

# **Employment in Chinese Firms: The Dragon's Gift to sub-Saharan Africa**

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# Employment in Chinese MNEs: Appraising the Dragon's Gift to sub-Saharan Africa

## Abstract

*China's international engagement is changing geopolitical dynamics to an extent that Western governments appear concerned. Negative reports of this engagement in Africa abound, not least in the area of employment relations and HRM. Yet currently there is a lack of serious management research and theory development in this area, leaving international HR managers to rely on anecdotal information. The way Chinese management engage with African workforces may be quite different to Western managers. The current work suggests that understanding this engagement should be informed by China's recent anti-imperialist involvement in Africa, its commercial motivation coupled with its political-seeking motive, the values such as paternalism that modify Western influences on Chinese HRM that are brought to Africa, and possible synergies with African values. Yet the current work identifies from the current published evidence a disparity between China's professed strategic level of engagement and what happens at organizational level, indicating that many Chinese organizations may be contributing to employment, but not to up-skilling of workers, mutual learning or engagement with local communities.*

**Key Words:** China in Africa, Chinese MNEs, Employment relations, cross-cultural management, International HRM.

The growing importance of China's role in the world, its involvement in Africa and the concerns of Western governments was underlined by the convening of a US Senate Foreign Relations African Affairs Subcommittee hearing on November 1, 2011 titled 'China's Role in Africa: Implications for U.S. Policy'. The opening statement by Senator Christopher Coons declared that 'The U.S. isn't just ceding its economic leadership in Africa to China - it may be ceding its political leadership there as well', adding that 'Between 2000 and 2010, trade between China and African nations grew by more than a thousand per cent'. It was apparent to the Senator that 'China clearly sees Africa for what it is - a continent of immense opportunity', adding that 'Africa is home to six of the world's ten fastest growing economies.'. Yet, '...the long-term American objective of promoting open societies in Africa - countries that embrace transparency and democracy, respect the environment, and protect human rights - is being challenged by China's approach to Africa'. This, according to the Senator, is an approach '...that often does not directly benefit the average African citizen'. (US Congress, 2011a). This concern was also reflected when German's Chancellor Angela Merkel remarked in 2006 'We Europeans should not leave the continent of Africa to the PRC .... We must take a stand in Africa' (Campbell, 2008).

Brautigam (US Congress, 2011b), an authority on China in Africa, gave evidence to the sub-committee on the enormity of engineering contracts, with Chinese companies holding nearly 3000 in Africa in 2008, valued at close to \$40 billion, adding that '...187,396 Chinese were officially working in Africa in 2009, most on the large engineering contracts in Algeria, Libya, and Angola'. (US Congress, 2011b).

Although this appears to add to the view previously reported by Brautigam (2011a, b) that Chinese companies bring with them all their labour, and add nothing to the employment and skills development of African workers, she concludes from extensive research that 'Chinese companies do bring a larger proportion of their workforce from home than Western firms, but this is the case mainly for construction projects in oil-rich countries like Algeria, Libya, or Angola where local labour is expensive. In other places, with few exceptions, Chinese projects have a majority of Africans in their workforce.....It is the poor conditions of this employment, and not its absence, that is a constant complaint among African workers'. (Brautigam, 2011a: 4).

China's engagement with Africa has spawned a plethora of literature in international relations (e.g. Alden, 2006; Callahan, 2008; Campbell, 2008), international trade and economics (e.g. Alden and Davies, 2006; Carmody, 2011 Child and Rodrigues, 2005), politics (e.g. Marafa, 2007; Mohan and Power, 2008) and international development (e.g. Davies et al, 2008; Brautigam, 2011a,b), which is discussed below, yet has still not fully engaged the attention of management and organization scholars. Not only is there a lack of empirical research at organizational level, little attention has been devoted to developing theory in this area that could inform research. This needs to be urgently undertaken in management studies and HRM and is the focus of this article.

