUTA understands the interest in Ghana. But there are investment laws of the country that every investor must adhere to... it is not a Chinese or Nigerians issue, people are saying that because the Chinese and the Nigerians foreigners have taken us for a ride by breaking the laws.¹⁶¹

According to GUTA, the work of the taskforce had the full support of the Minister of Trade and Industry, Hannah Tetteh who held a press conference two days before the start of the operation and said, "the laws of Ghana require Ghanaians who wish to establish businesses to

¹⁵⁹ Interview George Ofori, GUTA President, Accra, August, 2012

¹⁶⁰ See: Ghanaweb, "Non-Ghanaian retailers close shops as GUTA deadline expires"
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=242669> accessed July 7, 2014

¹⁶¹ Interview with George Ofori, GUTA President, Accra, July 8, 2012

register or incorporate their businesses with the Registrar General's Department (RGD), and register with the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) to satisfy their obligations to the State. What is required of Ghanaian citizens is equally required from non-Ghanaians."¹⁶² The Minister also indicated that, "we [government] are not telling them to sell their properties, or move from the country, all that we are asking them to do is to comply with the law."¹⁶³

GUTA makes a rationalisation for the pressure they were bringing to bear first on the Chinese, other non-Ghanaians and then the Ghanaian government: "whatever GUTA as an organisation is embarking on is for our future generations to come and meet a better Ghana." GUTA also believes that their members "are not only economic operators who pay taxes for the running of the state; but we are also citizens concerned with the development of this country [Ghana]."¹⁶⁴

For GUTA the influx of foreign goods is more than just an economic issue: "they [foreigners] represent a threat to local manufacturers, the tax system as well as state security" because "those markets are there for the indigenes because most of them are poor, but these foreigners come to take them out. They are creating hatred for foreigners even the genuine ones. It has become a matter of life and death."¹⁶⁵

GUTA also claims that Chinese traders gain unfair advantages in the Ghanaian market through a range of illegal practices such as selling "imitation" goods, underreporting imports and sales to reduce tariffs and taxes. The foreigners also refuse to pay the social security contributions for the Ghanaian staff they employ and because of their greater access to credit, they are able to inflate shop rents, thereby leading to ejection of Ghanaian traders by Ghanaian

¹⁶² See Ghanaweb: "Task force to clamp down on illegal foreign traders" available at <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/economy/artikel.php?ID=241405> accessed July 25, 2014

¹⁶³ *ibid*

¹⁶⁴ Interview with GUTA executive Secretary, Accra, August 8, 2012

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*

landlords in favour of Chinese and other foreign nationals. For GUTA these practices are unacceptable. GUTA argues that if the Chinese or the Nigerians are interested in doing business in Ghana, “why are they shying away from the manufacturing firms, which could employ more people, bring capital injection into Ghana’s economy and facilitate transfer of technology? Why are they shying away from it and more interested in buying and selling? Buying and selling does not need technology and does not transfer it.”

Meanwhile, the work of the InterAgency task force began after the grace period. At the time of this field research (2012 and 2014), some foreign owned shops, including those belonging to Chinese, were temporarily closed down and businesses locked up. The temporary closure of the shops severely disrupted businesses with most of the Chinese traders losing their stock and many seeking alternative opportunities elsewhere. At the same time the Ghana government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also had the cause to deport some Chinese nationals for illegally engaging in the retail business and evading taxes.¹⁶⁶ Although GUTA and other parties know that the exercise to get rid of foreigners in the business district was a tough one and could have implications on Ghana’s economy, they believed that it was necessary and that they were able to achieve some success. At the very least, they believe they have started to regulate the activities of some of the traders and ensured that the basic investment law is respected.

The work of the task force was temporarily halted. This followed a petition from some of the affected foreigners, especially the Nigerian traders led by the Nigerian Union of Traders Association in Ghana (NUTAG). Nigerians felt Ghana was targeting them and claimed that they did not fully understand the operations of the task force. They cited the Economic Community of

¹⁶⁶ See GBCGhana: “Resumption Of Work By GUTA Members” available at <http://www.gbcbghana.com/1.1768892> accessed July 20, 2014

West African States (ECOWAS) protocol, which allows for free movement of people, goods and businesses within the West African sub-region. Additionally the Chairman of the Diaspora Committee of Nigeria's lower house, the House of Representatives, Ms Abike Dabiri-Erewa, led a lobby team to the ECOWAS Parliament, calling upon the regional body to intervene in the situation in Ghana.¹⁶⁷ But the petitions from NUTAG and others failed to yield the desired results as Ghana did not see it as legitimate, leading to a court action.

The National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS) and NUTAG filed a case at the ECOWAS court petitioning the sub-regional court to intervene and stop Ghana from continuing with its implementation and enforcement of the law. The petitioners were of the view that Ghana's investment law is in contravention of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and People. Ghana, through the Ministries of Trade and Industry (MOTI), Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and the Attorney-General responded by urging the court to discard the petition. Ghana's position was that the ECOWAS Protocol, which Ghana has ratified, is not superior to its internal laws, especially given that the GIPC Act does not prevent foreigners from investing in the country but requires them to meet the various investment requirements. The ECOWAS court gave its verdict and dismissed the case brought against Ghana.¹⁶⁸ But as a result of the petition, the taskforce's operations were suspended for four more months to allow for time for the foreigners to become familiar with sections of the law and comply with it. The temporary moratorium was to end before the end of 2012.

Without seeing the redeployment of the task-force on foreign retail traders, in November of 2012 some members of GUTA decided to close their shops in protest against foreign retail

¹⁶⁷ See Africanarguments: "Ghana: economic nationalism through petty trading laws" <http://africanarguments.org/2012/07/10/ghana-economic-nationalism-displayed-through-petty-trading-laws-by-kissy-agveman-togobo-songhai-advisory/> accessed July 20, 2013

¹⁶⁸ See Myjoyonline.com: "ECOWAS Court Dismisses Case against Ghana" available at <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2013/November-20th/ecowas-court-dismisses-case-against-ghana.php> accessed June 6, 2015

traders who were still in the market and to express their frustration for the lack of political will on the part of government to deliver on its promise of ejecting foreigners from the retail market. As GUTA executive maintained, “members of GUTA believe in fighting for our freedom from these foreign retailers who have taken over our businesses by taking our destiny into our own hands.” And that, “If nothing is done about it the agitations would continue nationwide until government enforces the law to the letter.” It is “Aluta Continua” as GUTA intimated, meaning the fight to move non-Ghanaians from the retail sector would continue.

GUTA, Foreign Traders and Reform of Investment Laws

What do the actions of GUTA in opposing foreign traders say about the role of civil society groups in Ghana concerning the growing presence of Chinese and other foreigners in sectors reserved for Ghanaian businesses only? GUTA’s role, particularly its strategy of not only putting pressure on government to enforce the investment law of the country, but to publicly protest and coordinate against perceived threat to its economic interest and illegal activities of foreigners, reflects the sophistications with which local actors express their social and political agency. This case shows that interest groups like GUTA have taken direct action with the view to regulating the activities of Chinese merchants in Ghana and have been able to attract some level of support from the state (although this support was initially not as coordinated as GUTA would prefer).

GUTA believes that their actions have produced results, as they have been able to ‘force’ the state to respond to their plea, thereby helping to regulate Chinese enterprises and merchants. The actions of GUTA and the taskforce have been considerable in regulating the business activities of foreign nationals in Ghana. In addition to pushing for compliance with the investment laws in Ghana, GUTA has also been able to engender law/policy reforms that seem to

meet the aspirations of its members. As stated earlier, the GIPC Act (1994) did not meet the expectation of GUTA. Due to the incessant pressure from GUTA, Ghana's Parliament in 2013 revised Ghana's investment laws.

The revised Act, among other things, will help to protect the Ghanaian entrepreneur from unfair competition by unscrupulous foreign businesses.¹⁶⁹ The new law encourages foreign investors to engage in large-scale value-added trading activities that would not interfere with activities of Ghanaian petty traders. Significantly, the revised Act increased the minimum capital requirement of foreigners to engage in retail trade from US \$300,000 to \$1million in cash or goods. It also required foreigners to employ at least 20 skilled Ghanaian staff (previously it was 10 Ghanaians). The law also requires Ghanaian citizens who partner with foreign investors to have at least 30 percent equity participation in the joint enterprise. The legislation extends this equity requirement to mining and petroleum enterprises. To ensure proper monitoring, compliance and ease of coordination, the new Act has made it mandatory for all enterprises including Ghanaian businesses to register with the GIPC.

