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Dissertation

The lives of others: An investigation into the lives and attitudes of Chinese migrant workers in Africa against the historical background of Sino-African cooperation.

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Abstract

As China's expansion into Africa has been increasing enormously over recent years, Sino-African relations have become a prominent topic in the general media and for observers of both Africa's and China's international relations. It is surprising that relatively little has been written about Chinese migrants in Africa. While China claims their relationship with Africa to be mutually profitable, a high proportion of the available available literature presents Chinese presence on the continent in increasingly negative ways, this literature is mostly of Western authorship. It is timely to attempt to gain greater understanding of the experiences of Chinese migrants workers who come - in increasing numbers - with Chinese aid, trade, business and development projects to the African continent. This small scale study uses existing literature to explore Sino-African cooperation and migration to Africa, and obtained empirical evidence from conducting in-depth interviews with Chinese migrants in various African countries in order to gain understanding of their lives and attitudes. This paper demonstrates that through largely positive encounters and despite language barriers and cultural differences, Chinese migrants are playing a prominent role in Sino-African cooperation.

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Introduction

Chinese premier Zhou Enlai made a promise in 1964, that Chinese aid to Africa was to become "less a one-way offering of alms", but a more practical investment in a mutually profitable future.¹ After that, the amount of Chinese aid, trade, business and development projects on the African continent, has increased at the same speed as scholarly and media interest in the Sino-African relationship.

Current literature has been dedicated to examine how well Chinese aid and economic cooperation live up to Zhou Enlai's promise, and engaged in drawing a picture of the relationship between China and Africa by analysing diplomatic ties and business relations, generalising about China's "neocolonialist" threatening strategies with weak African states.

In 2005 Alden made a statement that "*the behaviour of thousands of newly settled Chinese businessmen and the conduct of the African communities in which they live and work will matter as much as the diplomacy and concessions made at government level.*"² It is somewhat surprising that so little has been written about the increased number of Chinese migrants in Africa, as they were already gaining importance in 2005. What are Chinese immigrants' experiences living and working in Africa and what is their role within the Sino-African Cooperation?

Methodology

In order to find out what role Chinese migrants play within the Sino-African relationship, this research was aimed to examine their social world. The study consists of an in-depth literature review on the contemporary South-South Cooperation, Sino-Africa Relationship, and Chinese Migration to Africa. Secondary data will be analysed initially through the university library using a range of information sources such as academic abstracts, journal articles, textbooks, databases, and online articles on the subject. However, it does not confine itself to the existing literature as the area is relatively under-investigated, but instead aims to add to the body of literature by means of a small-scale study.

During all parts of the research, the standards of the UNNC Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics³ were respected.

While there was pre-understanding about the research topic, it was assumed that this knowledge would not be sufficient to develop a fixed research design due to the complex nature of what is thought of as reality. The study progressed with the support of informant's ideas. The positivist approach which

¹ Brautigam (2009, p21).

² Alden (2005, p128).

³ UNNC (2013).

generalises and predicts causes and effects through the use of a hypothesis was therefore ruled out. An interpretivist approach differs in philosophical assumptions, however, and is considered more suitable for this study as it generates knowledge through socially constructed and subjective interpretations⁴. Interpretivism has its roots in the 'Verstehen' concept - German for "to understand" - and was largely developed through the work of German sociologist Max Weber⁵. "To gain 'Verstehen', the interpretive approach tries to drop the assumption of shared meanings and tries to see the world from an insider's perspective"⁶. Reality is constructed through a process in which "all human knowledge is developed, transmitted, and maintained in social situations"⁷.

Interpretivism stands closely in line with what Patton stated to be the main concept of qualitative analysis in 1990: "the cardinal principle of qualitative analysis is that causal relationships and theoretical statements be clearly emergent from and grounded in the phenomena studied. The theory emerges from the data; it is not imposed on the data"⁸. Qualitative research is an inductive approach which, according to Ridenour & Newman (2008) allows to provide subjective reasoning with the help of various real life examples.

Quantitative statistical data would not have been 'valid' as this method does not provide a representable image of society on this topic. Besides that, Mohan & Tan-Mullins (2009, p590) claim that data concerning Chinese migrants is often speculative. "The weaknesses in official data collection is the whole question of undocumented migrants" (Mohan & Tan-Mullins, 2009, p591). Furthermore, as "interpretivists seek to determine motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences that are time -and context bound" (Hudson and Ozanne 1988, p511), a qualitative study within an interpretivist approach seems to offer the most suitable research method within this context.

Using this methodology, an account of perceived reality was created through conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with a recruitment agency in China which recruits Chinese agro-professionals to work in the Republic of Benin, and with ten Chinese migrants who shared an account of their subjective real life experience in Angola, Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Congo, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nairobi, South-Africa, and Namibia. There was chosen for interviews rather than online social media, as of ethical reasons. Writers of certain online published information perceive their interaction to be private, even though their comments appear to be public.⁹ Anonymity is impossible to guarantee when using online published work, even when pseudonyms are used.

⁴ Hudson & Ozanne (1988).

⁵ Weber (1947).

⁶ Hudson & Ozanne (1988, p511).

⁷ Berger and Luckman (1967, p3).

⁸ Patton (1990, p278).

⁹ Markham (2011, p122).

Furthermore, it has been estimated that 90 percent of all social science investigation involve interview data.¹⁰ Furthermore, interviews "*produce narratives of people's lives and circumstances*"¹¹ and according to Briggs¹², interviews have produced a large part of the information we have gained about contemporary non-Western societies. As this study aimed to investigate the social environment of Chinese migrants' lives in Africa, a non-Western society, interviews were considered the most appropriate means. The focus is mostly on temporary labour migrants, as the majority of Chinese immigrants in Africa belong to this group.¹³

Because of the personal nature of interviews, certain steps were taken to make sure that no one involved was harmed in any way. Before interviewing took place, every participant was asked to read the 'Participant Information Sheet'¹⁴, and to sign the 'Participant Consent Form'¹⁵. By signing the latter, the participants have confirmed to have understood that they have the right to withdraw from the research project, that their personal results will remain confidential, that the result will be recorded and or written down, and that the data will be stored in accordance with the 'Data Protection Act 1998'.

Interviews were anonymised by the use of pseudonyms, to encourage the interviewees to speak more freely. However, as online interviews cannot be protected against possible intrusion of hackers, which means that their anonymity could be breached, all participants were informed separately about this risk.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen, firstly because structured interviews would have allowed little or no scope for deviation from the structure, and secondly because by using "*unobtrusive observations and unstructured interviews, validity might be diminished when the researcher is potentially bound only by his or her biases*"¹⁶. Miller & Glassner state that while "*open-ended interviews can be useful*", it is necessary to "*be cautious about the romantic impulse which identifies 'experience' with 'authenticity'*"¹⁷. This research project was highly dependent on gaining access to relevant and reliable sources. Follow-up questions were asked to prevent misunderstanding.

Finding interviewees was complicated by various objections raised by potential participants. They expressed concern about the intrusive nature and purpose of this study, the type of questions asked. Furthermore, many of the prospective subjects had no means of receiving, printing and or resending a signed 'Participant Consent Form'.

¹⁰ Charles Briggs (1986, p1).

¹¹ Holstein & Gubrium (2011, p150).

¹² Briggs (1986, p1).

¹³ Ma Mung (2008).

¹⁴ See Appendix 12

¹⁵ See Appendix 13

¹⁶ Ridenour & Newman (2008, p72).

¹⁷ Miller & Glassner (2011, p145).

Doing research from China had the benefit of accessing participants through Chinese networks: it made circumstances more favourable for obtaining reliable data. The participants were selected on the basis of their background. It was important that the interviews were conducted with a broad range of Chinese people, from different classes, who live and work in African countries. Because of the huge distances involved, the internet was used to conduct the interviews. "*Internet interfaces disregard location and distance, enabling the instantaneous and inexpensive transmission of information between people*"¹⁸. The use of internet, however, led to various challenges in retrieving valid information. Principally, "*the social situation created by the interview does not just constitute an obstacle to the respondent's articulation of his or her beliefs. Like any speech event, interviews fundamentally shape the form and content of what is said*"¹⁹. Secondly, as the participants on the net are anonymous, they may be more likely to overstate and dramatise their answers. Whenever this seemed to be the case, follow-up questions were asked, and depending on how reliable their answers seemed, the interview was continued or discarded.²⁰

Because of the restrictions of time and distance, research was limited to 10 extensive interviews with Chinese migrants across a number of African countries. This achieved a wider representation of experience than can be obtained by conducting more numerous interviews within fewer countries. This study aimed to discover common experiences of otherwise unconnected Chinese migrants.

During the interviews, which were all conducted one-on-one, Chinese translators were present. This approach was used to improve the validity of this study. Firstly, the presence of someone with similar roots who uses the same language gains the trust of the participants, and encourages them to speak comfortably. And secondly, participants were more likely to open up about personal or more sensitive matters, than they would have in group interviews. "*If the interviewer asks questions properly and the interview situation is propitious the respondent will convey undistorted information*"²¹. This way, "*The interview conversations is a pipeline for transporting truthful knowledge*"²².

Ridenour & Newman quote Harry Wolcott in their chapter about the meaning of validity and truthfulness. Wolcott was one of the world's premier educational anthropologists who claimed to be unconvinced that validity needs quite so much emphasis in naturalistic studies. He suggests that the word 'understanding' replaces 'validity' in qualitative research.²³ This stands in line with the interpretivist approach this study has adopted which, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, has its roots in Weber's notion of 'Verstehen'²⁴,

¹⁸ Markham (2011, p115).