This absence appears a disservice to those international managers who increasingly have to compete in growing markets in Africa, not least within very dynamic labour markets, and who have to fall back on anecdotal information, often very negative, about the way Chinese managers engage with staff and communities. Yet positive inflections that official Chinese policy appears to portray can often be countered by some of the literature in other areas of study. For example, the Centre for Chinese Studies reports that: 'There is at times a stark contrast between the Chinese rhetoric of brotherhood with African people, and some of the criticism coming from African citizens.' (CCS, 2008). Indeed, there is a line of literature from the 1990s (Dikkoter, 1994) to more recent studies attesting to Chinese nationalism (Jacques, 2009) and even racism (Shen, 2009) that should be taken seriously in future management studies to see if this is a factor in terms of the reality of human resource practices, as distinct from professed official policies. Empirical evidence at organizational level is seriously lacking. Yet this needs to be built on management theory that could be used to interrogate these types of relations. This is an issue that the current work attempts to address.

In particular, the current article proposes that such research should be framed by two interconnected considerations:

- *The reasons for Chinese corporations being in Africa and the nature of this presence.* These motives (which constitute a contested area and can be interrogated by examining official Chinese government views, China's historical and current engagement with Africa, and Western and African criticisms and concerns) and the implications for Chinese corporations' interactions with local staffs and communities have to be examined in order to understand the nature of employment policy and practices.
- *South-South interactions at global level that constitute a different geopolitical power dynamic fundamental to the generation and transfer of knowledge.* North-South interactions have dominated the world stage for centuries, more recently typifying the transfer of predominantly American management knowledge to non-Western countries. Hofstede (1980) most famously challenged the direct transfer of management knowledge from the United States to other countries that varied substantially on one or more of his cultural dimensions, while Jackson (2002) questioned the appropriateness of the Western cultural values underpinning the regarding of human beings as resources in non-Western cultures, and the transfer of practices associated with these values to non-western countries. Boyacigiller and Adler (1991) attempted to explain the reasons for this prevalence of transfer in terms of post-World War II economic dominance of the United States. In political science and international relations the concept of a global North-South divide, which arose after WWII, was consolidated in what has been referred to as the Brandt Line, conceptualized by the former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1980 as an imaginary line delineating the boundary between the industrial North and the poorer South, a political geography that had mostly eclipsed the divide between East and West, (Lees, 2011). With countries such as China and India, which were placed at the South of this divide, Lees (2011) argues that despite considerable growth in the economies of both these countries, the concept of a North-South divide still is relevant today when considering both economic inequalities within nation-states and political and military inequalities in international relations. Connell's (2007: 212) concept of an emerging

Southern Theory in social science is also premised on the persisting relevance of this conceptual global divide which she says constitutes an expression of ‘..the long-lasting pattern of inequality in power, wealth and cultural influence that grew historically out of European and North American imperialism’. That China and India are emerging as major geopolitical and geo-economic players is not a reason to deny historical circumstance and reclassify them as ‘Northern’ states. It is a reason to unpack the implications of South-South interactions as they emerge as a more powerful force in geopolitics, if we are to successfully scrutinize Chinese employment practices in Africa. The dominance of the United States and Europe may increasingly be less relevant. Correspondingly, management theories and policies developed in the geographical North may have less significance, particularly in terms of our understanding of cross-cultural interaction between Chinese management and African staffs.

The objectives of this article are therefore to:

1. Provide a theoretical framework within which the study of Chinese organizations’ employment policies and practices can be critically appraised in terms of the nature of China’s engagement in Africa and the changing geopolitical dynamic that may have implications for knowledge transfer and how organizational and management knowledge is understood within these dynamics.
2. Interrogate the available, yet sparse, evidence of Chinese organizations’ employment and HRM policies and practices in Africa in the context of this theoretical framework.
3. Examine the implications for Africa in terms of employment and Africa’s wider development
4. Point the way to further research in this area.