The role of GUTA, a special interest group, in ensuring policy reform and compliance to existing law regarding the presence and activities of non-Ghanaian traders is significant. However, as highlighted in Chapter Three, the actions of *agents* are not always without constraints and are certainly impacted by many factors. Closing down foreign owned shops and enacting laws alone, however, do not guarantee that the problems brought about by foreigners in domains reserved for Ghanaians are solved. Indeed, it is the case that some Chinese and other non-Ghanaian merchants still operate in the retail sectors in Accra and other cities. Yet, what is evident from the discussion above is that Ghanaian traders have chalked some success in their

¹⁶⁹ See, Lawrence Quartey: "Ghana revises investment laws to safeguard local traders" July 2013 available at <http://www.theafricareport.com/West-Africa/ghana-revises-investment-laws-to-safeguard-local-traders.html> accessed June 12, 2015

protest against influx of foreign products and merchants. They have also been able to pressure the state to check and control activities of Chinese traders operating in the country. Such political and social agency enacted by civil society organisations has been critical in regulating Chinese actors in Ghana and it is material gain for groups who for a long time have felt marginalised and unprotected by their own government.

Case study 2:

Local Resistance: Chinese Miners in Ghana's Small-scale Gold Mining Sector

In the summer of 2012, while the Fifth Ministerial Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)¹⁷⁰ meeting was underway in Beijing, some Chinese men digging for gold in Ghana fired warning shots when local residents marched on them in protest of their presence in the community. The youth of the community rallied and marched to complain about the economic, social and environmental effect of small-scale mining operations of the Chinese. The Chinese, apparently, in self-defence and/or to scare away the advancing demonstrators, fired gunshots. Some of the enraged youth returned gunfire but no one was hurt. Police officers had to rush in to save the situation from further deterioration. In October of the same year, a Chinese teenager was reportedly killed during a police raid, and two local miners were shot dead, allegedly by Chinese miners in Ghana in May 2013. Since 2013 Ghana Immigration Services (GIS) has deported over one thousand Chinese miners who were engaged in 'illegal' mining operations in various parts of Ghana, with some of them living in the country with false travel documents.

¹⁷⁰ FOCAC is a platform established by China and African countries for collective dialogue and cooperation “in order to further strengthen the friendly cooperation between China and Africa under the new circumstances, to jointly meet the challenge of economic globalisation and to promote common development.” See: FOCAC website “Characteristics of FOCAC”, available at <http://www.focac.org/eng/gylt/litj/t157576.htm> accessed August 25, 2015

The deportation followed clashes with local Ghanaian youth and subsequent establishment of a Presidential Inter-Ministerial Task Force to fight (Chinese) illegal small-scale mining in Ghana. The presence of foreign miners mostly from China in the Artisanal and Small-scale Mining (ASM) sector in Africa is a new dynamic largely unexamined in the burgeoning literature on ASM in general and on Chinese involvement in Africa. The media and, more recently, the academic literature have focused mainly on the environmental impacts of Chinese mining activities (see e.g. Armah et al., 2013) as well as the larger implications of the arrival of Chinese miners on Ghana's ASM sector (see Hilson et al 2014).

The remainder of this chapter examines Chinese presence in Ghana's (illegal) small-scale mining, locally referred to as '*galamsey*' (a local term originating from the phrase 'gather them and sell', Rambaud et al., 2000). I explore the ways in which marginalized local communities attempt to resist appropriation of their lands by foreign actors and how such resistance elicits state response to deal with perceived threat to the environment, safety and economic security. Departing from the dominant approach in the literature that focuses on how Chinese actors determine Ghanaian/African realities, I interrogate the strategic ways in which Ghanaian actors engage and respond to Chinese involvement in Ghana. By exploring Ghanaian resistance and agency in Ghana-China relations, I hope to emphasize that Ghanaian actors exercise considerable influence in their interaction with their Chinese counterparts, certainly more than it is acknowledged. The political and social agency Ghanaian actors and institutions wield in their engagements with Chinese actors are critical and deserve to be equally analysed and understood if we are to appreciate the full implications of Chinese growing presence and influence in Ghana.

The discussion below is based on primary data collected from July to September 2012 in Ghana and complemented with some other secondary sources. Specifically, I focus on mining activities in two communities (Manso-Insiena and Abodom), both within the Amensie West

district of the Ashanti region of Ghana. The communities were selected based on the pervasiveness of Chinese mining and ASM activities. Local residents, government policymakers and the local miners interviewed cast considerable light on the dynamics of the growing Chinese presence in the Ghana's informal gold mining economy and the forms of protest and resistance it has engendered.

Before I examine the strategic responses of local residents and governmental institutions, I situate the arrival of Chinese miners into Ghana's ASM within the historical development of the ASM sector in Ghana. I will also examine the industry's regulatory framework and its challenges. This examination of the ASM sector helps not only to account for the significant underlying issues leading to the emergence of foreign miners into a sector reserved for Ghanaians, but also to understand community resistance within the prevailing conditions.

An Overview of Small-scale Mining in Ghana

Small-scale mining has been a key feature in Ghana's mining industry for centuries. However, until the 1980s, small-scale mining in Ghana, as in other developing countries, was seen and treated as an informal sector and largely unregulated and unsupported by governmental bodies (Hilson 2001; 2014). In fact, during the colonial era policies were enacted to prohibit or limit indigenes from engaging in small-scale mining (Aryee et al, 2003). Such legislation ensured that large-scale mining, which was dominated by European mining companies, received no interferences from local miners (Ofosu-Mensah, 2010). Restrictions to small-scale mining continued during the early independence years until the 1980s when the government, with the encouragement and support from international agencies, initiated policies to formalise and regularize small-sale mining operations in Ghana (Hilson, 2001). A series of laws, including *The*

*Small-Scale Gold Mining Law*¹⁷¹, *The Mercury Law*¹⁷² and *The Precious Minerals and Marketing Corporation Law*¹⁷³, were passed at the end of 1980s to fully regularize small-scale mining (Hilson, 2001:21). These laws and regulations, which were implemented as part of the Economic Recovery Programmes and the Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s, targeted the small-scale mining sector with the view to establishing the basis for local miners to register and formalise their activities (Hilson, 2001).

After decades of official policies to promote small-scale mining as a catalyst for poverty reduction and sustainable development (Aryee, 2003), illegal mining in Ghana continues to be widespread. In fact, these policies and regulations seemed to have further marginalised and disempowered prospective licensees (Hilson et al., 2014: 294). As a result, many small-scale mining operators continue to mine outside of the legal framework. While many factors account for this irregularity, research has shown that this failure can be attributed to lack of serious commitment on the part of government to prioritise ASM as well as government and donor agencies' perception of the sector's operators as people merely looking to 'get rich quick'—without considering that most of operators in ASM are instead driven by economic hardship, not a desire to 'get rich quick' (Hentschel et al., 2002; Hilson, 2010; Hilson et al., 2014).

The little support provided to the ASM industry and ironically the enormous demands for formalisation placed on local operators have proved highly inappropriate¹⁷⁴ over the last several years. This discrepancy has fuelled the growth of two broad categories of small-scale gold miners: those that have registered and licensed their operations and those (the majority) that

¹⁷¹ This law provided for the registration of activity; the granting of gold-mining licences to individuals or groups; the licensing of buyers to purchase product; and the establishment of district-assistance centres.

¹⁷² The law made it legal to purchase mercury (for mineral processing purposes) from authorized dealers

¹⁷³ By this law the Diamond Marketing Corporation changed into the Precious Minerals Marketing Corporation (PMMC), with authority to buy and sell gold (Hilson, 2001: 21)

¹⁷⁴ The ASM regulations put in place appear to be more suitable for operators who have access to capital, not those who are in the industry due to hardship, who also are in the majority.

operate illegally (Sarpong, 2014: 2). Though the number cannot be substantiated, it is estimated that over 500,000 Ghanaians are engaged in small-scale mining (Nyame et al., 2009; Tschakert, 2009) with over 85 percent of ASM miners in Ghana operating without license.¹⁷⁵ Part of the reason for this high number of unlicensed miners is that the procedures for registration to obtain concessions of land are considered cumbersome and complex, requiring the completion of several forms, and final approval from governmental authorities (Hilson, 2001: 21).

Moreover, the process is largely voluntary and small-scale miners in the business mainly to survive cannot afford the capital requirements and therefore have no option than to operate without official registration and license (Nyame and Blocher, 2010; Sarpong, 2010; Low, 2012). But the risks associated with operating small-scale mining (without license) are high. Local miners are subjected to constant ‘raids’ by security agencies. Security contractors of transnational mining companies assisted by armed police and soldiers often conduct “raids” or “operations” ostensibly to arrest or ward off alleged illegal small-scale mining operators in the concessions of large-scale mining companies and other demarcated areas. These “raids” tend to be violent and invasion of communities often results in gross human rights abuses. Furthermore, small-scale mining is generally seen as a tedious job that is labour-intensive, with the use of fairly rudimentary tools (Hilson 2001; Aryee et al., 2003) with groups of people coming together to clear the vegetation, dig the earth, wash and sift the minerals. People who go into alluvial mining are considered brave and adventurous because of the potential risks inherit with the nature of the work. Over the years, many miners have died in their own pits due to walls collapsing and falling on them while underground (Sarpong, 2010). However, these periodic government and the industry-sponsored ‘raids’ of illegal mining sites and frequents deaths

¹⁷⁵ Hilson and Potter (2003) estimate that close to half of those employed in the sector are women. Women tend to work as panners, carriers, and processors as well as jewellery makers, cooks, and other service providers (including prostitutes) in and around mining sites.

associated with mining activities, not to mention physical hazards and illness, have not deterred operators from ASM (Hilson et al., 2007).