¹⁹ Briggs (1986, p22).

²⁰ Bryman (2008).

²¹ Holstein & Gubrium, (2011, p150).

²² Holstein & Gubrium (2011, p150).

²³ Ridenour & Newman (2008, p36).

²⁴ Weber (1947).

and emphasises the aim of this study which is to 'understand' the participants and create a reality based on the understanding of their subjective real life experience.

*"Research methods must be driven by the research questions and purposes. Within this mandate lies the essence of validity"*²⁵. The research questions within this study are closely linked to the questions asked in the interviews. These questions mostly related to the domestic and work environment of the participants and to their interaction with the local people.

Transcribing and subsequently analysing the conducted interviews through thematic analysis has given an insight into this group of Chinese migrant's experiences and perceptions of their life in Africa. A thematic analysis - one of the most common approaches to qualitative data research - is used to to split the data from retrieved from the interviews into themes.²⁶

The particular results of this small-scale study represent a reality build up from the experiences of a small group. As the interpretivist approach *"facilitates generalisation within the context"*, similarities within the experiences and views of the respondents were used to generalise within the context.²⁷.

The transcripts of the interviews will be retained intact for a period of at least seven years from the date of publication, and will be available for discussion with other researchers, except where precautions for confidentiality exist.

²⁵ Ridenour & Newman (2008, p35).

²⁶ Bryman (2008).

²⁷ Hudson & Ozanne (1988, p511).

1. The South-South Cooperation (SSC): China and Africa.

The wider context of this paper is the connection between Chinese migrants and cooperative enterprise between China and Africa, both of whom, form part of the South-South cooperation. This section will therefore begin with a brief introduction to this cooperation and then explain how this cooperation is important.

The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) describes the 'South-South Cooperation' (SSC) as "*a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the 'South' in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains.*"²⁸ The term started to be used by policymakers and academics in the field of development studies in the late 1990s. "*It was fuelled by a growing realisation that poor nations might find appropriate, low-cost and sustainable solutions to their problems in other developing countries rather than in the rich North.*"²⁹ "*The term 'North' refers to countries or regions traditionally classified for statistical purposes as 'developed', while the term 'South' refers to those classified as 'developing'.*"³⁰ While some scholars argue that these terms are used incorrectly, especially in the migration context,³¹ within this study they will solely be used for statistical convenience, without serving to indicate a certain stage of development of a certain country or area.

Within the SSC, developing countries exchange knowledge, skills, expertise and resources on a bilateral, regional, subregional or interregional basis, in order to meet their development goals through concerted efforts.³² Several initiatives - like the dialogue forum for India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the G77 - have been launched to promote these exchanges. According to Melville & Owen, a potent example of 'South-South cooperation' is China's presence in Africa.³³ "*Beijing's rhetoric of unity and practical backing have constituted an area of broad consensus on which African leaders have been happy to agree.*"³⁴ China had however refused to join the the NAM or G77. "*Since joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001, China has become active in trying to address some of the trade symmetries between North and South.*"³⁵ China has used debt relief and the abolition of tariffs as a form of 'South-South-cooperation'. Recently "*China has cancelled nearly US\$ 1.3 billion in debt to 31 African countries and abolished tariffs on 190 different goods from 29 African countries.*"³⁶ Details of the Sino-African relationship will be further discussed in the next section. First,

²⁸ *The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (2014).*

²⁹ *Melville & Owen (2005).*

³⁰ *United Nations (2013).*

³¹ "*If 'South' denotes a lack of development, even in the lack of negative inferences, many of these regions were not less developed when the migrations took place*" (Mohan, 2012, p288).

³² *The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (2014).*

³³ *Melville & Owen (2005).*

³⁴ *Power, Mohan & Tan-Mullins (2012, p43).*

³⁵ *Power, Mohan & Tan-Mullins (2012, p43).*

³⁶ *Power, Mohan & Tan-Mullins (2012, p43).*

there will be explored in what ways the 'South-South cooperation' is important, within the context of Africa and China.

The 'South-South cooperation' is growing within the world political economy, in particular the cooperation between Africa and emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil.³⁷ Africa has always been significant in the wider global political economy. The slave trade, the 'Scramble for Africa' and the subsequent colonial period, the proxy wars of the Cold War, and the increasing importance of the continent's natural resources, illustrate the significance.³⁸ William Brown - a specialist on the international politics of development aid in Africa - believes that Africa is increasingly attracting interest from a variety of actors "*at a scale perhaps not witnessed since the original 'Scramble for Africa'.*"³⁹ For example, in January 2006 the People's Republic of China announced an emphasis on trade, investment and economic co-operation as the basis for their engagement with Africa.⁴⁰ The following tremendous growth in trade, investment and commerce - between China and the African countries - has become a significant feature of the current global economy.⁴¹ Harry Broadman - economic Adviser for the Africa Region at the World Bank - states that "*for decades, world trade has been dominated by commerce both among developed countries (the North), and between the North and the developing countries of the South.*"⁴²

Recent numbers show that new emerging powers within an accelerating 'South-South cooperation' are capable of shifting this dominated trade course. Robert Rotberg - professor in governance and foreign affairs - highlights that today "*China has become the largest new investor, trader, buyer, and aid donor in a select number of important African countries, and a major new economic force in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.*" The China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation's white paper confirms that in 2009, China became Africa's largest trade partner. In the following two years, the scale of China-Africa trade expanded rapidly. In 2012, the total volume of China-Africa trade reached US\$198.49 billion, a year-on-year growth of 19.3 percent. Africa is now China's major import source, with a value of US\$113.171 billion in 2012, up 21.4 percent.⁴³ In 2000 the total volume was about \$10 billion in 2000.⁴⁴ ⁴⁵ These numbers show that the 'South-South cooperation' has become an important agent of economic development of new emerging powers, like China, and Africa. "*foster the self-reliance of developing*

³⁷ Cisse (2013, p17).

³⁸ Taylor (2004, p1).

³⁹ Brown (2012, p1889).

⁴⁰ People's Daily Online (2006).

⁴¹ Broadman (2008) provides a more detailed description of South-South commerce in the chapter 'Chinese-African Trade and Investment: The Vanguard of South-South Commerce in the Twenty-First Century', p87–108.

⁴² Broadman (2008, p87).

⁴³ China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation (2013).

⁴⁴ Rotberg (2008, p3).

⁴⁵ For more information about the economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa, see Xinhua (2013).

countries by enhancing their creative capacity to find solutions to their development problems in keeping with their own aspirations, values and special needs".⁴⁶

The 'South-South cooperation' can be linked to the decrease of African aid-dependency on the North. China's presence in Africa might reduce Africa's aid dependency of 'the global North'. Aid dependency is a phenomenon that is seen by some scholars (Moyo 2009; Brautigam 2008) as fatal for African development.

Dambisa Moyo - a Zambian-born economist - criticises Western aid programmes in Africa.⁴⁷ According to her, *"the net result of aid-dependency is that instead of having a functioning Africa, managed by Africans, for Africans, what is left is one where outsiders attempt to map its destiny and call the shots."*⁴⁸ Moyo points out that *"Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and rapidly growing exports, not aid, have been the key to China's economic miracle"*.⁴⁹ African exports are encouraged by China as by the end of 2012, commodities in nearly 5,000 taxable categories exported to China from the least developed countries were enjoying zero tariff treatment.⁵⁰ More important in this context however are the flows of FDI, which tend to encourage migration to Africa. According to Harry Broadman *"flows of FDI between sub-Saharan Africa and China are part of the broader trend of South-South investment that has been expanding significantly in recent years."*⁵¹ The Chinese State Council Information Office (SCIO) Africa has seen a decrease of FDI between 2009 to 2012. However, they confirm that during that same period Africa experienced an accelerated growth of FDI from China. *"China's direct investment in Africa increased from US\$1.44 billion to US\$2.52 billion, with an annual growth rate of 20.5 percent."*⁵²

Acceleration of the 'South-South cooperation' may cause a shift in the balance of power, towards developing countries. China has been determined to strengthen its position vis-a-vis the West. While Beijing needs Western investment and technology to maintain its modernisation programme, Ian Taylor explains that *"with the Soviet Union now no longer extant, China has felt vulnerable to the perceived threat of the one remaining superpower, the USA, and so has assiduously courted linkages with Africa to counter-balance the discerned menace from a dominating West."*⁵³ There was reason enough for Africa to welcome China's strategy. Most importantly, China gave them financial resources without any strings attached, with the side effect that African leaders were able to avoid the threat from the West's

⁴⁶ *The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (2014).*

⁴⁷ In *'Dead Aid'* (2009), Moyo argues among other things that aid feeds corruption, reduces competitiveness, causes inflation and the erosion of social capital, weakens institutions, reduces domestic investment, and makes governments lose the need to pursue tax revenues.

⁴⁸ Moyo (2009, p66).

⁴⁹ Moyo (2009, pXI).

⁵⁰ Xinhua (2014).

⁵¹ Broadman (2008, p102).

⁵² SCIO (2013).

⁵³ Taylor (1998, p459).

democratisation projects.⁵⁴ Africa has in its turn gained significant importance in international relations over the past decade. William Brown names Africa's growing role in international trade, climate change negotiations, the G8 and G20, and a range of new 'South-South' coalitions as leading examples of Africa's importance.⁵⁵

The 'South-South cooperation' could also be linked to interdependency, as interdependencies involve exchanges and collaborations. More importantly, "*Interdependencies evolve not only through diplomatic brokering but also through the presence of one people in the nation of another.*"⁵⁶ It is according to Giles Mohan - professor of International Development - for this reason that "*migration can be favourable toward South-South cooperation, even though there is an objective basis for concern as to whether the migration of workers - along with goods - enhances cooperation or whether it provokes a competitive element.*"⁵⁷

From this section it can be concluded that the 'South-South cooperation' is important for its links with economic development, interdependencies, balance of power, and aid dependency.