In order to achieve this, the article is structured as follows. Firstly, China’s engagement with Africa is theorized by briefly looking at the West’s engagement and how this has led to a disparaging of things ‘African’ through a modernizing ethos, and noting historically how China’s engagement has been different. Logically, because China’s historical engagement has been quite different to the West’s, it could be assumed that the outcomes might be different where there appears to be a lack of a ‘civilizing’ or colonizing mission. Yet this is examined critically, where for example Alden (2007: 131) asserts that ‘China exports the capitalism it knows’, being ‘the second largest recipient of Western FDI for over two decades’.

This then leads to an examination of China’s professed motives for being in Africa, and how its resource-seeking may be modified by broader socio-political motives. Also, to continue to build a theoretical framework in which to examine corporate practices, what Chinese MNEs, with a focus on parastatals or state owned enterprises (SOE), are likely to take with them to Africa is examined. This framework or schema gives rise to certain theoretical assumptions that are then used critically to examine the available evidence of Chinese human resource practices at operational level. The contribution that China’s MNEs are making to Africa’s development and human capacity building at organizational level is then examined, with research propositions developed from the currently available evidence that can be used in future much-needed empirical investigations in this area.

## **Theorizing China’s Engagement in Africa**

### ***Basic assumptions: beyond imperialism***

The dearth of knowledge about Chinese organizations in Africa at the level of the organization is problematic. Yet, as with the study of organizations in Africa generally, it is necessary to clearly identify the underlying assumptions that may have a bearing on the way such study is undertaken. Jackson (2004) identified an underlying pejorative view of ‘African’ management that heavily influenced the way it was perceived and presented in preceding literature (including Kiggundu, 1989; Blunt and Jones, 1992). He pointed out that the subject of such derogatory analysis could be identified as ‘post-colonial’ management: the normally inefficient, authoritarian and sometimes

corrupt remnants of (Western) colonial institutional arrangements that Dia (1996) had reported to be at variance to indigenous communities and institutions. Ayittey (1991), in his examination of indigenous African institutions, had largely disabused the idea that such management and organization could be identified as indigenous. Yet having analysed 'African' organizations and institutions in this pejorative way, it was an easy step for management scholars, supra-governmental organizations such as the IMF and World Bank, and Western MNEs to promote a modernizing trajectory for such organizations by adopting Western management principles, among them modern HRM (Kamoche, 2001). Hence a whole literature grew up around this premise in the late 1990s and first decade of the new millennium, suggesting how Western management (with some adaptations) could be applied to inefficient 'African' organizations (Waiguchu, Tiagha and Mwaura, 1999; Ugwuegbu, 2001). That many of the contributors to this thesis were from the African diaspora was an indication of how deeply this modernizing ethos had been entrenched.

Yet this modernizing ethos simply appears to reflect the dynamics of two or more centuries of Western colonialism, a disparaging of indigenous cultures and the trajectory of post-colonialism. Its acceptance and internalization by the colonized is explained by Said's (1978) theory of Orientalism and Bhabha's (1994) concept of Mimicry, as major contributions within Postcolonial Theory. Said (1978) proposed that the developing world is represented in the eyes of the developed world. Western imperialism, through Western culture has developed a systematic 'body of theory and practice' that constructs or represents the 'Orient' (Said's, 1978/1995: 49). These representations are carried over to Western intellectual and cultural production including research, and management and organizational studies. Bhabha's (1994) elucidation of 'mimicry' applies predominantly to a colonizing power's ability to get the colonized to mimic the colonizer, in order better to control the unfamiliar and to gain acceptance of transferred-in knowledge. The acceptance and internalization of such representations by the developing world itself means that the colonized can never refer back to an 'authentic' identity of pre-colonial times.