Galamsey activities have expanded significantly since the 1980s and continue to be popular in mining areas in Ghana despite the high risks associated with them (Nyame et al., 2009; Tschakert, 2009). This dramatic increase in illegal ASM in Ghana can be attributed to the high rate of youth unemployment and the growing poverty prevailing in many mining communities in Ghana. Mining communities in Ghana have some of the highest incidence of unemployed youth. Some of these youth were former workers who have been laid off by multinational mining companies, while others are farmers who have lost their arable lands leaving them with the only option of digging for minerals (Banchirigah and Hilson, 2010). As largely a poverty driven activity, ASM miners do not usually see their activities as illicit or at least they do not want to accept it as such. The state, large-scale mining companies and the media tend to characterise *galamsey* as a nuisance, a menace and even a threat to the operators, their communities, concession landholders, and the nation. Due to their encroachment on concession lands procured by national and multinational mining companies, their use of dangerous mercury substance in gold extraction, as well as social cost to communities, illegal artisanal miners in Ghana are marginalised and even criminalised (Tschakert, 2009: 24; Carson et al. 2005).

Despite the problems small-scale mining operations bring and the anti-galamsey discourse, the sector has also generated employment and contributed millions of dollars to the national economy since 1989 (Aryee, 2003; Auty, 1998; Carson et al., 2005). The state officially purchases *galamsey* gold, via agents licensed through the Precious Mineral Marketing Corporation. From these indicators, the state should be committed to support ASM as a means of reducing poverty and ensuring sustainable development in mining communities. Yet, unlike the

country's large-scale mining sector, very little has been done to help local miners navigate the complex regulatory framework. This lack of support accentuated by the difficulties experienced with registration, payments to state institutions, and challenges with accessing viable technological and financial support have combined to discourage local gold miners from securing licenses (Hilson et al., 2014: 297). Hilson et al., (2014: 298) aptly summarize the cost of registration in Ghana, which seems to be the most significant challenge facing local artisanal miners:

Despite mounting evidence pointing to licensing fees being beyond the means of applicants, the government has elected to increase them. Prospective licensees must now pay upward of 1000¢ or US\$512 to prepare a site plan; 100¢ (US\$51) for the application form; a 250¢ (US\$128) processing fee; a 550¢ (US\$282) 'consideration' fee; 750¢ (US\$384) to the Environmental Protection Agency for the completion of an environmental impact assessment; and a number of other fees, including a stamp duty, court duties, and stool land registration. The procedure seems highly-inappropriate for a group of people engaged in an activity described by many, including donors and at times, Ghanaian Government officials, as 'poverty driven.'

Local miners must navigate these already costly processes along with frequent payment of bribes to landowners and traditional authorities and other middlemen before they can be sure of getting access to a parcel of land. Thus, in sum, state policies or lack thereof over the years have frustrated and further marginalized Ghanaian *galamsey* operators, leading some of them to resort to unorthodox means to continue to stay in small-scale gold mining, although even many registered operators need financial and technological assistance (Hilson et al., 2014: 298). As discussed below, within this environment of neglect, many local gold miners have sought partnership and assistance through unconventional means with Chinese nationals whose presence in Ghana has increased in the last decade.

Chinese miners in Ghana

Since the mid-2000s several Chinese migrants, traders, investors and temporary workers have entered Ghana on an increasing scale (see Ho 2008; Hilson et al 2014). Many of these Chinese nationals have come to Ghana on the back of growing relations between Ghana and China. While some studies suggest that China's infrastructure based development assistance to African countries has led to *official* dispatch of thousands of Chinese labourers to Africa (Tan-Mullins et al., 2010), there is little evidence this is happening in Ghana, where there are a number of Chinese infrastructure projects, including the aforementioned Bui Dam and the Atuabo Gas project. But certainly it could be argued that the growing 'visibility' of Beijing in Ghana has made Chinese entry into Ghana easier in the last few years.

While most Chinese nationals that have entered Ghana since the mid-2000s are engaged in productive legal activities, others have entered into illegal artisanal and small-scale mining. According to the GIS, some of these migrants used tourist visas to enter Ghana via neighbouring countries and operate mining sites without working visas.¹⁷⁶ As noted, The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), which was enacted to replace the Minerals and Mining Law, 1986 (PNDCL 153), prohibits non-Ghanaians from engaging in ASM. Thus the emergence of the Chinese into the ASM sector and the proliferation of their activities suggest weaknesses in state agencies enforcement of rules and more importantly gaps in the minerals and mining legal framework. Taking advantage of government's inability to properly regulate the ASM sector, Chinese miners have entered into *galamsey* in Ghana, raising concerns about environmental and social cost impact of their mining activities.

¹⁷⁶ See Ghanaweb, "GIS detain 25 Illegal Chinese Miners" available at <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/GIS-detains-25-Illegal-Chinese-Miners-223467> accessed August 2, 2014

Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify a few things about the Chinese miners in Ghana. First, it should be noted that the (il)legality of Chinese mining activities in Ghana is ambiguous. As stated above, according to the Minerals and Mining Law, the small-scale mining sector is reserved for Ghanaians, so the law excludes foreigners. However, Ghanaian law allows foreigners to assist Ghanaian small-scale miners technically and financially in the form of mine support services. Consequently, some of the Chinese enter into the small-scale mining as goods and services providers and then later partner with Ghanaians who front the applications for land concessions. Thus, many of the Chinese small-scale gold miners are in the possession of valid concession rights (through partnerships and alliances with Ghanaians), although it is a fact that some of the miners are in the country and the mining sites without valid visas and work permits. Those who have concession rights have them through Ghanaians potentially backed by local officials often well aware that these rights are given to Chinese and other foreign miners.

Ghanaians go through the right process to get mining licences after which they sell the licences to the Chinese, transfer the licence or enter into partnership with them. What this means is that on paper Ghanaians own the small-scale mining ‘companies’ yet, in practice, it is the Chinese and other foreigners who operate them. This is the case because most local miners are unable to afford the cost of licensing to operate as registered small-scale gold miner. As discussed earlier, although small-scale mining in Ghana, as in other developing countries, plays an important economic role, it is dominated by socially and economically marginalised and disadvantaged communities who resort to mining to escape poverty, unemployment and landlessness (Bush 2009; Hilson 2012; Armah et al 2013). Most small-scale miners in Ghana cannot afford heavy machinery; their mining involves a mixture of manual digging and semi-mechanised processing, using small diesel crushers and technique of mercury amalgamation (Siegel, 2013; Hilson et al., 2014). Notably, the arrival of Chinese miners in Ghana’s ASM

sector has since changed this dynamic. The Chinese have introduced new technology and machinery into the sector, thereby transforming the traditional method of pickaxe, shovels and pans. They have introduced a hybrid model that combines mechanized industrial mining techniques and equipment (trench drills, wash plants, insuction equipment, bulldozers, excavators etc) with the mobility of small-scale mining. Along with technological changes came big capital and intensification of production. Areas of land are now mined in weeks, which previously could take years. These practices are attractive to the local mines as they potentially increase the amount of gold: hence the increasing partnership with the Chinese. A local miner interviewed had this to say:

You know this business now requires big money, but I don't have it so the Chinese people are sponsoring me, because I have the license and they have the money. Of course I know that some people have also sold their licenses to the Chinese. Whether it is legal or illegal, I do not know.

Another local miner said he has partnered with the Chinese because they have the needed equipment: "I am a Ghanaian and I go and acquire the mineral license and concession from the authorities but due to the fact that I don't have the logistics and the machinery to work so I have to work with the Chinese who have the equipment."

The intensification of production as a result of the presence of Chinese miners comes with large-scale environmental degradation, destruction of land and water bodies. And so while Chinese mining activities have been welcomed by those who benefit directly (such as farm-owners, chiefs, local politicians, local gold miners among others), on the whole, and as a result of the telling impact on the environment, farm produce and water bodies, the Chinese mining has created anger, frustration and protest from members of affected Ghana mining communities. For

local residents the feeling of a sense of loss and damage to natural resources generates discontent and animosity towards foreign miners.