2. Contemporary Sino-African Relationship

As stated above, the South-South cooperation is particularly important for Africa and China. This section will explore the Sino-African case, including a brief history and an introduction to the current debate about China's presence in Africa. The aim of this paper is to analyse Chinese presence in Africa, not to demonstrate whether that presence is either a good or a bad thing. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide much detail on the specific case of every African country.

Relations between China and Africa go back many centuries, but "*the shape of current China-Africa relations can be traced back to the 1950s.*"⁵⁸ In 1956 China offered its first political support to Africa. Chairman Mao announced at that time, "*We are opposed to any violation of the Egyptian sovereignty and to any army interference in Egypt*".⁵⁹ Soon after that, China sped up the fulfilment of the China-Egypt trade agreement, and increased the production of steel rolling for export to Egypt.⁶⁰ China's respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity seem to have gained the trust and goodwill of African countries. According to He Wenping, "*For over half a century, China's policies toward Africa have been*

⁵⁴ Taylor (1998, p447).

⁵⁵ Brown (2012, p1889).

⁵⁶ Mohan (2012, p283).

⁵⁷ Mohan (2012, p283).

⁵⁸ Mohan & Power (2008, p27).

⁵⁹ Gountin (2006).

⁶⁰ Gountin (2006).

unfailingly based on these principles, helping Sino-African relations to progress smoothly."⁶¹ It is true that by 1978 China had established diplomatic relations with 43 African countries.⁶²

Soon after the Chinese 1978 reforms "*China's modernisation project demanded foreign investment and technological assistance*"⁶³, and therefore they first started to increase their involvement in the industrialised West. However, a few years later Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang travelled to eleven African countries to promote South-South cooperation. "*During discussions with African leaders, Zhao announced that henceforth four principles - equality and mutual benefit, stress on practical results, diversity in form, and common progress - would guide China's economic and technical cooperation.*"⁶⁴

After 4 June 1989, China underwent a major re-evaluation of its foreign policy. The demonstrations and shootings around Tiananmen Square resulted in a severe crisis in China's relations with the West.⁶⁵ It was therefore not until after the demonstrations that China's attitude towards Africa truly gained renewed emphasis. "*It was still those [...] old friends who gave China the necessary sympathy and support. Therefore from now on China will put more efforts in [...] developing relations with these old friends.*"⁶⁶

About a year after the Tiananmen demonstrations, Prime Minister Li Peng commented that "*The new order of international politics means that all countries are equal and must mutually respect each other [...] regardless of their ideology. They are not allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of the developing countries, or to pursue power politics in the name of "human rights, freedom and democracy.*"⁶⁷ One of the aspects that to some degree drew attention to China's 'friendship' with Africa was their political support during the period when Africa was gaining independence.

Not only China's political, but also economic and social impact on Africa has grown tremendously since the turn of the millennium. The creation of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) marks this point. The First Ministerial Conference of FOCAC, which took place in Beijing in 2000, was attended by 44 African ministers, representatives from African and Chinese business communities, and regional and international organisations. According to the forum, this meeting marked the start of the development of a new, stable and long-term partnership featuring equality and mutual benefit between China and African countries.

⁶¹ Wenping (2007, p34).

⁶² Anshan (2007, p72).

⁶³ Taylor (1998, p443-4).

⁶⁴ Brautigam (2008, p203-4).

⁶⁵ Taylor (1998, p446).

⁶⁶ Taylor (1998, p447).

⁶⁷ Armstrong (1994, p473).

By 2006, the Chinese government had released its first white paper - 'China's African Policy'⁶⁸ - which elaborates a detailed plan for future relations with Africa, based on four principles. Besides the economic aspect (mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity), this plan includes political cooperation (sincerity, friendship and equality), social/ cultural cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture, health and social work, and international cooperation including peace and security (in the shape of mutual support and close coordination).⁶⁹ These aspects are all "*important for domestic stability in both China and African nations, their bilateral relations and the broader international community*" according to He Wenping.⁷⁰ The government stated in the paper that "China will establish and develop a new type of strategic partnership with Africa which features political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange." This study argues that Chinese migrants are as significant as those diplomatic ties within this exchange.

Strengthening friendly co-operation with all developing countries, especially African countries, has long been an important component of China's foreign policy. The principles governing these relations, anticipating the notion of 'South-South cooperation, were originally proposed by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai during his visit to Africa in 1963-4. He had advocated "mutual economic assistance between 'poor friends'" and attacked the "maltreatment of small and weak countries by the big and strong,"^{71 72} the latter meaning the West. His principles continue to broadly serve as the foundation for Sino-African friendship. More recently He Wenping claims within this context that "the modus operandi of Western powers in the past has been the interference by powerful countries in the internal affairs of weaker ones."⁷³ According to her, "*It is important to ask how effective this system has been for Africa in recent history*". Consider that "*in the past fifty years, more than \$1 trillion in development-related aid has been transferred from rich countries to Africa.*"⁷⁴ One must ask the question how this assistance has improved the lives of Africans.

A 'friend', according to the Oxford Dictionary, means a person with whom one has a bond of mutual affection⁷⁵. Whether the Chinese 'friendship' with Africa is less selfish and or hegemonic however than the North-South relations, has been widely debated. Especially Western literature has questioned the mutual aspect of the benefit of this renewed relationship between China and the African continent. This is where the debate begins.

⁶⁸ *People's Daily Online* (2006).

⁶⁹ *People's Daily Online* (2006).

⁷⁰ *Wenping* (2007, p37).

⁷¹ *Snow* (1995, p286).

⁷² *The paragraph "From 'Afro-Asian Solidarity' to 'South-South' Cooperation" (Power, Mohan & Tan-Mullins, 2012, p36-43) is recommended for a more detailed version of the establishment of the South-South cooperation between China and Africa.*

⁷³ *Wenping* (2007, p33).

⁷⁴ *Moyo* (2009, introduction).

⁷⁵ *Oxford Dictionaries* (2014).

On one hand there have been continuous critiques involving the exploitation of Africa's resources, bad labour conditions and environmental degradation. Studies mainly focusses on the unsustainability of the contemporary Sino-African relationship, claiming that China's presence is not benefitting the development of local economies, and that Chinese investments lead to increased internal inequality. Scholars (Alden 2005; Melville & Owen 2005; Carroll 2006; French 2014) imply that the 'South-South cooperation' of China and Africa has similarities with the hegemonic 'north-South relationship' and should be considered a threat. David Cameron is quoted saying that "*the West is increasingly alarmed by Beijing's leading role in the new 'scramble for Africa'.*"⁷⁶ In this context, Howard French recently contributed to the analysis of China's imperialist behaviour with his book '*China's second continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa*'.⁷⁷ It is understandable that the West is fearful for recent developments within the 'South-South cooperation'. Melville & Owen suggest for example that in the event that the 'global South' expands their horizons, they possibly bypass rich northern states.⁷⁸

There are however some aspects to this that should be highlighted. First of all, China's rise to power presents a unique and almost unprecedented challenge to the maintenance of the Western-dominated world order. This consequently results in a myopic and dichotomised debate on whether or not Chinese policies in Africa are 'bad' or not."⁷⁹ Secondly, "*literature on Chinese foreign policy remains heavily influenced by Western states' policy interests, resulting in an impoverished debate that is primarily concerned with the idea of a China threat.*"⁸⁰ Much of the public debate about Africa's economic problems are for example conducted by non-Africans, from the economists - Paul Collier, William Easterly, Jeffrey Sachs - to the rock stars - Bono, Bob Geldof. Has the African debate been colonised? And thirdly, there is a heavy reliance on English-language materials as most of the English literature on Sino-African relations has been written by Western scholars. Besides that, several universities in the west - using the University of Nottingham as an example - do not allow the use of Chinese sources. Research on African development and international relations can therefore be considered biased. This, as Daniel Large concludes, has "the danger of playing out a self-referential logic."⁸¹

On the other hand, other scholars (Downs 2007; Brautigam 2008; Suzuki 2009; Moyo 2009; Hirono & Suzuki 2014; Lampert and Mohan 2014) put Chinese foreign policy in context without portraying China as a threat, evidenced from the Western literature mentioned above. According to Hirono & Suzuki "*recent debates on China and Africa have taught us that China is actually not that 'different' compared to many other Western states*".⁸² Scholars (Taylor 2007; Moyo 2009) suggest that the essence of problems

⁷⁶ Groves, J. (2011).

⁷⁷ French (2014).

⁷⁸ Melville & Owen (2005).

⁷⁹ Hirono & Suzuki (2014, p445).

⁸⁰ Hirono & Suzuki (2014, p443).

⁸¹ Large (2008, p58).