Unlike the trajectory of the Western modernizing project that informs much of the management literature on Africa, underpinned by centuries of colonialism, and critiqued among others by Postcolonial Theory, the coming to Africa of China has been quite different. One could logically expect the outcomes also to be different. In addition, the way this relationship and these dynamics are critically theorized would also, correspondingly, have to be different. If the Europeans' coming to Africa was motivated by what David Livingstone, the 19<sup>th</sup> century British missionary-explorer, termed the three 'C's' of Commerce, Christianity and Civilization (Pakenham, 1991), what is China's motivation? Certainly China's motive has been commerce rather than stressing a need for Africa's political and economic reform (Mohan and Power, 2008; Carmody, 2011) in contradistinction to the West that sought to introduce a neoliberal ideal (Carrier and Miller, 1998). It appears not to have been a 'civilizing' nor a proselytizing motive (Brautigam, 2011b). Yet there has been an emerging line within the international relations literature that alludes to a nationalist perspective mentioned above and a Chinese perception of superiority of Chinese culture: that it is the patriotic duty of China's elites to spread Chinese values and culture around the world (Nyiri, 2006; Callahan, 2008)

However, support for the contention that there is a lack of a 'civilizing' or modernizing mission appears to manifest itself in China's apparent disregard for governance and human rights issues in countries such as Sudan and Zimbabwe (Brautigam, 2011b). Marafa (2007) also alludes to there not appearing to be a disparaging attitude attached to China's engagement towards African cultures and institutions, which may be a concomitant of a lack of a civilizing mission. Despite also the large numbers of Chinese immigrants in Africa (Mohan & Tan-Mullins, 2009), Brautigam (2011a) finds no empirical evidence of a 'land-grab' that would indicate a colonizing project.

Having now outlined how China's entry into Africa was historically different from that of the Western powers, it is next necessary to look at this in more detail, and to focus on China's professed motives for being there.

### ***China's motivation for being in Africa***

As indicated above, China's entry into Africa is not new. It goes back to the Han dynasty (206BC-220AD), and the 1950s and 1960s in modern times. This engagement with Africa also appears qualitatively different from European involvement in the wake of the slave trade. Following the China-Russia split in 1956 much of the anti-colonial struggles in the Third World had ideologically allied themselves with China, as a result of its '...apparently disinterested substantive support to liberation movements or hard-pressed front line ..... states, particularly in Mozambique, South Africa, Southwest Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, its populist orientation towards the peasantry and the need for an agrarian revolution, towards struggle from below, and its emphasis on guerrilla warfare and armed struggle against imperialism..' (Young, 2001: 188). Its role in the decolonization of Africa was significant (Thiam and Mulira, 1999).

Its current-day motives for being in Africa, which Gill, Huang and Morrison (2007) describe as resources-seeking to fuel China's development goals, market-seeking to sustain its growing economy, and political-seeking to support its aspirations to be a global influence, must be seen within this recent historical context. It may also be possible that Gill et al's (2007) three types of motives may be too restrictive in terms of hypothesizing the connection between the reasons for China's being in Africa and the approach that Chinese MNEs have towards people policies and practices. Also there may not be a direct relationship between wider strategic motives professed by Chinese government policies and their manifestations in inter-governmental relations with African governments and actions at organizational level, which will be explored later. Yet just as the way that the West's resource-seeking motives for being in Africa may have been modified by a civilizing and proselytizing ethos, so China's resource-seeking motive may be moderated by the nature of its socio-political engagement. This is now examined.

### ***Moderating China's resource-seeking motive***

Britain's coming to Africa was motivated by commerce, firstly through the lucrative slave trade in human resources and then through the exploitation of natural resources. Yet according to Ferguson (2004), following the extreme exploitation of the eighteenth century coupled curiously with an interest and often serious study of the different African cultures, a Victorian religious revival in Britain saw the emphasis changing towards saving and civilizing Africans from their perceived heathen ways. Their mission became not just to rule the world but to redeem it. Native peoples would no longer be exploited, but their cultures, based on superstition and backwardness, would have to be expunged (Ferguson, 2004). This is relevant to the current discussion of China's engagement with Africa. Like our understanding of Britain's commercial engagement with Africa that has to be moderated by and understood within a broader context of the civilizing project, and in the current century the modernizing project, so China's commercial engagement has to be understood in a context that appears not to share such motivations. However, Nyiri (2006) provides some evidence that Chinese migrants, including those in Africa, take with them a civilizing/modernizing notion. Yet this appears far from the socio-political interventionist development schemes of the West premised on civilizing missions of previous centuries. Rather, according to Nyiri (2006: 104) it involves concepts of modernization and productivity together with community harmony, that are demonstrated by, for example, entrepreneurial success, rather than '...educating or "reforming" natives'.