Other nationalities such as Indians and Serbs (Armah et al 2013: 97), however, are involved in the “illegal” gold mining in Ghana, meaning the Chinese miners are but one group of foreign nationals. As I will examine below, what is curious about the Chinese miners are the vast numbers, how they got into Ghana’s ASM in the first place and why their presence and activities have led to clashes with mining communities.

Second, the Chinese who are involved in the small-scale mining sector belong to a relatively small group of Chinese who are independent, not directly linked to Chinese government, State owned enterprises, large private companies and entities even known to the Chinese embassy, according to Chinese officials in Ghana. This assertion is contrary to the media speculations that Chinese miners in Ghana are directly a result of official Chinese government's policy to encourage Chinese ‘to go out’. Obviously several factors account for Chinese migration into Ghana’s gold mining sector, and it’s certainly not a mere coincidence that Chinese engagements in *galamsey* in Ghana has grown around the same time that Beijing’s political and economic interests in sub-Saharan Africa in general are at an all-time high.

Ghana is the second largest gold producer in Africa after South Africa and the price of gold was soaring at the time of increasing Chinese migration to Ghana. As reported by Chinese media, “most young men from Shanglin County could only earn 1,000 yuan a month or less as a farmer, but they could make about 10,000 yuan a month in Ghana.”¹⁷⁷ For many of the Chinese, the decision to move to Ghana was enticing and life changing. Most of the Chinese miners in Ghana came from Shanglin County, a mining community in Guangxi province in China

¹⁷⁷ See: “Low costs and huge profits irresistible lure for Chinese to mine Ghana's gold” *South China Morning Post* (June 2013): available at <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1255126/low-costs-and-huge-profits-irresistible-lure-chinese-mine-ghanas-gold> accessed July 20, 2013

following the collapse and shut down of the mining activity in that locality.¹⁷⁸ That said, other factors have certainly made Chinese entry possible, including the informal character of the small-scale mining sector in Ghana, the growing presence of Chinese investment in Ghana and a fluidity of migration between Ghana and China, catalysed by trading networks which have galvanised since the launch of the ‘Going Out Policy’ (Hilson et al 2014: 297).

Chinese Miners and their ‘Host’ Communities in Ghana

The two communities at the centre of this study were visibly enduring the effect of systemic and mechanised drilling of the land for gold at the time of my research visit. Farmlands had been bulldozed for their gold content and left unclaimed. Roads and bridges essential for commute and for transportation to nearby markets were flooded because streams have been re-routed. Kofi, a local resident, complained of the destruction:

The Chinese don’t care; once they come in, they erect their tent in the bush, they clear the forest and farms, they dig with their machines, wash, crush, and separate the soil from the gold. If the area they are exploiting is done, they move to another piece of land and clear the land, which has farm crops.... This river [pointing his hand] used to flow this way, now they have redirected it.... Within 3 months the whole area is destroyed. Why should that be?

Similarly, Mr P.¹⁷⁹ expressed worry about the effect of the mining activities on their water bodies and the environment:

Look at the road to the school, look at the buildings.... As for these people [Chinese miners] they are destroying the river and the people cannot use it for anything.... They

¹⁷⁸ This was confirmed to me during a discussion with a Chinese academic in Beijing, March 2014. See also report in the Chinese news media: “Low costs and huge profits irresistible lure for Chinese to mine Ghana's gold” *South China Morning Post* (June 2013): available at <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1255126/low-costs-and-huge-profits-irresistible-lure-chinese-mine-ghanas-gold> accessed July 20, 2013

¹⁷⁹ Mr P (not his real name) is an opinion leader who requested anonymity due to fear of victimisation. He claimed some local officials had threatened him, ironically, because of his criticism of the Chinese miners. He agreed to meet for the interview at a location outside of his hometown (Manso-Nsiena).

have destroyed all the food crops. Look, it's been barely two months, but look at all these [pointing to mine site].... They have destroyed the environment....

Ataa, a young woman I met at the marketplace in Manso-Nsiena, described how she felt when she saw local people 'selling' land for money: "just last week I witnessed a family taking some amount of money from the Chinese; 'selling' their farmland for money. I almost cried because I could tell the amount was not worth it and they were going to lose their farm produce too." Ataa was kind enough to take me and my research assistant to other locations where Chinese miners were digging for gold. She was sceptical of the contribution of the miners to the community: "it's not as if they [Chinese] like us. They do not buy from our market; they bring in their food at the back of their trucks, and they build their tent and stay in the bush for their mining activities."

Chinese gold mining in Manso-Nsiena also has negative social impact. Residents explained how illegal mining was affecting school children's daily schedule and preparation to school. Mr P complained about some of the negative social impact of the activities of the Chinese miners:

In the morning when they [Chinese miners] come to the borehole to fetch water they tell everybody to leave. If not they will give a warning shot. They come with big tanks and take the water and when they come they prevent the people from taking the water. As a result students who are supposed to go to school in the morning around 7:30am end up going to school around 10am because they have to wait for their turn to get water.

Community outrage and finger pointing were evident in a community meeting that was set up in one of the communities to discuss the growing problem of Chinese mining. Community members wanted to find solutions to the looming problem but they ended up arguing about who was to blame for allowing the Chinese into their community. One of the reasons why small-scale mining in Ghana often lead to violent clashes with the local people is because the local people

are not always involved in the decisions over land concessions. For example, it is possible that locals will wake up one day and suddenly find a group of foreigners who may claim to have the right to mine for gold in farmlands they have used for many generations. These temporary ‘owners’ of the land or concession holders (concessions are valid for a limited period of time) tend to defend their newly acquired land with sophisticated weapons. For instance, Chinese miners use guns at their sites, claiming that they do so to defend themselves from robbers and other attackers.

The raging anger of local residents is not only targeted at the Chinese or the government agencies that have failed to protect them. Some community leaders and local chiefs are accused of conniving with the Chinese to mine the gold in exchange for money. In the Ashanti region and Ghana as a whole, land is allocated through the paramount chief, or *Omanhene*, of the locality and the hierarchy of sub-chiefs operating under the Ashanti King. Therefore it is almost impossible for concession holders to have the land without the consent or at least awareness of the chiefs. But some chiefs are deeply involved in illegal mining activities in their communities. A local miner in Manso-Nsiena indicated that the chiefs gave the land to the Chinese miners and 10 percent of their output goes back to the chiefs. But one of the Chief claimed innocence:

I have no idea of what the Chinese miners were doing here. All I know is a native of the town came to me to mine on the land and I told them to go to the Mineral Commission, that only the Mineral Commission can give them the license. Since then I haven’t heard anything. It was only two days ago that a citizenry of the town came to report to me that the land is being spoiled.

Responding to the role the local chief play in the illegal mining activity, an official of the Minerals Commission said some Ghanaians acquire the land and in turn sublet their licenses to Chinese and other nationals. He claimed that behind every illegal Chinese activity at the community level there is likely a local opinion leader, a chief, a farmer, a farm owner involved.

He stated further: “I have been told that a number of chiefs are involved, but I must say there are some chiefs who are standing against illegal mining and they insist on letting them [Chinese] go. So you must understand that not all chiefs are with illegal miners.”

Meanwhile the youth in the affected mining communities were convinced that somebody must stop the miners from further destroying their community. However, they also knew that it was not going to be the police or any state institution because local authorities have not been responsive to their call for help. As far as they were concerned, the Ghanaian state has not only been unable to regulate small-scale mining; it has failed to protect communities from the adverse effect of irresponsible gold mining. In view of the failure of the state to stop the illegal mining activities of the Chinese miners, Mr P., who was mobilising the youth in the affected communities, offered the following observation: “They [Chinese miners] did not show that they would leave. It was up to us. The police people were not coming. We had to do something. We had to defend ourselves and our community.”¹⁸⁰

In the past, some of the youth in the affected communities had signaled their opposition to the actions of the miners by destroying some properties belonging to the Chinese miners. This followed a report that in one village the Chinese miners allegedly shot a local man in the thigh while attempting to reach his farm. Upon hearing this, the villagers retaliated by setting fire to an excavator belonging to the miners.¹⁸¹ The Chinese miners will often fire warning shots to ward off local residents, but as expected, the firing of guns in turn infuriates local residents, leading to misunderstanding and conflict, as Mr P. lamented: “they [Chinese] walk into our country illegally and engage in illegal activity that destroy our river, they drop cyanide and mercury into

¹⁸⁰ Author interview with Mr P. Kumasi, Ghana, August 2012,

¹⁸¹ Cited in Siegel, S., 2012. “The missing ethics of mining”. *Ethics & International Affairs*. 27 (1), 3-17

our rivers that we drink and still have the audacity to hold guns to fight Ghanaians. What do they take us for?”¹⁸²

On July 20, 2012 the Youth in the Manso-Nsiena community embarked on what Mr P. described as ‘massive demo’ (or public demonstration). This protest was organised a few days before Mr P (the ‘leader’ of the youth group) arrived in the town from another location (he had been away from town after there was a threat on his life from some local supporters of the Chinese miners) and noticed that the destruction to the land and property was getting worse. As he described, there were about six different groups of illegal Chinese miners operating at the Manso-Nsiena area, a predominantly farming community of about 1,000 inhabitants.