⁸² Hirono & Suzuki (2014, p445).

within the Sino-African relationship should be found within Africa itself. Taylor - one of the most authoritative academics on African International Relations - states that Africa consists of mainly *"neo-patrimonial regimes that care little for development of properly directing inward investment, be it Chinese or any other."*⁸³ Recently Arthur Mutambara - a Zimbabwean politician - agreed with this in a podcast about 'China in Africa'. He claims that the main problem is usually not the Chinese investors, but the African governments who are not putting their people first and are lacking goodwill to use this valuable foreign investments to create jobs without harming African livelihoods or the local environment.⁸⁴

Dambisa Moyo concludes in her book 'Dead Aid' - a New York Times bestseller - that the increased presence of Chinese migrants is seen by the Africans as a good thing, and that the majority of the Africans seem to believe that China has a more beneficial impact on African countries and Africans than does the United States.⁸⁵ She describes improvements as things that aid promised but has not delivered.⁸⁶ Debora Brautigam - a leading expert on China in Africa - interestingly adds to this that China's aid on the other hand can, at times, deliver great benefits to the receiving states, and that much of China's allegedly pernicious political influence is greatly exaggerated.⁸⁷ In her influential book 'The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa', Brautigam has intended to analyse the myths of Chinese aid and economic engagement. She concludes: *"Chinese are not new donors in Africa. They did not prove an unreliable partner, "dumping" Africa after Mao died, returning only as their resource hunger grew. Their aid program is certainly large and growing but not enormous. They are undoubtedly interested in gaining access to Africa's petroleum, minerals, and other natural resources but there is little evidence that aid is offered exclusively, or even primarily, for that purpose. From the evidence, China's aid does not seem to be particularly "toxic"; the Chinese do not seem to make governance worse, and although it is popularly believed that aid comes with "no strings attached," economic engagement usually does come with conditions, some of it even (indirectly) governance-related."*⁸⁸

Literature on China's diplomatic offensive has been as thorough. Giles Mohan argues in this context that *"China uses the peaceful goals of past interaction to validate her current win-win trade themes. In particular, Cold War ideas of China as an agent of solidarity, and as a time-honored friend of the developing world."*⁸⁹ Within the white paper on 'China's foreign aid' it is explained that *"when providing foreign assistance, China adheres to the principles of not imposing any political conditions, not interfering in the internal affairs of the recipient countries and fully respecting their right to independently*

⁸³ Taylor (2007, p145).

⁸⁴ China in Africa (2014).

⁸⁵ Moyo (2009, p111).

⁸⁶ Moyo (2009).

⁸⁷ Brautigam (2008).

⁸⁸ Brautigam (2008, p21).

⁸⁹ Mohan (2012, p9).

*choosing their own paths and models of development. The basic principles China upholds in providing foreign assistance are mutual respect, equality, keeping promise, mutual benefits and win-win.*⁹⁰

To help cement their diplomatic relations with Africa, China has committed to an exceptional number of foreign aid projects, which include the sending of Chinese workers and volunteers to the continent.⁹¹ For example, in total, 150.000 technicians have been sent to work in agriculture and infrastructure and according to Xinhua, they have sent 16.000 medical personnel to Africa to develop hospitals and clinics. Over 240 million patients have been treated by Chinese staff.^{92 93} The most telling example of their offensive was 50.000 Chinese workers that were sent to Africa to built the Tanzania-Zambia railway in the 1970s.⁹⁴ More recent numbers released by China's Information Office of the State Council show that between 2010 and 2012, 51 African countries received 51.8 percent of China's total foreign aid.⁹⁵ In those years, among several other forms of foreign assistance China built 86 economic infrastructure projects, sent 43 Chinese medical teams to 42 African countries, assisted in the construction of 30 hospitals and 30 malaria centres, provided 800 million yuan worth of medical equipment, supplies, and anti-malaria drugs, trained over 3,000 medical staff, built 150 primary and secondary schools, trained 47,000 people of various professions, launched the African Talents Program, offered 6,717 government scholarships to African countries, and donated a total of 1.3 billion U.S. dollars to regional financial institutions.⁹⁶

Rotberg states that *"unlike the less engaged West, China has established embassies in thirty-eight of sub-Saharan Africa's forty-eight countries. It has exchanged military attachés with about 14 African nations. It has created Confucius Institutes in several national capitals, and partially funds a serious think tank in South Africa."*⁹⁷ He also highlights that the president of Zimbabwe - Robert Mugabe - has made the teaching of Mandarin mandatory in the University of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, scholarships for study in Africa are made available throughout Africa, and student exchanges are common.⁹⁸ What is particularly significant about these projects is that Chinese aid is distributed in ways whereby corrupt rulers are less able to use it for personal gain, for example in the form of infrastructure, scholarships, or medical staff.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ Xinhua (2014).

⁹¹ For more detailed information on China's foreign aid projects in Africa see consult the white paper that China's Information Office of the State Council has issued recently, (Xinhua, 2014).

⁹² Politzer (2008).

⁹³ Xinhua (2006).

⁹⁴ Hirono & Suzuki (2014).

⁹⁵ Xinhua (2014).

⁹⁶ Xinhua (2014).

⁹⁷ Rotberg (2008, p3).

⁹⁸ Rotberg (2008).

⁹⁹ Sautman & Hairong (2007, p87).

Besides the above, Li Weijian claims that *"Africa has gained real benefits from its cooperation with China, including debt relief, an open market, preferential loans, projects improving living conditions, development of human resources, and new cooperative areas."*¹⁰⁰ Zhang adds to this that in order to enhance Sino-African emotional intimacy, China has been shifting its development assistance from 'hard' infrastructure assistance to 'soft' aid, like education, people to people exchange, joint research, etc.¹⁰¹ An important characteristic of the China's engagement with Africa is that it is progressive and forward-thinking. *"China is looking to further cooperation with Africa both horizontally and vertically – to increase interaction between China and Africa at a multitude of political, social and cultural levels while also expanding economic cooperation beyond traditional sectors to all areas of commerce, industry and technology."*¹⁰² Like the Japanese, the Chinese believe that the best antidote to conflict and instability is sustained economic development.¹⁰³ China's recent closer emotional, diplomatic and economic ties to Africa partly explain the great curiosity about China's plan with Africa, and the increase of literature dedicated to the study of China in Africa. Malia Politzer - a reporter at the Migration policy institute - claims that their *"closer ties have precipitated a new wave of migration between the two regions - from China to Africa and from Africa to China - that is only expected to grow as economic ties become stronger."*¹⁰⁴ In the next sections, this wave of migration will be further explored.

¹⁰⁰ Li (2010).

¹⁰¹ Zhang (2013).

¹⁰² Wenping (2007, p36).

¹⁰³ Brautigam (2008, p21).

¹⁰⁴ Politzer (2008).

3. Migration

Before introducing debates around migration it is important to explain what counts as a 'migrant' or a 'migrant worker'. While this should be fairly straightforward, definitions tend to vary among different sources, data collections and law. This not only affects migration data and analysis - as different definitions provide different estimates of net migration stock and flows - but is also likely to impact public understanding and policy debates.

This work will use the definition used by the United Nations (UN). "*The term 'migrant worker' refers to a person who is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a nation of which he or she is not a national.*"¹⁰⁵ In the next sections, which explore South-South migration and the specific case of Chinese migrants in Africa, several types of Chinese migrants will be distinguished. This section will solely function as a brief introduction to the migration topic.

Ernst Georg Ravenstein - a geographer who made the first scholarly contribution to migration back in the 19th century - saw migration as an "*inseparable part of development*". He believed that "*the major causes of migration were economic*".¹⁰⁶ However, while migration hasn't drawn significant attention within mainstream economic theory, economic explanations have also not dominated scholarly analysis on migration.¹⁰⁷ Migration patterns were assumed to be influenced by factors such as distance and population densities, and were individual decisions.¹⁰⁸ Within the 'neo-classical equilibrium perspective', "*people are expected to move from low income to high income areas, and from densely to sparsely populated areas.*"¹⁰⁹ Within this notion Hein de Haas - Co-Director of the International Migration Institute (IMI) and expert on migration theories - "*migration will cause labour to become less scarce at the destination and scarcer at the sending end. Capital is expected to move in the opposite direction.*"¹¹⁰ According to Hein de Haas this general notion has remained alive in the work of many demographers, geographers, and economists. Therefore there will be investigated in this study if this is the case with the Chinese migrants in Africa.

Castles - a political economist specialising in international migration dynamics - believes that the pessimistic view of 'Historical-structural theory', which became dominant in the 1970s and 1980s, might have been a reflection of broader intellectual trends.¹¹¹ Historical structuralists have never developed a migration theory as such, but perceive migration "*as one of the many manifestations of capitalist*

¹⁰⁵ United Nations (1990).

¹⁰⁶ De Haas (2008, p4).

¹⁰⁷ De Haas (2008, p4).

¹⁰⁸ Skeldon (1997, p19).

¹⁰⁹ De Haas (2008, p4).

¹¹⁰ De Haas (2008, p4).

¹¹¹ Castles (2008, p4)

penetration and the increasingly unequal terms of trade between developed and underdeveloped countries", a way of generating capital through mobilisation of cheap labour.¹¹² The intellectual roots of this paradigm lay in Marxist political economy, especially within the dependency theory developed by Andre Gunder Frank.¹¹³¹¹⁴ Frank claimed that global capitalism (and migration as one of its manifestations) is harmful to the economies of underdeveloped countries, rather than a path towards development.¹¹⁵ However, Hein de Haas explains that *"the incorporation into global capitalism can have both positive and negative effects in different areas of development and on different groups of people within society"*. Translating this to the effects of migration he believes that *"(labour)migration cannot automatically be interpreted as a desperate flight from misery, not only because it is seldom the poorest who migrate, but also because we can at least not logically rule out the possibility that migration facilitates development through reverse flows of capital (remittances), knowledge, ideas, attitudes, and people (return migration)"*.¹¹⁶

Independent of its root causes, migration has strong implications for both communities of origin and destination. Where it is a response to rural pressures, migration can either alleviate or aggravate such stresses. Ousmane Badiane - Director for Africa at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), explains that *"the outcome depends on whether it hinders access to labour and investment resources or plays a role of assurance among rural areas of origin, together with related implications for technology adoption and changes in rural wages."*¹¹⁷

Castles & Wise state that *"suddenly, 'migration and development' is the flavour of the month."* They claim that *"ideas on the positive effects of migration on development are at the centre of important policy initiatives."* and that migrants are suddenly being described as *'heroes of development'*.¹¹⁸ Since 2001, the debate around migration has been mostly positive towards development.¹¹⁹ According to Castles and Wise, the key elements within this debate are the increase of migrant remittances (the money sent home by migrants), and the broader role of migrant diasporas in national development importance.¹²⁰

In their book 'Migration and Development', Castles and Wise claim that Northern governments, and international agencies hold meetings on migration management frequently, while southern states often have a minor role.¹²¹ The next section is dedicated to emphasise the importance South-South migration.