Shaw, Cooper, & Antkiewicz (2007) report a perspective that from the experience of transformation in China, there are lessons to be learned in Africa. Kapinsky, (2008) suggests the existence of a sense of 'Third World Solidarity' in China's relations, drawing on its socialist heritage and anti-imperialist discourse, and as a reaction to the IMF's neoliberal policies and government alignment with the United States (see also CCS, 2008). These other influences on the nature of China's resource-seeking should be taken into account in theorizing China's engagement

with Africa and the implications for employment and employment relations, which will be later discussed.

Having theorized, from the broader literature, how China's engagement may be premised on a different type of entry into Africa to that of the Western powers, and how this may moderate a purely resource-seeking motive, it is necessary now to focus on what theoretically China may be taking to Africa at organizational level, and to scrutinized this within the wider geopolitical context.

### ***HRM knowledge transfer from China: Chinese or Western?***

Discussion in the section above focused on the impacts of China's motives, notwithstanding the motivations of individual organizations, which might well vary in line with industrial sector, size and other factors (Lee, 2009). Yet China's motives have also got to be considered in association with how wider geopolitical relationships are conceptualized and how these are changing. What Chinese organizations bring with them to African countries is a function of such motivations and rationales discussed above, but also a product of previous and current geopolitical relations (as noted above: Alden, 2007). The way people are managed in China is a product of such relationships. Of these principles and practices, what is then brought to Africa is another such product. Whether or not Chinese managers come to Africa to impose, instruct, teach or learn is yet another product of geopolitical relations both historic and current.

Although China was never fully colonized by the West, Western civilization has had its impact, and more latterly Western management has had an impact on organization and management in China (Jackson and Bak, 1998; Warner, 2001; Cooke, 2004). The management literature over the last two decades has focused on China as an emerging and huge market for the West, yet more recently has turned its attention also to the internationalization of Chinese firms and their activities in other countries (Bjorkman, 2002; Child and Rodrigues, 2005; Zhang and Edwards, 2007). Yet this has tended to focus on Chinese MNEs in developed economies such as the UK, and the possibilities of such organizations learning from practices in these countries through a process of reverse diffusion (Zhang and Edwards, 2007). To build a theoretical understanding it is first necessary to focus on the nature of people management in China and its local and global influences, and then to study the available evidence from the literature on what Chinese organizations abroad take with them.

### ***Managing People in China***

An understanding of the way people are managed in China necessitates an understanding of the balance in China between individual human rights and national development. This is the context in which the adoption of Western HRM should be understood.

An example of human resource management in the wider community in China is the restriction of parents to one child. Arguable this is an infringement of individual human rights. Arguable this is a necessity for national development. Although an original signatory to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights China has long contested its principles and application, particularly in contradistinction to the USA, and in its trade off with national and economic development (Schech and Haggis, 2000). Yet China has not been alone in challenging the universality of the UN declaration. In 1980 the African Charter of Human and People's Rights was adopted by the Organization of African Unity, to 'reflect the African conception of human rights, [which] should take as a pattern the African philosophy and law to meet the needs of Africa' (Amnesty International, 1991, cited in Ahluwalia, 2001: 93). The main difference to the UN Declaration is the stress on community: 'collective rights to national sovereignty free from external influence.' (Paul, 1990: 216, cited in Ahluwalia, 2001: 93).

The main area of contention is the emphasis on the individual as the holder of certain rights, and the extent to which this may override the needs of the collective, and in the case of the

Chinese nation, the responsibility of the state to put first the need for economic and social development to ensure the livelihood and wellbeing of people as a whole. In the Chinese view this may not be seen as being at the expense of individual rights, the pursuit of which are not necessarily recognized as a legitimate objective. How is this then applied to human resource management in organizations, particularly as Cooke (2011: 198) reports that ‘The interests of the state, the enterprise and the workforce are assumed to be unified’?