On that fateful July day when the youth group approached the mining site to demand them to leave the community because of their destruction, the Chinese fired warning shots. The warning shots went on for some time, forcing three men from the community to fire back. The scene was dramatic, but there were no casualties, and the protest march went on for some time before armed policemen arrived from Manso Nkwanta, a nearby town, to save the situation from further deterioration.

The news of the protest and the ensuing fragile security in the communities reached almost every corner of Ghana. Radio stations, television networks and social media were abuzz with the news of the confrontation as some journalists working on the story captured the incident and reported. When the video footage of the confrontation and the extent of damage to the environment were put in the public domain, the Ghanaian public was outraged and agitated over the destruction caused by illegal mining. Most people were upset by the lack of oversight and the failure of state institutions to prevent the crisis, yet others were also outraged about the role some Ghanaian citizens played by encouraging or benefiting from the illegal mining activities.

¹⁸² Author interview with Mr P. Kumasi, Ghana, August 2012,

The anger and frustrations from among the public were also accompanied by a general recognition that the bold mobilisation of the disgruntled youth finally exposed such illegal mining activities as a national issue. The protest or ‘demo’ showed how the youth of the affected communities mobilised in the face of threat to their community and livelihood. They did so by employing the means most available to them by protesting against the activities of the Chinese miners.¹⁸³ The confrontation from the youth led to the arrest of some of the Chinese miners and a temporal suspension of mining activities in the two communities under study. Eventually, it also prompted a government response in the form of a national task-force and more importantly broader joint Ghana-China efforts to prevent future re-occurrence.

The July 2012 incident happened few days before the passing of the sitting President Atta Mills (he passed away on July 24). The sad news of his death potentially tempered the frustrations and anger of people as the nation started to mourn the death of its first sitting president. But the outcry continued in homes and on media platforms. After a rather long period of growing public pressure, new president John Mahama in May 2013 finally established an Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Illegal Mining. The terms of reference of the taskforce were to ‘seize all the equipment the illegal miners use, arrest and prosecute perpetrators whether they be Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians.’¹⁸⁴ The taskforce co-ordinated the work of an newly convened Operations Team that included staff of the National Security Council, the Ghana Immigration Service, personnel of the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana Armed Forces.

Some members of the public and other commentators saw the government’s task-force as too late and a façade aimed at pacifying an agitated public considering that it took about a year for its formation. Some commentators suggested that the delay in action against illegal Chinese

¹⁸³ Interview with Mr P. Kumasi, Ghana, August 2012

¹⁸⁴ See Peacefmonline: ‘Task Force against illegal mining refutes allegations’, available at <http://news.peacefmonline.com/pages/news/201306/166619.php> accessed June 15, 2014

miners was due, in part, to protracted government deliberations concerned that forceful action against the Chinese miners could deteriorate relations with China (Hilson et al 2014: 293). While the Ghanaian government denies this claim, such trepidation of potential loss of development support from foreign interlocutors is problematic. What it means is that, for example, although the state may consider the presence and activities of Chinese as illegal, it may not want to overly 'offend' foreign 'patrons' because of fear of losing development assistance. This patron-client relationship in many ways forecloses African agency (see Jackson 1993; Comaroff, and Comaroff, 2006). As trade and diplomatic relations between Ghana and China are soaring, public perception that Ghanaian officials did exercise some leniency in dealing with the impasse of Chinese miners in Ghana could be valid.

As we saw in the case of the taskforce set up to enforce the investment laws against Chinese traders and products, the mining taskforce was also accused of targeting and destroying equipment belonging to Chinese and some local miners. But the Minister of Interior, Alhaji Fuseini, who was the head of the task force, indicated that "he does not begrudge Chinese miners for aspiring to improving their economic status in Ghana but emphasised that endeavours of all foreign nationals must be prosecuted within the confines of the laws of Ghana." The Minister announced that the Inter-Ministerial Task Force against illegal mining was reclaiming lands degraded by illegal miners and indicated that government would welcome Chinese assistance for the exercise as a goodwill gesture to reflect the new Ghana-China relations.¹⁸⁵

Later that year a Chinese team of personnel from the Chinese Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Public Security arrived in Ghana to discuss with their Ghanaian counterparts the issues linked to Chinese citizens. This visit followed a report by the Chinese

¹⁸⁵ See "Chinese Diplomat Calls for New Era in Ghana-China Relations." *Africa News Service* 12 July 2013. *World History in Context*. Accessed December 8, 2014.

media that a Chinese man was killed on 11 October 2013 by Ghanaian military police in the Ashanti region of Ghana.¹⁸⁶ The Chinese embassy in Accra was not happy about this incident and also expressed concern about the detention of over 100 Chinese nationals on suspicion of illegal mining. This treatment of Chinese nationals led to an investigation by Ghanaian authorities following a formal protest by the Chinese embassy in Accra.

In another interesting twist to the mining impasse, Chinese media reported that hundreds of residents of the Shanglin County in China took to the streets to demand the help of the Chinese government for their relatives in Ghana who were being chased down by Ghanaian task force for illegal mining. As stated earlier, most of the miners in Ghana came from a Shanglin, a small mining town in the Guangxi province of China. The protests in China raised fears of reprisals against Ghanaians in China but no incidents like that have been reported.

Following the operations of the mining task force, some Chinese miners voluntarily opted to be repatriated back home and the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) granted their request after screening them to determine their nationalities.¹⁸⁷ The screening also helped GIS to establish how the Chinese entered the country in the first place and where they carried out their illegal mining activities. By June 2013, thousands of Chinese nationals working as gold miners in Ghana had been returned to China, some through voluntary deportation.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶See: *China Daily*: “Ghana detains 100 Chinese for ‘illegal’ mining” available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2012-10/15/content_15816410.htm accessed July 11, 2014

¹⁸⁷ See: Myjoyonline: “Don’t arrest us; we are ready to go - illegal Chinese miners tell immigration” <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201306/107567.php> accessed June 30, 2015

¹⁸⁸ See: The Guardian, “Ghana deports thousands in crackdown on illegal Chinese goldminers” <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/15/ghana-deports-chinese-goldminers> accessed August 15, 2013

Policy Gaps, Community Resilience and Social Agency

Illegal small-scale gold mining is popular in Ghana, especially among marginalised communities and disempowered youth. Despite years of attempted policy and legal reforms, small-scale mining is a serious problem for the Ghanaian government, which has to deal with a disorganised mining sector and various illegal practices, although those who benefit the least from this policy chaos are the local miners and the local communities. Gold mining and especially small-scale illegal gold mining can be damaging to the environment and often has led to adverse social and health effects for local miners and host communities. Clearly, the absence of effective legal frameworks and secure rights for miners and communities in Ghana exacerbates this problem. A key factor in the failure of attempts to regulate ASM in Ghana is that the current policy mechanisms are too technical and cumbersome and do not take into account the complex socio-political realities of the people involved and the local communities they find themselves. Aggravating the situation (or due to it) is the arrival of illegal Chinese miners who have started to partner with local Ghanaian small-scale miners because they have the money and the equipment.

The arrival of Chinese miners and the crisis brought about by their activities in Ghana reveal some of the gaps in institutional and legal framework in Ghana. The current public policies (including the Minerals and Mining Act) are not placed to deal with the complex dynamics of the ASM sector as well as the Immigration and security issues making it possible for foreign nationals such the Chinese miners to gain entry into Ghana and mine without proper permits (Armah et al 2013; Hilson 2014). Taking advantage of government's inability to properly regulate ASM sector, Chinese miners have access to large acres of land (sometimes farmlands with crops), use heavy machinery to extract gold, cause deforestation and water pollution and run into conflict with local residents.

Small-scale illegal mining in Ghana and the presence of foreign nationals including Chinese miners certainly are not expected to end overnight simply because of community protest and the work of a taskforce. The presence of Chinese nationals in Ghana's informal gold mining sector is symptomatic of the general attitude of ambivalence to the presence and role of the Chinese in Ghana and Africa as a whole. As discussed above, on the one hand, some groups, particularly local residents of mining communities in Ghana, denounce the environmental and social devastation brought about by the unsustainable activities of Chinese miners. On the other hand, however, some individuals, particularly local miners, encourage or at least welcome the presence of the Chinese because of the benefits they derive from Chinese partnership opportunities.