¹¹² De Haas (2008, p7).

¹¹³ Castles (2008, p4).

¹¹⁴ Frank (1966).

¹¹⁵ De Haas (2008, p7).

¹¹⁶ De Haas (2008, p8).

¹¹⁷ IFPRI (2013).

¹¹⁸ Castles & Wise (2007, p3).

¹¹⁹ De Haas (2008, p2).

¹²⁰ Castles & Wise (2007, p3).

¹²¹ Castles & Wise (2007, p4).

4. South-South Migration

Despite weaknesses which include differing definitions of migrants, delays in reporting census data, and underreporting of irregular migration, the 2013 UN Migration report is the most comprehensive source available for estimating South-South migration. According to the report, South-South migration is as common as South-North migration. The report states that in 2013 about "82.3 million international migrants who were born in the South were residing in the South." This number was slightly higher than the 81.9 million international migrants born in the South and living in the North.¹²² As South–South migration represents slightly more than half of the picture, there is no reason to expect that South-North migration should be any more significant than South-South migration.¹²³ However, Ratha & Shaw - both experts on migration theory - believe that the extent of migration between developing countries, and the issues surrounding it remain poorly understood, largely because of incomplete and unreliable data.¹²⁴

What motivates these high numbers of South-South migrants to migrate? Apart from the stock of migrants in search of asylum or safe haven (refugees), which counted for 2.4 million in Africa alone in 2010,¹²⁵ current movements between Southern countries are according to Mohan largely motivated by economic opportunities.¹²⁶ However, Ratha and Shaw argue that "*income differentials between countries do not generally explain the migration patterns.*"¹²⁷ Migration does not always flow from low-income to higher-income countries as previously discussed in the neo-classical equilibrium perspective. Many other factors may affect migration patterns such as political changes in the sending or receiving country, social factors, and the degree of hospitality of the receiving country. The motives of Chinese migrants will be further explored in Section 6A. First, the context of contemporary Chinese migrants to Africa is explored.

5. Chinese Migration to Africa

During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the first Chinese ships - which were the most technically superior vessels in the world and are the largest wooden boats ever built - sailed to Africa. Among the most famous Chinese sailors was Zheng He, who landed on the East African coast and brought back exotic goods and animals.¹²⁸ However, the earliest confirmed Chinese migrants to African shores did not arrive

¹²² See United Nations (2013, p1). This report offers specific information on international migrants by origin and destination.

¹²³ Bakewell (2009).

¹²⁴ Ratha & Shaw (2007).

¹²⁵ United Nations (2012, p4).

¹²⁶ Mohan (2012, p7).

¹²⁷ Ratha & Shaw (2007).

¹²⁸ For more information on China's first expeditions in Africa see: 'Zheng He. China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405–1433.', by Dreyer (2007); 'When China ruled the seas.', by Levathes, L. (1994).

until the mid- to late-17th century. The coolie system - which operated in the 19th and early 20th centuries - was a form of indenture that saw many Asians move to other parts of the colonial world on temporary contracts to build railways and work on plantations.¹²⁹ The Dutch East India Company for example had sent small numbers of convicts and company slaves arrived to the Cape - now part of South Africa - followed by a small number of contract labourers, craftsman and miners. Other long-standing Chinese populations in Africa can be found in Reunion and Madagascar, islands off the southeastern coast of Africa, and Mauritania in western Africa.¹³⁰ The history of migration is important for understanding the context of Chinese migrants in African countries, even though their numbers were small and most were repatriated to China, or integrated into South-Africa's mixed race population.¹³¹

Contemporary immigration trends have their roots in Chinese international policy under former Chairman Mao Zedong around the time of China's first bilateral agreement with Egypt in 1956. China's Africa policy was exclusively political and Chinese migrants were often sent to the continent to help cement diplomatic relations. The Chinese government continues to sponsor engagements with African nations frequently. Through Chinese investments in the development of Africa's infrastructure Chinese presence on the African continent has increased exponentially, reaching a level unmatched by any Western nation.¹³² Current immigration trends are - apart from political reasons - closely linked to China's liberalised migration and economic policies in the late 1970s. These permitted Chinese citizens to leave the country and allowed for Overseas Foreign Direct Investment (OFDI).¹³³ Chinese companies, mainly State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), found their way into African countries to secure resources and to seek markets to sell Chinese goods, leading to increasing numbers of Chinese employees and workers.¹³⁴ Independent migrants such as individual entrepreneurs, small traders, and businessmen, followed in their quest for economic opportunities in a number of African countries in tandem with positive diplomatic relations.¹³⁵¹³⁶

While there is limited scholarly or empirical research on recent Chinese migration to Africa, it is known that Chinese migration to Africa has existed for at least 500 years, and that this migration flow has increased tremendously in the past years.¹³⁷ This coincides with China's OFDI in Africa, and with China's trade with various African countries.¹³⁸

¹²⁹ Mohan (2012, p8).

¹³⁰ Politzer (2008).

¹³¹ For more information on the first known Chinese migrants in South-Africa see: 'Colour, confusion and concessions: The history of the Chinese in South Africa', by Yap & Man (1996).

¹³² Sautman & Hairong (2007, p87).

¹³³ Politzer (2008).

¹³⁴ Alden (2007).

¹³⁵ Brautigam (2009).

¹³⁶ Mohan (2012).

¹³⁷ Mohan & Kale (2007, p2).

¹³⁸ Mohan (2012, p14).

According to Politzer, one of the most telling signs of increased migration between the two regions is the rising number of weekly flights between China and Africa. In 2007, Chinese airlines began launching one flight per week between Beijing and Lagos, Nigeria's largest city. A year later, three Chinese air companies offer routes to Africa, and Emirates airline offers 6 flights per week to Guangzhou, with connections in Dubai for those coming from Cape Town, Lagos, Cairo, Addis Ababa, and Nairobi.¹³⁹ Now, non-stop flights by various African Airlines like South African Airways and Ethiopian Airlines can be added to that list. Improved connectivity in its turn is a factor in increasing numbers of migrants.¹⁴⁰

While observers agree on the increased migration to Africa, official estimates of the number of Chinese migrants in Africa vary dramatically. A major problem in assessing South–South migration is that much data is speculative, especially regarding China–Africa migration.¹⁴¹ According to several sources the flow of Chinese migrants has exceeded 1 million, with South Africa hosting the largest Chinese community.¹⁴² Alden states that emigration is no longer limited to a certain level of Chinese society, but has become an option for Chinese across the country, from a wide range of backgrounds.¹⁴⁴

Apart from Chinese diplomats, journalists, students and tourist traffic, Emmanuel Ma Mung identifies three distinct categories of modern Chinese immigrants to Africa: temporary labour migrants, independent entrepreneurs, and transit migrants (also referred to as undocumented migrants).¹⁴⁵

Temporary labour migrants are mostly semi-skilled workers for development projects in construction, infrastructure, mines and oil fields of Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs). They usually work on contracts that typically last between one and three years.¹⁴⁶ This study will focus mostly on this category, as the majority of Chinese immigrants in Africa belong to this group.¹⁴⁷

The second category that can be distinguished are independent entrepreneurial migrants who, through policy changes mentioned above, arrive in Africa in increasingly larger numbers seeking economic opportunities. They are usually small business owners mainly work in retail or wholesale trade of China-made goods, or in Chinese restaurants.¹⁴⁸

The last group consist of undocumented migrants. Apart from 'agricultural migrants' they are categorised by Ma Mung as 'transitory migrants', who often use Africa as a jumping off point for Europe or North America or Western Europe. It is difficult to estimate the total number of in-transit migrants. Mohan emphasises that inaccuracies could be worsened by the "*purposeful evasiveness of undocumented*

¹³⁹ Politzer (2008).

¹⁴⁰ Cisse (2013, p20).

¹⁴¹ Mohan (2012, p12).

¹⁴² Sautman & Hairong (2007, p89); Wang (2014); French (2014).

¹⁴³ Skeldon (2011).

¹⁴⁴ Alden (2007, p55).

¹⁴⁵ Ma Mung (2008).

¹⁴⁶ Politzer (2008); Mohan (2012).

¹⁴⁷ Ma Mung (2008).

¹⁴⁸ Politzer (2008); Mohan (2012).

migrants who purposefully evade state surveillance."¹⁴⁹ Some are able to find a job such as street vendors or delivery men, while others find full-time work as entrepreneurs or tradesmen and are able to eventually establish themselves legally."¹⁵⁰

Chinese presence in Africa is extending in harmony with China's cooperation with Africa. The Chinese diaspora does not only relate to China, but also interacts with the society where it has established itself."¹⁵¹ Mohan & Kale even believe that "the scale and dynamism of the Chinese communities are likely to shape economic, social and political relations on the continent for decades to come."¹⁵² It is therefore that we need to start to understand the Chinese migrants who come along with Chinese aid, trade, business and development activities to the continent. It is to an empirical case that we now turn.