Cooke (2011) describes the patriotic and paternalistic foundations of people management, which also include principles of unity, congruence and harmonization as reflecting Confucian philosophy, and which despite economic liberalization and reforms in state-owned enterprises and commercial considerations in private enterprises, is still a main guiding influence. Cooke (2011) suggests that this encourages social harmony and cohesion focusing on social relations, collectivism and self-sacrifice for the collective good. This appears reflected in people management practices such as company-sponsored employee-oriented activities that seek to embed societal and company values (Jackson and Bak, 1998; Cooke, 2008). This also seems reflected in the continuing role of the sole labour organization, ACFTU (All-China Federation of Trade Unions), led by the state/communist party focused on a welfare role rather than protecting worker’s rights (a role that perhaps is seen as irrelevant where the interests of state, company and workforce are perceived as one). Similarly workers’ participation is very much aligned to the ACFTU, supplemented by legislation by the Workers’ Representative Congress which is guided by the trade union. Cooke (2011) suggests that even with a more recent trend for private sector firms to set up a workers’ congress, this is normally in compliance with legislation, and serves as an extension to the company’s HRM function.

There are of course differences among different organizations and sectors, and between private and state-own sectors. Yet there is a tradition of absorbing foreign influences, but with Chinese characteristics. Even though companies have been adopting apparent Western HRM practices such as linking performance with pay, the reward system is still by and large based on equality, with employees exerting extensive control over the distribution of pay, with income inequality still being seen as potentially disruptive to group harmony and social adhesion (Cooke, 2004). Indeed, Warner (2010) asserts a much bigger emphasis in today’s China on harmony and Confucian values, and a turning away from simply economic efficiency, with Li (2005: 8) reporting that ‘[President] Hu’s strategy for China’s development has differed profoundly from his predecessors. Concerns about social cohesion have overcome the old model’s emphasis on economic efficiency.’ Warner (2010: 2056) adds that ‘The Chinese Communist .... now co-sponsors a form of Confucian’.

How such people management systems, reflecting aspects of Confucianism, an emphasis on the sameness of interests of state, organization and staff, on social cohesion and the absorption of Western HRM, may be compatible with values and expectations in African countries is now discussed.

### ***Synergies with African people management***

The concept of *Ubuntu* management was popularised in the late 1990 in South Africa by, among others, Mbigi (1997) and experimented with in some of the larger corporations and public enterprises, amidst a focus on empowerment and employment equity (Jackson, 1999). This represented an emphasis on the humanity of people working in organizations, and a move away from seeing people as resources in an instrumental (Western) perspective. This represents a view that African communities’ values may be different from the Western focus on the individual and what he or she achieves. It views people as having an intrinsic value, a value in their own right, for who they are as part of a collective, and indeed a part of existence captured by the isiXhosa saying *Ubuntu ungamntu ngabanye abantu*, meaning ‘people are people through other people’. Jackson (2004) reported the difficulty of identifying the operation of this concept in any pure form

because of the dynamic of cultural crossvergence, driven by geopolitical power relationships and dominance of Western concepts of HRM.

Such a social concept of the person can also be found in Ip's (2009) idea of the Confucian firm in its core principles of *ren* (a virtue or capacity of benevolence and compassion: humanity – and perhaps akin to *ubuntu*), *yi* (a sense of moral rightness) and *li* (conventions, etiquettes or norms). He describes *Junzi* as the model moral person who possesses these three 'mega-virtues' together with wisdom and trustworthiness. Hence an organization's goals, strategies and practices are defined by the principles of *ren-yi-li*; its structures, processes and procedures conform to *ren-yi-li*; stakeholders are treated with *ren-yi-li*; while its leaders conform to thoughts and deeds of *junzi*; and members of the organization are virtuous and act in accordance to *ren-yi-li*.