While this crisis could have been avoided, the outcome is symptomatic of the potential fallout of increasing engagement between China and Ghana, as issues like these may surface from time to time. Yet what is curious to note and consistent with the position of this study is the manner in which the youth of the affected communities 'brought' this matter to the public space and to the attention of state officials both in Ghana and China. It is yet further evidence of the resilience and the social agency Ghanaian actors possess in their engagement with Chinese actors. For the communities that 'hosted' the Chinese miners, their revolt and the subsequent government decision to take action against the miners leading to deportations and reclaiming of lost lands is a sign of relief. At least the looting of natural resources, destruction of the environment and disturbance of peace and social harmony in their communities have subsided, largely because of their initial resolve to resist and do something about the situation, while state institutions appeared to be failing them.

Resistance Here, Resistance There

Resistance against Chinese transnationals, entrepreneurial migrants and miners in Ghana do not occur in isolation. Across Africa and around the world studies and media reports are awash with similar stories of resistance from below. In Africa, there have been discontent and resistance among segments of African populations who see themselves as negatively impacted by various forms of Chinese presence and activities. There have been studies on the effect of Chinese entrepreneurial migrants who outcompete African traders (e.g. Baah et al 2009; Carmody and Taylor 2010; Mohan and Lampert, 2013; Ndiyo 2009; Scheld 2010). There are also concerns raised by trade unions about violations of labour rights and safety regulations by Chinese companies, including the impact of influx of cheap Chinese products on African markets (see Alden 2007; Brooks 2010; Carmody and Laing 2007; Jauch and Traub-Merz 2006; Kaplinsky and Morris 2008; Keet 2008; Kragelund 2009; Larmer and Fraser 2007; Taylor 2009).

Protests against Chinese transnational actors have occurred in Zambia against the poor working and safety conditions in Chinese-owned copper mines (Shacinda, 2006; Lee 2009). In Nigeria, the Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) detonated a car bomb in April 2006, during the visit of Chinese president Hu Jintao, as an expression of rage against the involvement of Chinese actors in the oil rich Niger Delta, and there occurred the kidnapping of nine Chinese oil workers in 2007 (Obi, 2008). Protests have also transpired in Sudan where Chinese oil companies are 'in bed' with the Sudanese state (Large, 2007:51-76; Patey, 2007:997-1016), and apparently have backed government repression of local resistance and conflict in oil rich areas.

While these forms of resistance in Ghana and elsewhere point to evidence of African agency, they are more than just demonstrations of agency. They also indicate real oppositional politics borne out of marginalisation, dispossession and exploitation in political spaces across

Africa. These forms of resistance resonate with forms of social and political struggles around the world. Acts of resistance across the globe come with varied degrees of successes, yet they are all driven by similar impulses: inequalities and injustices embedded into relations of dispossession and accumulation, domination and exploitation, wealth and poverty and widening gaps, whether at the local, national, regional or global levels (Harvey 2003; Chin and Mittleman 1997; 2005).

Local resistance around the world—from peasant rebellions and resistance against rapidly industrialising Malaysia (Scott, 1976; 1985) to the Zapatista uprising among the Maya Indians against the Mexican government's neoliberal reforms (Johnson 2000; Johnson and Laxer 2003) to the MEND's insurgency against marginalisation by the Nigerian state and transnational oil corporations in the Niger Delta in Nigeria (Oriola 2013; Obi 2008)—point to persistence of contentious politics, counter-hegemonic discourses and resistance movements by people whose modes of existence are threatened by state brutality and global capitalism. These voices in the 'wilderness' abound in multiple places across Africa as China's resurgence in Africa touches the ground, and so researchers as well as policy makers need to pay attention.

Conclusion: Taking Ghanaian Voices Seriously

The cases examined in Chapters Five and Six show that the issues brought about by Chinese actors in Ghana intertwine multiple actors and numerous issue areas. The actors involved on the Ghanaian side include Ghanaian state officials, legislators, ad hoc task force committees, workers, trade unions, opinion leaders, traders and private individuals. On the Chinese side, we see the role not only of the Chinese officials but also of large, semi-autonomous Chinese corporations, independent Chinese merchants, entrepreneurs and miners. In terms of the issues areas, we observe that they involve various sectors of Ghana's economy cutting across from the oil and gas industry, retail sector, labour and mining sectors.

In all these sectors it has been shown that multiple actors either working alone or collaboratively have managed to resist, influence and regulate activities and behaviour of Chinese actors in Ghana. However, as indicated earlier, Ghanaian actors do not express their agency without constraints and so if we are to fully understand the depth and nature of agency expressed and the issues at stake, we must be sensitive to the specific context in which issues emerge and the conditions within which actors operate. For example, while the enforcement of the investment laws in the retail industry shows GUTA's social agency, it depended upon the assistance of other actors to ensure compliance. Put differently, while GUTA for example, on a number of occasions questioned the commitment of Ghanaian state actors, the anti-retail operations only worked to the extent that it did when GUTA worked with other state institution. Thus GUTA was successful at circumventing certain state actors (GIPC) as unhelpful and even problematic by engaging with other states actors (the taskforce). These collaboration efforts reflect the point made in Chapter Three that actors or agents do not always have agency in all issues areas.

In almost all the cases examined, initial acts of resistance take place from outside formal state institutions. All four cases show how Ghanaian responses to the role and activities of the Chinese extend to actors 'below the state.' For example, in the Chinese mining case we see community members mobilize initially to intervene against Chinese activities that were deemed harmful without the assistance of security agencies. The residents of Manso-Nsiena mobilised to 'do something' because they saw the role of state actors (the Police Service) as inadequate. GUTA also embarked on demonstrations because they had concluded that they could no longer rely on the state agencies to protect them from the activities of the Chinese traders, and that they had to do something about the situation.

By examining these cases, this study has sought to bring to the forefront the critical Ghanaian voices missing in on-going research. I show how analysis of Ghanaian responses and reaction increases our understanding of how agency operates where the Chinese presence and activities are perceived as harmful. I have also argued that analyses of the Ghanaian perception of threatening Chinese activities, how that perception is constructed, along with the responsive strategies to these constructions of threat, must all be sensitive to the prevailing context in which these processes unfold.

It should also be noted that the responses and strategies of Ghanaian state and non-state actors to counter perceived threat of Chinese actors does not indiscriminately affect all or even most Chinese actors in Ghana. This conclusion is consistent with findings from Axelsson (2012: 200), who suggests that Ghanaian actors respond to perceived threat of Chinese activities rather than the 'Chineseness' of the people involved. Indeed Axelsson and Sylvanus (2010) have also shown that, in the case of the textile industry in Ghana, the anti-Chinese sentiments is projected on to the Chinese commodity or product (Chinese African Print) itself, but rarely on the person selling it. What these findings mean is that the critical Ghanaian voices and responses regarding the illegal activities of Chinese are not best understood as anti-Chinese sentiments. Rather, in the Ghanaian case, these voices and responses are contextually mediated and locally driven strategies that seek to safeguard certain economic sectors of the country without being overly protectionist and anti-migrant. Thus the response to Chinese engagements in Ghana is deeply embedded in the local and historical context of marginalisation and neglect, although some of the circumstances within which both Ghanaian and Chinese actors operate are embedded in global processes.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Implications of the Study

This dissertation critically examined Ghana's recent engagement with China, within a broader framework of increasing relations with China and African countries. I explored the factors that account for Ghana's growing interaction with China as well as Ghanaian agency in those engagements. The study showed that changing priorities and challenges in Ghana's political economy has a direct impact on the decision of both the state and non-state actors to engage Chinese actors. Consequently, I argued that to fully understand Ghana-China relations the best place to begin is not necessarily a detailed review of China's practices and implications on Ghana. Rather, answers can be found within the Ghanaian domestic context as any changes in Ghana's policies towards China and vice-versa come from significant domestic as well as other factors discussed throughout the study.

Second, the study also problematised the dominant 'China in Africa' scholarship in which Chinese practices in Africa and their implications on Africa's development are analysed without a corresponding empirical analysis of African actors' response and engagement with Chinese actors. I demonstrated with the Ghana case study that, contrary to popular assumption, Ghanaian and Chinese actors influence each other's policies and strategies in their engagements. I argued that it is only through grounded analysis on how Chinese investment is received, the diverse agents involved, the local conditions that enable their interplay with workers, unions and communities that we can properly contextualise and understand the dynamic encounters between Chinese and Ghanaian actors.

Third, the study showed that Ghanaian actors exercise considerable influence in their interaction with their Chinese counterparts and that the political and social agency Ghanaian actors wield in their interaction with Chinese actors is critical and deserve to be equally analysed

and understood. However, Ghanaian actors' ability to wield influence and express agency is demonstrably impacted by several factors, not least of which are prevailing internal political and socio-economic structures. Ghanaian actors do not express their agency without constraints and so if we are to fully understand the depth and nature of agency expressed, we must be sensitive to the specific context in which issues emerge and the conditions within which actors operate.