¹⁴⁹ Mohan (2012, p14).

¹⁵⁰ Ma Mung (2008).

¹⁵¹ Ma Mung (2008, p105-6).

¹⁵² Mohan & Kale (2007, p2).

6. Thematic Analysis of Interviews with Chinese Migrants in their receiving African countries.

This chapter describes a small scale study dedicated to exploring common experiences of ten Chinese individuals who live and work in various African countries through in-depth interviews. Analysis of their experiences are important in order to know more about the interactions between the local Africans and the growing number of Chinese migrants in Africa. In addition to this an interview was conducted with a recruitment agency in China which recruits Chinese professionals to work in the Republic of Benin. The ten Chinese migrants that were interviewed live and have worked in Angola, Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Congo, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nairobi, South-Africa, and Namibia for at least a year. Their pseudonyms and locations are listed below.¹⁵³ This section is divided into themes that were discussed with the interviewees.

6A. Reasons for migration

In section 3 and 4 it was set out that migrants have various motivations for choosing to leave their home country, among which Ravenstein believed that "*the major causes of migration were economic*".¹⁵⁴ Mohan also claims that current movements between Southern countries are largely motivated by economic opportunities.¹⁵⁵ Half of the Chinese migrants who were interviewed for this study went to Africa for this same reason, for example to pay for education¹⁵⁶, to pay for a mortgage¹⁵⁷ or because someone in their network had already earned money there.¹⁵⁸ Karl - who is a project engineer in Algeria - mentioned that his pay was about 2-3 times higher than his Chinese salary.¹⁵⁹ One interviewee claimed that it is easy to make money as Africa is underdeveloped.¹⁶⁰ The other half of the interviewees were sent to Africa by the company they worked for in China. Money plays a big part in the decision to go to Africa: the actual earnings will be further looked into in section 6C Benefits.

Sino-African migration however does not flow from a poor to a rich country, as the 'neo-classical equilibrium perspective' suggests,¹⁶¹ but between developing countries. Chinese migrants are exploring opportunities in a country with a developing economy. All of the interviewees considered Africa to be a place of opportunity. One of the respondents said: "*Africa is like China before Chinese economic reform*

¹⁵³ Names and locations of respondents: Rose (Angola), Karl (Algeria), Romeo (Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria), Fred (Congo), James (Namibia, Angola), Shawn (Nigeria), William (Sierra Leone, Ghana, Kenya), Jim - (Sudan), Brandy (South Africa), Eddy (Kenya), and Mr. Smith - Republic of Benin.

¹⁵⁴ De Haas (2008, p4).

¹⁵⁵ Mohan (2012, p7).

¹⁵⁶ Jim (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 8th 2014. See appendix 8 for the full interview.

¹⁵⁷ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

¹⁵⁸ Fred (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 1st 2014. See appendix 4 for the full interview.

¹⁵⁹ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

¹⁶⁰ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

¹⁶¹ De Haas (2008, p4).

or China in the 90s".¹⁶² This notion was emphasised by the experiences of the people known through their personal or business network, as all of the interviewees either already knew another Chinese person in Africa, or were sent there by the company they worked at. William - who works as a real estate manager in Sierra Leone and Ghana - mentioned a saying from their real estate agency: "*You will regret it to go to Africa for a couple of years, and you will also regret it to not go to Africa in your life*".¹⁶³

Besides economic opportunities, there are other aspects that contribute to the rationale for going to Africa. Further on in the interview respondents were all asked what they had looked forward to before moving to Africa. The answers included: the clean environment, good climate, beautiful scenery, and fresh air. Some stated they were excited about working abroad, as foreign experience is not something that many Chinese people have.¹⁶⁴ Before James - an electrician - went to Angola and Namibia, he looked forward to connecting with the local people and exploring their cultural backgrounds.¹⁶⁵ Getting to know the African culture was important for him. James said in this interview: "*To be honest, at first I went there just to make money but I can also gain the experience that I cannot get domestically.*" At his age money is not as important as the opportunity to see the world.

6B. Working Experience

This section explores the respondents' work experiences in an African country. Interviews were conducted with a storekeeper; a project engineer; a marketing manager; a translator/ interpreter; a company medic; an electrician; a gold mine technician; a real estate manager; an optometrist; and an assistant retail manager. All of them have different positions in different African countries and therefore different experiences. This study examines the commonalities within their experiences.

All of the respondents have both Chinese and local colleagues: in most cases the number of Chinese employees is higher than the number of local employees, but in a few cases there are about as many Chinese as African employees.¹⁶⁶ Jim - who worked in Sudan as a translator - had hundreds of Chinese and local colleagues.¹⁶⁷

First of all the interviewees were asked about the comparative roles of the Chinese and African employees within their companies.

While there are Chinese employees who do manual labour work, the vast majority of the interviewees and their Chinese colleagues are skilled workers like office workers in finance, sales and marketing, electricians and technicians, project managers, chefs, or engineers. The majority of the Chinese

¹⁶² Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

¹⁶³ William (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 4th 2014. See appendix 7 for the full interview.

¹⁶⁴ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

¹⁶⁵ James (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 7th 2014. See appendix 5 for the full interview.

¹⁶⁶ William (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 4th 2014. See appendix 7 for the full interview.

¹⁶⁷ Jim (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 8th 2014. See appendix 8 for the full interview.

employees have managerial positions, whereas the majority of the local employees undertake physical work.

This discrepancy has mostly to do with their education levels. Rose, who monitored thirty local employees at a project of China Railway 20th Bureau Group Co Ltd in Angola said: "*Many of the local people are illiterate and therefore mainly assigned to do manual work, like carrying cement, tools, and bricks.*"¹⁶⁸ A Chinese engineer who was interviewed confirmed that in his company local workers with no education are employed as builders, cleaners, drivers, security guards, or cooks. Local people with a degree are offered jobs as secretaries.¹⁶⁹ Other respondents worked with African employees, of whom the majority had university degrees. These worked, for example, in administration, marketing, sales, after-sales and as finance clerks¹⁷⁰, or electricians.¹⁷¹

Romeo, who worked as a marketeer in a Chinese cell-phone company in Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria, explained that African workers dealt with smaller local clients, and did the work that was not convenient for Chinese workers to do, such as going on business trips, putting up posters, visiting clients, dealing with local government and the police. Romeo's managers were all Chinese. But there were also African managers who were in charge of the local employees. In his company the African employees' educational background is good. They have graduated from the best local schools. However, he said that the main issues for the Africans are firstly that it is very expensive to get education in Africa: in many countries they have compulsory primary education but the university expenses are high, usually several thousand pounds a year¹⁷²; and secondly, after graduating it is hard to find a job. James - who also encountered these two issues - said that while the Angolan government has been trying to improve the facilities, most local people are not getting quality education. Besides, his African colleagues who are qualified electricians could not find a job in a local company.¹⁷³ He was not the only respondent who mentioned the lack of jobs. Shawn - who works in a gold mine in Nigeria - claims that there are also not enough jobs because of the lack of African entrepreneurs and factories.¹⁷⁴

After discussing everyone's work status, the interviewees were asked about work ethics.

Overall the respondents find their African colleagues pleasant to work with, tolerant and easy to make happy, even though they are expected to adapt to the Chinese working style. Romeo said they work carefully and they are compliant. "If you give them some tasks, they will finish the tasks as you require".¹⁷⁵ William was also impressed that the locals employed at the construction sites did good work, even though they have low literacy levels.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁸ Rose (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 1 for the full interview.

¹⁶⁹ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

¹⁷⁰ Romeo, William and Jim (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 3, 7 and 8 for the full interviews.

¹⁷¹ James (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 7th 2014. See appendix 5 for the full interview.

¹⁷² Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

¹⁷³ James (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 7th 2014. See appendix 5 for the full interview.

¹⁷⁴ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

¹⁷⁵ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

¹⁷⁶ William (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 4th 2014. See appendix 7 for the full interview.

The locals' attitude to work in Africa, however, was considered much more relaxed, and in this context half of the interviewees criticised the African employees for not working hard enough. Not only in manual work, but in more higher educated jobs they tend to work "*slower and more leisurely*" than their Chinese colleagues.¹⁷⁷ Another difference was their attitude to punctuality, efficiency, and overtime.¹⁷⁸ Chinese employees are accustomed to finishing their work during overtime hours, even when they do not get paid for those hours. According to Shawn, the Africans do not agree with this requirement.¹⁷⁹

The respondents gave various reasons for these differences in work attitude, including language barriers and illiteracy. With poor education some of their local colleagues do not understand their tasks, and are dependent on their Chinese colleagues or supervisors to teach them. This lack of education also adds to their lack of adaptability. Romeo explained for example that he had asked his African colleague to buy a pre-paid phone card and gave him 1000 shillings. As there were only 500 shilling cards available, he came back without a phone card.¹⁸⁰ Lack of 'logic' was referred to as a cultural difference in other interviews.¹⁸¹ Shawn believes that Africans do not feel the same pressure to work or learn as Chinese people. They do not have to buy a house or a car before they get married.¹⁸² However, what he does not understand is the problem of starvation, when there are large pieces of land overgrown with weeds. "*The output of agriculture is low while the soil is fertile*".¹⁸³ Furthermore, the majority of the interviewees mentioned the local people's religious belief as a difference, as they pray every day. Fred was surprised to hear that his African colleagues preferred to go to church on a Sunday than receive higher earnings for working on Sundays.¹⁸⁴

6C. Wages and Benefits

Most of the respondents knew less about the differences in benefits for the Chinese and African employees than about the obvious difference in salaries. Rose for example said that the Chinese earned between US \$1500-1600 a month whereas their local colleagues only receive about a US \$140 monthly.¹⁸⁵ Shawn claims that his Nigerian colleagues get US \$6 per day while he and his Chinese colleagues receive US \$100 per day.¹⁸⁶ This inequality is not only represented in their salaries, but also in other benefits. The majority of the respondents claimed that Chinese employees' costs including health insurance, housing, transport, food and sometimes even phone-bills are paid; their African

¹⁷⁷ Brandy (Pseudonym). Anonymous interviews conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 9 for the full interview.

