

***The social and political impacts of South-South migration:
A comparative analysis of Chinese migrant integration in West Africa***

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China's impact on Africa has been discussed in terms of promoting 'bad' governance and/or signalling a new phase of exploitation. Yet underlying these political and economic relationships is a profound social change in the shape of Chinese migration to countries where economic opportunities are greatest. Nobody knows the extent of this migration and analysis is based on wild speculation. This lack of rigour encourages political propaganda by some African elites seeking to demonise what they see as an 'imperial' presence. Hence, this research will be the first to systematically analyse the patterns, processes and outcomes of Chinese migration to West Africa and the factors determining the responses to the Chinese by ordinary Africans. As such it focuses on three issues:

- Chinese business organisation and economic competitiveness In order to understand the integration of Chinese migrants and the reactions to them it is necessary to appreciate the economic sectors they engage in and the nature of business organisation. It is vital to distinguish types of migrants to Africa and we find three main groups: temporary labour migrants associated with Chinese-backed projects, private entrepreneurs, and illegal migrants. The state-backed projects are self-contained with limited linkages to the local economy and society. For smaller entrepreneurs integration is determined to an extent by social networks linking them to other Chinese businesses. For illegal migrants African countries are staging posts to developed countries and so economic activity is geared to saving for the onward journey. As yet we know little of whether and how Chinese businesses in Africa secure labour, contracts and inputs locally.
- The social organisation of Chinese diasporic communities Since recent migration to West Africa builds on older trajectories it is important to analyse what role existing diasporic communities play and how they facilitate both integration and connection back to China. In Africa Chinese communities have remained relatively self-contained and possess formal organisations which serve to cement their identity. However, we do not know whether and how new migrants use these organisations for integration.
- The conviviality of African society The hospitality shown to migrants in recipient countries affects their desire and ability to integrate. There is the juridical sense in which migrants are conferred varying degrees of rights within the recipient state, but we know little of how African states are formally responding to the influx of migrants. Moreover, there are unexplored ways in which migrant/host relationships unfold in terms of the everyday minutiae of living together.

These issues will be addressed through comparative analysis of Nigeria and Ghana. These countries offer different types of relationship between Chinese migration and African society. Broadly speaking Nigeria has a bigger Chinese population than Ghana and its economy is driven by oil extraction. Moreover the different nature of the two states may influence the degree of openness to outsiders and the Gulf of Guinea's oil reserves make it one of Africa's economic hotspots, which will bring in more Chinese. We will conduct semi-structured interviews with a sample of Chinese businesses and associations in order to analyse their motivations and organisation. Autobiographical interviews with recent migrants will be undertaken to understand their reception and experiences. To gauge official African responses we will conduct semi-structured interviews with African policy makers and to understand popular perceptions of the Chinese we will conduct attitude surveys.

To maximise the impacts of the research we will interface with users in Africa and the UK through an advisory group and workshops, in addition to academic dissemination. Impacts will also benefit from connections to the existing *Asian Drivers* programme at the Open University and collaborations with the BBC.

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