In Chapter Two *'The Dragon has Not Just Arrived': An Historical Overview of Africa-China and Ghana-China Relations,* I delineated the historical as well as the contemporary context of Africa-China linkages and Ghana-China relations. I argued that contrary to current media frenzy and popular assumption that China is a 'new kid on the block,' China's presence in Africa dates back centuries and this historical linkage still affects or influences Africa-China relationships today. I posited that the rhetoric China employs in legitimising its engagement with African countries reflects China's own historical and present experience with the outside world and Africa in particular. Such rhetoric, which has its roots in history, affords Beijing a historical legitimacy resulting in a distinct culture of 'South-South' cooperation in its contemporary engagements in Africa. I suggested that historical relation between China and Africa exhibit some pattern and can be organised into at least three phases: the Bandung Period, from 1950s to 1960; the Post-Bandung Period, from late 1970s to the late 1980s; and the Age of Business, from the 1990s to the present. I argued further that the third-phase of the relationship has seen remarkable growth in China's presence and influence in Africa and has engaged the attention of academics, policy makers and the international media. Here, I suggested that dominant perspectives on China's engagement in Africa since the early 2000s have enriched our knowledge of Chinese foreign policy practices in Africa and its implications. However, I also argued that the 'China in Africa' literature has done little to expand our knowledge of the prevailing processes at play and the intricacies within the African side of the engagement.

In an attempt to contribute to filling the knowledge gap described in Chapter One, the third chapter discussed the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for analysing contemporary Africa-China relations as a two-way relationship, making it possible to interrogate and account for the complexities of the African side of Africa-China engagement. I presented a critical African political economy approach fused with postcolonial perspectives as a viable framework for contextualising and historicising Africa's postcolonial development relations with China. In the rest of the chapter I discussed three key concepts pertinent to the study: 'South-South cooperation', African *agency* and *resistance*. Drawing on Colin Wight (1999) and others, I developed a conceptual framework of agency to account for the various actors and institutions engaged in the daily interaction between Africans and Chinese. I expanded on Wight's treatment of state agency to include non-state actors. This framework was useful for the analysis of my empirical findings. I argued that an analytical focus on African agency affords us the chance to enquire about where and how African actors are exerting influence or agency and provided an identification of those factors, which make it possible or not to exercise agency.

In Chapter Four I interrogated the factors that drive Ghana's recent engagement with China. I started the chapter with Ghana's postcolonial economic relations with external powers to examine the surge in its economic engagement with China. Partly informed by field research in Ghana, I demonstrated that complex motivations inform Ghanaian actors' interactions with China. Overall the chapter showed that conditions of Ghana's political economy have a direct linkage with Ghanaian state actors' interaction with China in contemporary times and underpin the growth in Ghana's reliance on Chinese support. Since the last decade, Chinese investment in Ghana has targeted Ghana's most underdeveloped sector—the energy infrastructure—making China an important partner in Ghana's infrastructure development effort.

Chapter Four also probed into the modalities through which China offers its development assistance to Ghana. China seems to recognise a particular complementarity between Ghana's endowment and its needs and China's capacity to meet these needs. Similar to its engagement across Africa, China development assistance to Ghana is based on an integrated system that bundles trade and investment instead of just foreign aid. China offers an integrated aid strategy and scheme of financing in which it provides its large state-owned firms with export credits, securitized by access to the recipient country's resources through agreement with the recipient government. I argued that this mode of financing which was used to build the Bui Hydro Dam in Ghana as well as the Atuabo Gas project is appealing to Ghanaian policy makers but has some adverse implications on Ghana's development, particularly on the sustainability of its new oil and gas industry.

Chapter Five and Six provided further empirical support for this study through an examination of Ghanaian agency in Ghana-China engagement. The two chapters examined the interaction between Chinese state actors, Chinese entrepreneurial migrants and transnational actors, on the one hand, and Ghanaian state actors, civil society organisations and private individuals, on the other hand. I discussed four cases to underscore the varied ways Ghanaian local actors express their political and social agency in Ghana-China engagement. I provided a case study on state-to-state interactions between Ghanaian actors and their Chinese counterparts. Focusing on China's interest and involvement in Ghana's oil and gas sector, I explored the interaction between Chinese state actors and local Ghanaian institutions and highlighted how they mutually influence each other's interest, policies and strategies.

The second case study examined the role played by Ghanaian workers of Sinohydro, Ghana Trade Union as well as the Bui Dam Authority in ensuring Sinohydro's compliance to Ghanaian labour laws and respect for the right and safety of its workers. The case showed that

whereas management of Sinohydro was reluctant to the idea of the formation of workers' Union, the pressure from the workers and union leaders proved to be instrumental in improving the behaviour of Sinohydro. This pressure led to the formation of union at the work site and helped improve not only the working conditions of the employees, but also management-employee relations.

The third case explored the role civil society organisations in Ghana played in influencing state regulation of activities of Chinese traders and merchants in Ghana's retail sector. Contrary to suggestions that African civil society has had minimal impact on the Chinese role in Africa, the actions of GUTA in Ghana have contributed to policy reforms and the regulation of Chinese enterprises.

In the fourth case study I examined the growing Chinese presence in Ghana's informal gold mining economy and the forms of protest and resistance that presence has engendered. The determination of the community youth 'to do something' about the miners' activities even when state institutions appeared to be failing them is evidence of the resilience and social agency on the part of Ghanaian actors in their engagement with the Chinese. The people's revolt and subsequently the government's decision to take action to deport and reclaim lost lands show that individuals and state institutions can make use of and are able to protect their interests countering the notion of Ghanaian or African passivity.

These cases demonstrated that in many ways Ghanaian state actors and institutions, as well as civil society organisations and individuals, exercise considerable political and social agency in their engagement with Chinese actors. Although the influence and agency of these actors are not without constraints, it is crucial for such actors and actions to be exposed and interrogated as a way of not only broadening our analytical focus of the actors engaged in Africa-China relations, but to account for the critical voices in Ghana's interaction with China.

Conclusions and Implications of Research Findings

The research findings of this study have led me to draw several broad conclusions in relation to the questions posed by this dissertation. These conclusions have general and specific implications for Ghana, for the African continent, China and the international community as China's presence and role in Africa grows. First, in terms of what account for Ghana's increasing reliance and engagement with China, I found out that Ghanaian policymakers define their engagement with China based on their understanding of what they can get from the Chinese. These decisions are usually informed by prevailing socio-economic conditions in Ghana. But they are also influenced by how policymakers see the role and influence of their traditional development partners. The research shows that although Ghana's connection and ties with traditional European and American partners are intact, Chinese assistance is on the increase. This is partly because China is offering loans and development assistance in sectors of the economy that badly need revamping. Also, the increase in Ghana-China cooperation is because of the mixed record of the involvement of traditional partners in Ghana's economy. After decades of Western aid and investment provided under conditions often viewed by policymakers as paternalistic, many Ghanaian leaders show appreciation for China's approach to economic development and the so called "no strings attached" approach. China's non-interference approach is perceived as less condescending than the West's insistence on conditionalities on social development projects and policy reforms.

While Chinese assistance is not without economic conditionalities, its investment in the economic infrastructure is very attractive to a developing country like Ghana. Thus, the China option certainly appeals to policy makers in Ghana. However, like many others, I am concerned that this era in which developing countries have 'new' options for financing development besides

the traditional DAC donor ('Age of Choice')¹⁸⁹ may actually lead to diversified dependency. Diversified dependency or what Ian Taylor calls "dependency redux" is a situation where reliance on the new emerging powers such as China is simply reproducing anew current state of underdevelopment in Africa (Taylor, 2014). The jury may still be out on this as Africa-China relations are fluid and ever changing. However, judging from on-going dynamics the outcome of China's developmental impact in Africa may lead to some form of dependency (or interdependency) in some countries and sectors depending on the host country's capacity and willingness to engage the Chinese on their terms. This differential outcome suggests that China's impact in any African state will be a reflection of the African country in question: where there is the capacity, commitment and willingness to engage the Chinese for mutual benefits the results will be more or less beneficial to the host African country. Thus, the agency of African actors is very critical for the realisation of any positive benefits from Chinese intervention across Africa.

Another point, which relates to the last, is the divergence of views regarding the role and importance of Chinese involvement and investment in Ghana. As this study shows, Ghanaian officials seem very enthusiastic of Chinese investment in the economy. This is partly because of China's investment in sectors of the Ghanaian economy that have long been left underdeveloped. On the other hand, however, ordinary Ghanaians such as traders and textile manufacturers who are negatively affected by the presence and activities of the Chinese are less optimistic of the presence of Chinese. Meanwhile, ordinary Ghanaian consumers are very receptive to Chinese consumer goods as they can afford Chinese products on the market, which are known to be less expensive compared to European or American products. This diversity in receptiveness to

¹⁸⁹ See Greenhill, Romilly, Annalisa Prizzon, and Andrew Rogerson. "The age of choice: developing countries in the new aid landscape." *Synthesis Report. Londres: ODI* (2013).