¹⁷⁸ Romeo, Jim, and Eddy (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 3, 8, and 10 for the full interviews.

¹⁷⁹ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

¹⁸⁰ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

¹⁸¹ Brandy (Pseudonym). Anonymous interviews conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 9 for the full interview.

¹⁸² Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

¹⁸³ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

¹⁸⁴ Karl, Fred, Shawn, William, Jim, and Eddy (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10 for the full interviews.

¹⁸⁵ Rose (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 1 for the full interview.

¹⁸⁶ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

colleagues usually only receive social security in accordance with the local policy. Rose said that the Africans are not even allowed into Chinese people's offices or into the Chinese canteen.¹⁸⁷ This is a more extreme situation than other respondents have mentioned.

In Nigeria, housing and transport is arranged by the company, but according to Shawn only Chinese employees receive healthcare in their company and they have their own chef.¹⁸⁸ Jim claims that Sudanese companies did not provide their site labourers with any health insurance, except for managerial staff. Chinese labourers and managerial staff were insured compulsorily when they went abroad to work.¹⁸⁹ The question is who is responsible for these inequalities. Most of the respondents argued that local people receive benefits according to poor local policies, which puts them into a less favourable position. Scholars (Taylor 2007; Rotberg 2008; Moyo 2009) have also claimed that bad local governmental policies are to be blamed for the many inequalities. Rotberg's research evidence suggests for example that *"Nigerians have a watchful acceptance and positive impression of China's growing impact on their country, but public perceptions of the Chinese presence could turn negative if the Nigerian government, like other African governments, manages the relationship poorly."*¹⁹⁰

Africa is full of opportunities, yet there are not many African entrepreneurs and factories. From the above, it can be concluded that this partly relates to their poor education and their level of earnings. On the other hand there is a difference in how the salary is spent. Romeo explained that in Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya the locals earn and consume according to their immediate needs.¹⁹¹ Fred had a similar experience in Congo. His African colleagues did not do any budgeting. They spend their money as soon as they receive it, no matter whether they might not afford their meals at the end of the month. They would not return to the job until they needed money again.¹⁹² This is interesting if you relate this to what Shawn had said about pieces of fertile land in Nigeria being overgrown with weeds. The Chinese on the other hand consume according to how much they earned¹⁹³, and reserve the remaining proportion of their money for savings or for future investment.

6D. Eating Habits

The combination of a low agricultural output and a lack of money that was discussed above can have great consequences. Romeo explained that the eating patterns of his African colleagues represented a shortage of money: the meals are simple, and do not contain meat nor any expensive vegetables.¹⁹⁴ Most of the time, he claims they eat potatoes, tomatoes, onions and cassava accompanied with a small portion of rice. Shawn noted that in Nigeria his African colleagues eat not more than one meal per day

¹⁸⁷ Rose (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 1 for the full interview.

¹⁸⁸ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

¹⁸⁹ Jim (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 8th 2014. See appendix 8 for the full interview.

¹⁹⁰ Rotberg (2008, p292) also p286 *Chinese Presence in Nigeria*

¹⁹¹ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

¹⁹² Fred (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 1st 2014. See appendix 4 for the full interview.

¹⁹³ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

¹⁹⁴ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

instead of the three meals the Chinese eat.¹⁹⁵ This was one of the reasons that the Chinese employees did not often eat together with their local colleagues.

Half of the interviewees said that eating with their fellow workers is not a habit. Most said this is because they live in a separate Chinese compound, where they have their own canteen, and their African colleagues tend to go home for their meals. Furthermore, Chinese and African people have a different diet. All respondents kept to their Chinese diet, which required different chefs. William said that in Ghana they had taught their local African chef how to cook Chinese food.¹⁹⁶ In Algeria, the locals mostly eat French food - like baguettes - which does not appeal to the Chinese people. Eating together in Algeria is further limited by the language barrier and by the fact that many locals who are Muslim who do not eat pork, an important ingredient in Chinese food.¹⁹⁷

The other half of the respondents, however, regularly eat together with the locals. They invite their African colleagues for a meal as friends, or have meals with them or with customers during business trips. Africans are liking Chinese food more and more, according to William.¹⁹⁸ Chinese food is relatively expensive and restaurants considered to be of high standard.¹⁹⁹

The opinions about food safety in Africa are diverse. In Nigeria, Shawn states that the meat is butchered by the Chinese themselves, as the meat sold by the locals is not considered clean.²⁰⁰ And in Algeria food safety is, according to Karl, better than that in China.²⁰¹ This is an aspect of life that could be improved by transfer of knowledge between China and Africa.

6E. Housing

Except for one respondent - who has been living among the local Kenyans for about five years²⁰² - all of the respondents live among other Chinese colleagues in shared houses, villas, apartments or prefabricated houses. *"If Chinese people live near the construction sites, they live in camps. If they live downtown, they rent villas of which the neighbours are African."*²⁰³ In some cases their neighbours were mixed, coming from the West, from India and from other African countries. Local people mostly live in their own houses. However, Shawn - who lives near a gold mine in Nigeria - explains that their camp consisted of two buildings with both their own facilities, including a kitchen. He occupies ten rooms with his nineteen Chinese colleagues in one building. And the ten rooms of the other building are being occupied by his twenty Nigerian colleagues.²⁰⁴ In his situation the housing was equally divided among the employees, living under the same circumstances, even though they had different job descriptions.

¹⁹⁵ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

¹⁹⁶ William (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 4th 2014. See appendix 7 for the full interview.

¹⁹⁷ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

¹⁹⁸ William (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 4th 2014. See appendix 7 for the full interview.

¹⁹⁹ Romeo and Brandy (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 3, and 9 for the full interviews.

²⁰⁰ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

²⁰¹ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

²⁰² Eddy (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 21st 2014. See appendix 10 for the full interview.

²⁰³ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

²⁰⁴ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

On the other hand, in Jim's situation, Chinese labourers, managerial staff, managers, and project directors had better accommodation than Sudanese labourers. The higher your rank, the better accommodation you get. Sudanese site managers normally live in good accommodations in town, while Sudanese site labourers have the worst accommodation and food conditions, this is the responsibility of the Sudanese sub-contractors.²⁰⁵

6F. Daily Interaction and Social activities

From the factors described above it can be concluded that the migrants' working and living situation makes it difficult to spend time socialising with their local colleagues or other local people. Nonetheless, this section will explore the interaction that they do have. Chinese people have exchanged several habits with the African people, for example, some Chinese are observed going to church on the weekend. And on the other hand, some locals are found to be enjoying Chinese noodles and dumplings.²⁰⁶ William explains, however, that many Chinese people are stuck in closed Chinese circles, without interacting with the locals. Since his job requires him to engage with the local elite, he and his Chinese colleagues interact with the local government, local corporation and clients every day.²⁰⁷ He describes how he has meetings and frequently visits local customers, they work together, eat together, and attend exhibitions and conferences. Furthermore, he was invited regularly to the homes of local staff, and even attended local weddings. Other interviewees mentioned several other activities in which they interacted with the local people, such as buying at the local stores, having lunch, watching or playing ping-pong, basketball and football, going to pubs, watching TV, going shopping, swimming or sightseeing.²⁰⁸ Shawn said that the Africans deliberately suggested playing football, even though they know that Chinese people are poor players. "*This is a joke between us - they are not unfriendly*".²⁰⁹

The respondents are overall positive about their interactions with locals. Shawn mentioned for example that they sometimes sing karaoke with their Nigerian colleagues, who are according to him much more talented than his Chinese colleagues.²¹⁰ Others describe the locals as friendly, easygoing and happy.²¹¹ Furthermore, the respondents mentioned that they were always nicely greeted by them, sometimes even in Chinese.²¹² Interestingly Jim mentioned that in Sudan some local labourers picked up some Chinese from their Chinese co-workers, and some well-educated Sudanese who studied in China, learned to speak Chinese fluently.²¹³

²⁰⁵ Jim (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 8th 2014. See appendix 8 for the full interview.

²⁰⁶ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

²⁰⁷ William (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 4th 2014. See appendix 7 for the full interview.

²⁰⁸ Karl, Romeo, Jim, Shawn (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 2, 3, 6, and 8 for the full interviews.

²⁰⁹ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

²¹⁰ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

²¹¹ James (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 7th 2014. See appendix 5 for the full interview.

²¹² Fred, Brandy (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 4, 9 for the full interviews.

²¹³ Jim (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 8th 2014. See appendix 8 for the full interview.

The language barrier is an important reason for some of the respondents not to interact more with their African colleagues, and limits them to staying within their Chinese compound. Eddy tried to learn the Kenyan local language Kiswahili, and even though he has been there for five years, he mentioned that it is too difficult to learn, and therefore sticks to English. If English is not the main language, however, or the Chinese migrants do not speak English,²¹⁴ socialising becomes a challenge.

Apart from the language, there is another aspect that was mentioned to limit interaction with the local people. In Shawn's compound in Nigeria, the company has a strict regulation that the staff cannot leave the camp as there is the potential problem of robberies. For this reason, Shawn and his Chinese colleagues do not socialise with locals other than their colleagues.