Chinese presence is revealing and speaks to the varied, differentiated and complex impact Chinese involvement could have on Ghana's economy and its people.

A second broad observation relates to how the idea of local agency plays out in the Ghanaian-Chinese interaction. Many have wondered what role Ghanaian actors play in their engagements with China. Are they able to exert any form of influence or do the Chinese always dominate? Critics argue that African governments are passive in their interaction with China. Others charge that civil society organisation in Africa has played a less significant role in engagement with China. In Ghana, this study observed that the role of civil society in influencing Ghana-China relations has been rather keen. Evidently, present day Ghanaian society is characterised by a sophisticated, vibrant, and active civil society. Few countries in Africa can boast of a population as politically informed, involved, and active as that of Ghana. Interest in national affairs, whether at the local or national level, is constantly in evidence. Crucially, actions of those in authority are scrutinised, evaluated, criticised, and frequently decried by the public. It seems this has ensured that a modicum of accountability is always present in the Ghanaian public arena. As elaborated in Chapters Five and Six, the scrutiny from Ghanaian civil society groups and individuals has been critical in the state's effort to regulate the activities of Chinese actors in Ghana. This agency of non-state actors suggests that strong institutions such as civil society organisations and opposition political parties can play a crucial role in the nature and outcome of engagement with foreign actors including China, re-echoing the view that Africa needs strong institutions, not strong leaders (Obama, 2009).

Third, findings from this study suggest that a focus on Ghanaian/African agency is crucial because it shifts the attention away from China, and instead interrogates how African state actors are utilizing their relationship with China to bring about favourable benefits for their citizens. As China's Special Representative on African Affairs, Zhong Jianhua, once said,

“China is neither bad nor good. China is a combination of these things” (Africa Research Institute, 2013). In their negotiations with Chinese state and transnational actors, African policy makers must understand China’s ambiguous role in Africa. To be able to do this effectively, African state actors need to improve their negotiation skills. Some of the agreements that are negotiated as government-to-government deals tend to be very high-level negotiations sometimes involving sitting presidents. Clearly, there can be a gap between a politician’s decision and how a deal with the Chinese can be structured in a way that makes financial, legal and economic sense. Thus it is critical that African leaders seek out appropriate technical advisors in their negotiations irrespective of the country they are dealing with.

Chinese growing interest to engage African nations indicates that China needs Africa even more than Africans need Beijing. Thus, as China is knocking on the door, Africans must decide whether, and under what conditions, to give Beijing entrance. For example, as seen in the case of Ghana, the infamous \$3 billion loan may help with the development of Ghana’s ailing infrastructure, but the accompanying terms may not lead to long-term developmental benefits in Ghana’s oil sector. Any bad outcome from this and any other deal with the Chinese primarily lies with the Ghanaian government, not the Chinese. Just because China is assisting Ghana with badly needed infrastructure does not mean it should slide into the danger of allowing China to have too much power and too much control in its economy.

No external actors, including China should have a dominating or controlling role in an African economy. Indeed, Ghana and the African continent should not be the pawn of any power, whether the Chinese, the Americans or other. The controlling stake in the Ghanaian economy should be in the hands of the Ghanaians. As already noted in Chapter Three, while the ‘China option’ and China’s development intervention may not necessarily be only positive, it certainly may reduce the developmental dominance of Western actors in Africa and bolster the

negotiating position held by African governments. Yet Ghana and African countries in general need to be clear about the fact that as they continue to be raw material producing countries, changing the destination of the export of those raw materials does not necessarily change the basic fact about their economies, which rely on non-renewable natural resources and are driven by raw material production. China becoming the destination of preference for the exports of African raw materials or the source of development financing does not change the reality about the African economy.

The fundamental nature of the African economy requires changing if indeed African countries are going to bring prosperity to the masses of their people. And that involves moving away from raw material producing economies to industrializing value adding economies as well as diversifying economies beyond a narrow reliance on natural resources. Of course external assistance and investment could support this goal, but Africa must fashion its own independent path, knowing that the elites of traditional and emerging donors (such as the BRICS) all have a stake in maintaining Africa's dependence on them.

If Ghana and all African countries commit to an independent path to development, Chinese, American, French, Japanese, British and other investments and cooperation must be welcomed only when they play into that fundamental goal of their economic transformation strategies. Any investment or engagement that digresses from this economic goal should be resisted. In this vein, the questions that need to be asked should no longer be about what the intentions or practices of the Chinese or any other foreign actors are in Africa. The issue should be about what Africans are doing in their engagement with these external actors. Thus, on the whole "the story of Africa's relations with China is ultimately an African story. It is up to Africa to write the plot."

Directions for Future Research

This study has combined a conceptual focus on local agency with meaningful empirical analysis to help fill a gap in research on China's relations with Africa in general, and Ghana in particular. It thus serves as a good background for further research on Africa-China relations. Below I have identified some potential areas for future directions for research. The suggestions for further studies have been categorized in two: areas for further research on Ghana-China relations and areas for Africa-China engagement in general.

Future Research on Ghana

Although this research made a conscious effort to interview many Ghanaians across different socio-economic backgrounds and sectors to get a better grasp of the drivers of Ghana-China relations, future studies can benefit from expanding the diversity of perspectives of actors interviewed. It would be revealing, for example, to know the views of civil society groups and other actors across different times. In this direction more empirical work could build on the works of Mohan and Lampert (2013). Future research could focus on how different political regimes in Ghana respond to Chinese engagements.

Besides China other emerging powers such as India and South Korea and others are fully engaged in the Ghanaian economy. It will be productive to explore, in comparative perspective, the role these emerging economies are playing in reshaping Ghana's economic future. As Ghana attracts 'new' economic investors, it will be particularly important to combine conceptual and empirical approaches in the study of the effects of emerging economies on a country that has engaged different economic ideologies since independence. Does Ghana learn lessons from its interaction with emerging economies in its quest to achieve and sustain economic growth and development?

Lastly, future research could focus on a comparative study of China and other traditional donors to ascertain the nature and extent of their changing roles and influenced over the long term. In what ways does Ghana's interaction with China impact its relations with traditional partners? Are there any signs of collaborations between Chinese and other emerging economies of traditional partners in Ghana's economy? These are important research questions that require thorough investigation.

Suggestions for Research on Sub-Saharan Africa

This study in part sought to understand why Ghana in particular and African states in general chooses to engage with China. However, it should be noted that the findings in the Ghana case can hardly be construed as indicative of the situation across Africa. Of course considering that Ghana is in Africa, there may be some logic to the rather wild claim that drivers of Ghana's engagement with China may be indicative of the reasons African countries engage China. Yet the uniqueness of Ghana within Africa, and the specific details, which make for a fascinating study represent both the strengths and weaknesses of this study with regard to its representative of the situation in Africa. While the findings from Ghana could point to the general atmosphere in Africa it would be naive to consider official responses from Ghana as representative of Africa. Future scholarship in this area needs to look at case studies of other African countries (as has been done by the various authors in Gadzala 2015) to understand better Africa-China relations and to establish a more accurate composite and comprehensive picture of Africa-China engagement that is empirically grounded. Additionally, Public opinion surveys (a follow-up on Sautman and Yan, 2009) on comparative attitudes of African elites and publics to China and other western actors would gauge prevailing perceptions of their engagement in Africa.

Just as there is significant focus on the Chinese perspective of this relationship it is also important that future studies continue to comparatively examine, in great detail, the role of African states and non-state actors. Examining these topics comparatively would deepen our understanding of Africa-China engagement and provide a comprehensive picture of Africa-China linkages. In the Ghana Bui Dam case, labour unions pressed effectively for the formalisation of their employment, security and conditions of services. Labour unions have also made similar headway in Zambia. A comparative study that follows up on Herbert Jauch et al (2008), which compares changes in Chinese-African labour relations across several well-selected cases and countries would be insightful.

Lastly, China is only one of several emerging economies with increasing interest in Africa; others include Brazil, India, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and Turkey among others. Two decades ago traditional bilateral and multilateral donors predominantly provided development assistance and aid in specific ways and according to particular set of norms. Today the growth of other forms of development assistance, including from non-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors, is changing the development cooperation landscape. What are the implications of the new and complex aid landscape for African governments? To what extent, how deep and how broad has been the impact of the rise of the BRICS on African society at large? Are China and the BRIC states merely diversifying African dependency or they are helping to herald a new transformative possibility for the continent? These are crucial questions about Africa's future that deserves further critical examination.

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