6G. Potential problems

In the last section it was highlighted that Chinese companies make regulations to protect their workers' safety. This section will explore what aspects the Chinese migrants were concerned about before going to Africa and how they feel about that now. Their experiences are important as potential problems and how they are perceived may cause an increase or decrease in migration flows.

Most common concerns were about infectious diseases, such as Aids and malaria, safety, wars and terrorism, living condition, and climate. However, after arriving in Africa they all claimed that it is not as bad as they had imagined. Public security and health care is considered to be good, and companies offer good accommodation. They generally feel safe, as they are aware of the issues of hygiene and personal security.

Safety concerns depend highly on the country. Eddy feels relatively safe in Kenya, despite ongoing threats and terrorist attacks from Islamic extremist Al-shabaab.²¹⁵ Romeo explained that there are only problems during the elections and around Christmas time. However, he also said that they would take a circuitous route home as nobody was allowed to know where they lived.²¹⁶ Sudan, however, is not politically stable and Jim was aware that many of his Chinese colleagues had been mugged.²¹⁷

Karl had similar experiences with robberies in Algeria. Whereas robberies were common in Algiers,²¹⁸ the construction site was according to him well secured.

In terms of security guards, situations differed. Romeo explained that the majority of the companies and employees cannot afford security guards in Kenya. Besides that, robbers have guns or knives when they attack: "*you just need to give them money and they just let you go and won't hurt you.*"²¹⁹ In Shawn's case, in Nigeria, six policemen were employed to protect them all day long.²²⁰

²¹⁴ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

²¹⁵ Eddy (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 21st 2014. See appendix 10 for the full interview.

²¹⁶ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

²¹⁷ Jim (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 8th 2014. See appendix 8 for the full interview.

²¹⁸ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

²¹⁹ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

²²⁰ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

If the interviewees encounter problems, they generally rely on their company, local friends or family, the embassy or local authority, though Karl says that relying on the local authority or embassy in Algeria is useless.²²¹ Brandy - who works as an assistant retail manager in South Africa - added to this that "*it is hard to find help on the spot because sometimes the policemen can also rob you*".²²² Because of these experiences there is a common feeling that you need to take better care of yourself and your belongings than you would in China.²²³ In spite of that, nothing serious has happened to any of the respondents or their network and the overall experience has been mostly positive. These positive experiences might take away certain migration barriers for future migration flows.

William explains that living in a capitalist country brings along differences in every aspect of life.²²⁴ The respondents encounter huge changes in work, social and cultural environments as many countries in Africa have distinct tribal cultures marked by colonial experiences. Their life after work is considered boring and the interviewees say that they often feel lonely as they are so far away from their families.²²⁵ In general the interviewees like the climate, the scenery, the friendly local people, and especially their salary in Africa. But is that enough reason to stay in Africa?

Jim says that the conditions in Sudan are harsh, there are epidemic diseases due to bad sanitary conditions, the work is intense, it is not much fun after work, and there are political and economic instabilities. Nevertheless, as his work is much better-paid than in China. He would consider staying. "*It is worth the experience, though not much fun and sometimes even dangerous.*"²²⁶ There are other respondents who are similarly ambivalent.

Romeo believes that Africa is more suitable for younger people. When he first went there, he was 22, the youngest at the company. He explains that people usually just stay for 1 year as Africa is so far from China. "*It tortures us mentally*". Yet he too will consider staying in Africa if there is another work opportunity.²²⁷ One of his friend did stay for more than four years.

Karl says he will go back to China after the project is done, unless the company gives him a rise or he gets promoted in Algeria,²²⁸

William has friends who have been working in Africa for more than ten years. Some of them even moved there with their entire family. They let their children finish high school in Africa and apply to universities in

²²¹ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

²²² Brandy (Pseudonym). Anonymous interviews conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 9 for the full interview.

²²³ Romeo, Fred, William (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 3, 4, and 7 for the full interview.

²²⁴ William (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 4th 2014. See appendix 7 for the full interview.

²²⁵ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

²²⁶ Jim (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 8th 2014. See appendix 8 for the full interview.

²²⁷ Romeo (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 26th 2014. See appendix 3 for the full interview.

²²⁸ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

Europe.²²⁹ Eddy would stay in Kenya without a doubt. His family has been there for decades and he is planning to start his own business when the time comes.

6I. Benefit for Africa

With increasing numbers of Chinese migrants arriving in Africa, the big question is whether this is beneficial. As previously mentioned, this study does not set out to analyse whether this is the case: it focusses solely on the opinions of the interviewees, their views on the potential benefits of the Chinese presence in Africa.

William believes that the huge number of Chinese people pouring into Africa recently has left something of a bad impression, for such reasons as selling fake products and pills, illegal mining, and unauthorised forest felling. Karl adds that Chinese migrants will not be appreciated if they take away local people's jobs.²³⁰ Hein de Haas was quoted in Section 3, saying that "*migration will cause labour to become less scarce at the destination and scarcer at the sending end*".²³¹ It was demonstrated in Section 6B that there are not enough local entrepreneurs and companies to provide jobs,²³² so a qualified African electrician could not find a job in a local company, so looked to a Chinese firm for employment.²³³ All of the respondents have both Chinese and local colleagues and Jim - who worked in Sudan as a translator - even had hundreds of local colleagues.²³⁴ Not surprisingly, several of the interviewees believe that the Chinese provide African people with jobs instead of occupying theirs.²³⁵

The respondents consider that the African countries they have been in are relatively underdeveloped in many respects, such as infrastructure, industry, economy, education, agriculture and resources. There is no stable power supply, and no strong telephone signal.²³⁶ Shawn believes that apart from mineral resources and rice, there is not much on offer in Nigeria. Many daily necessities are transported from China, most of the vegetables they eat are planted by Chinese people, and other requirements like clothing, shoes, electric appliances and motor bikes are made in China as well. The mines have to generate their own electricity. Every year many people die unnecessarily as they cannot afford medical expenses.²³⁷ Current Chinese investment in African healthcare is extensive.

²²⁹ William (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 4th 2014. See appendix 7 for the full interview.

²³⁰ Karl (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 5th 2014. See appendix 2 for the full interview.

²³¹ De Haas (2008, p4).

²³² Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

²³³ James (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 7th 2014. See appendix 5 for the full interview.

²³⁴ Jim (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 8th 2014. See appendix 8 for the full interview.

²³⁵ Karl, Romeo, Fred, Eddy (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 2, 3, 4 and 10 for the full interviews.

²³⁶ Romeo, Shawn (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 3, and 6 for the full interviews.

²³⁷ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

The respondents believe that Chinese presence in Africa improves the local people's lives: apart from buying at local stores, Chinese people are helping to improve the housing and infrastructure such as roads, railways, schools and hospitals;²³⁸ they offer equipment and supplies for much lower prices than any other country;²³⁹ Chinese companies pay tax to the local African governments;²⁴⁰ and Chinese companies offer managerial and technical support.²⁴¹

Since the 1960s, ten thousand Chinese agro-technicians have been sent to Africa and have worked on two hundred projects, including setting up farms and training locals.²⁴² In July 2012, at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the FOCAC, the Chinese government promised to strengthen technical training, and to help African countries improve their ability in food production, processing, storage and marketing."²⁴³ In July 2014, Mr. Smith - a Chinese recruitment agent who recruits agro-technicians for the Republic of Benin - was interviewed for this study.²⁴⁴ The technical experts were sent to the Republic of Benin to train local Africans on how to cultivate rice and their own rice seeds. He explains that the Republic of Benin is an underdeveloped country which really needs the help of Chinese people. Therefore they only send experts with a very rich work experience of around the age of forty-five, whose motives are not economic, but who feel that helping others is an honourable thing to do. The majority of the experts stay in the Republic of Benin for between 2 and 10 years. It is a requirement of Chinese policy that Chinese migrants return to China after 10 years or at retirement age of 60.²⁴⁵ This recruitment agency is a current example of China's cooperation with Africa that has been benefitting Africa for decades and of which Mr. Smith has been part of for almost twenty years.

China's presence is however not necessarily a good or bad thing, but has "*variable and context specific impacts*" which²⁴⁶ according to this study depend on the size of the existing community, the status, and the local policies in China and the African country concerned.

²³⁸ Karl, Shawn (Pseudonyms). Anonymous interviews. See appendix 2, and 6 for the full interviews.

²³⁹ Fred (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 1st 2014. See appendix 4 for the full interview.

²⁴⁰ Shawn (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 6 for the full interview.

²⁴¹ Fred (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted August 1st 2014. See appendix 4 for the full interview.

²⁴² Sautman & Hairong (2007, p87).

²⁴³ Xinhua (2014).

²⁴⁴ Mr. Smith (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 11 for the full interview.

²⁴⁵ Mr. Smith (Pseudonym). Anonymous interview conducted July 29th 2014. See appendix 11 for the full interview.

²⁴⁶ Mohan, G. & Kale, D. (2007, p4)

Concluding Remarks

In the absence of available literature written from a Chinese viewpoint, this small scale study aimed to show at ground level a range of experience of Chinese migrants working in different African countries. Such a study has obvious limitations. Nevertheless the following conclusions can be made:

The respondents consider that the African countries they have been in are relatively underdeveloped in many respects, such as infrastructure, industry, economy, education, agriculture and resources. They believe they have contributed to the African economies and are not merely exploiting their vast resources. In spite of sometimes harsh conditions, language and cultural barriers and the difficulties of being away from family, most of the migrant workers reported a predominantly positive experience. For their own part they have widened their horizons as well as obtaining economic benefits. For the Africans, the migrants believe their presence is beneficial both in terms of South-South cooperation and Sino-African relations.

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