Ip (2009) thus draws upon Confucian principles to construct this ideal type of what a 'Confucian firm' might look like. A pure profit motive would be morally constrained and consistent with *ren*, *yi* and *li* including doing good for the community and society. All stakeholders of the firm would be treated with rightness and humanity. This would involve providing fair wages and safe working environments, providing benefits to the community, being a good corporate citizen, and promoting social good generally. People's moral actions would drive the firm rather than rules and regulations, and conflicts would be resolved by appealing to virtues. As *ren* appears close to *Ubuntu*, it is worth dwelling on this further.

The Confucian concept of the person is essentially a social one, through familial collectivism. The person is defined by his or her relationships. A person's identity cannot be understood as something separate from his or her social attachments and place in the hierarchy of social relationships. A person is shaped by this social embeddedness in terms of their interests and goals, and also constrained by the same relationships. The social bonds thus created are a source of indebtedness and obligations. These characteristics, according to Ip (2009: 465) explain well 'the modern day version of Confucian relationalism': *guanxi*.

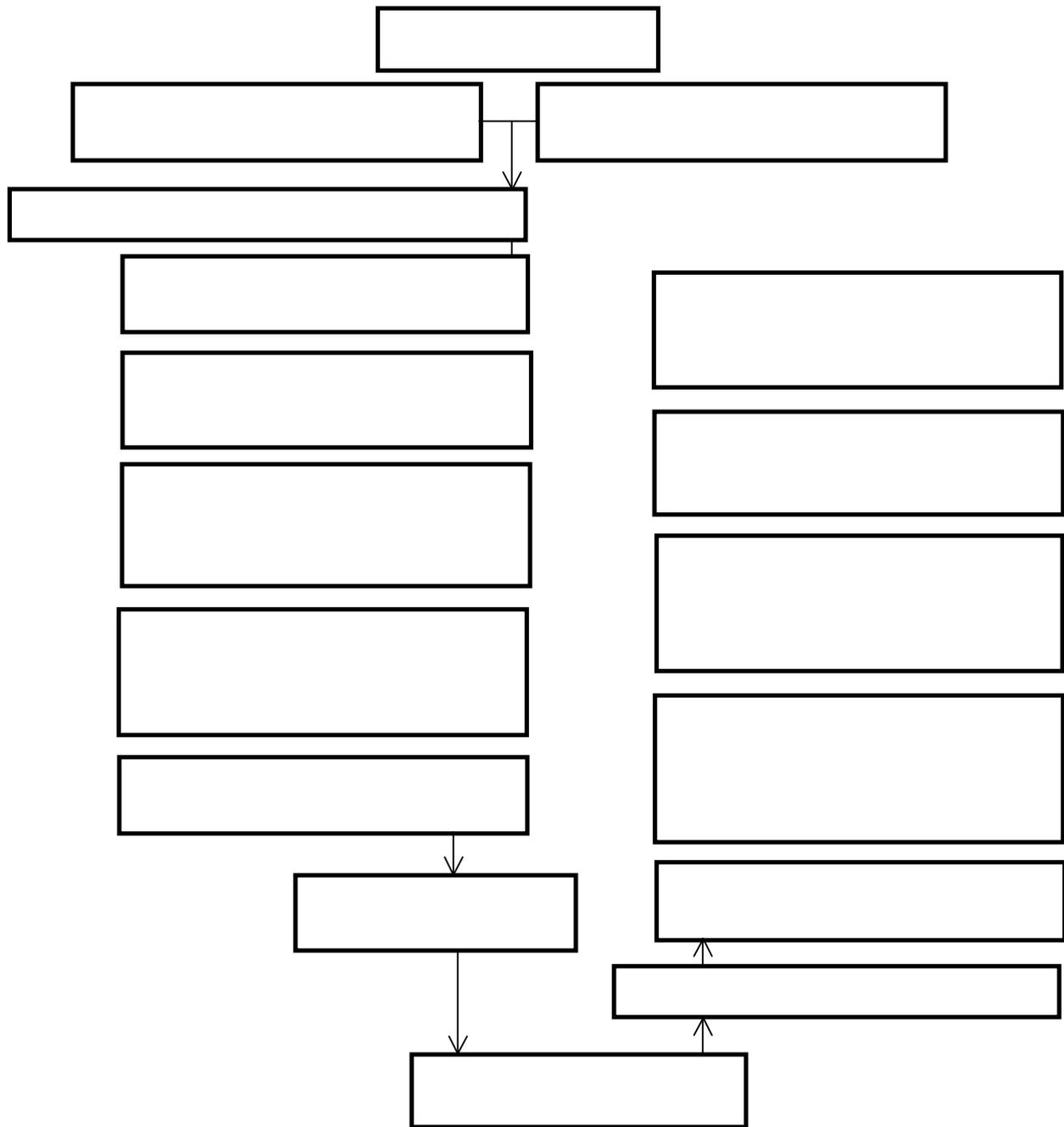
Ip (2009: 466) also reminds us that filial piety holds a very strong position within Chinese culture, often with family patriarchs, or indeed state patriarchs, demanding filial piety from their children, or subjects. This implies 'a hierarchical structure of human relationships in society' meaning that social exchange and obligations may be asymmetrical. Given this, the Confucian firm, from Ip's (2009) account, should incorporate the following elements:

- Collectivism/familialism: collective interests and goals overshadow individual corporate members' interests. There should be harmony between individual and collective interests. Similarly the wellbeing of individuals can only be realized within the overall wellbeing of the collective.
- Particularism: practice is based on personal relations rather than people's qualifications or abilities. Opportunities and benefits are therefore allocated in this way. This includes in hiring, and is linked with *guanxi*, and is seen as critical to a company's success.
- Paternalism: this works on the principle that the father knows what is best for the children and is an extension of familial collectivism, with the patriarch at the top of the relationship hierarchy deciding on what is best. He is seen to possess wisdom, knowledge and benevolence. This implies that there is no need for consultation and no place for dissent: people are not equal in the hierarchy.

In the more general cross-cultural management literature 'collectivism' is seen as target specific: that is, in-group and out-group members are treated differently (Triandis, 1990; Hui, 1990). It could be supposed that Chinese MNEs operating in Africa might not treat African employees and other stakeholders according to the principles of *ren* if this is qualified by Confucian relationalism. Similarly *ubuntu* principles and the communalism of Africa may only apply to in-group members. Yet Mutabazi (2002: 209) points out that, as a result of his empirical studies in thirteen sub-Saharan countries: 'Western notions of individualism and collectivism did not exist in any of the communities we observed .... These communities' fundamental method for managing human relations ... is co-subsistence – among individuals and among the concentric circles that make up a clan or community. As for newcomers to this system, they are not rejected

or dominated but are welcomed and perhaps even integrated into the community.’ Ip (2009) proposes that Confucian principles extend to the fair treatment of all stakeholders, which may indicate that *ren* could well apply to African employees. How this now feeds into a conceptual structure for interrogating Chinese involvement in Africa at organizational level is now explored.

Figure 1. China’s engagement with Africa, employment relations and HRM



***A Theoretical Schema***

The approach taken so far in this article is to lay the theoretical foundations for interrogating the available evidence of China’s engagement with African countries at the level of the organization, and from which to outline an agenda for informed research on employment relations and HRM.

This was premised on two broad conceptual considerations that such research should first take cognizance of the reasons for Chinese corporations being in Africa, and an understanding of South-South global dynamics and the way these influence the creation and transfer of knowledge.

From this, the theoretical schema that follows takes the form of a number of conceptual assumptions based at a broader socio-political level, and drawn from the above discussion. These are intended as a starting point for appraising the nature of China's engagement in Africa at organizational level, and are essentially theoretical constructs to be used to further examine available evidence of China's engagement. They are based on: how China's engagement should be in terms of how this may be different to that of the West's engagement; China's professed motivation where wider socio-political motives may modify commercial motives; what Chinese MNEs may be taking to Africa, for example, in terms of paternalism and concepts of harmonious social relations; and, how Confucian relationalism may modify the way its humanism is applied to African workers.

Following the outlining of these assumptions Chinese MNEs' HRM practices abroad are then examined, with current evidence of how this is applied in African countries. From this, specific propositions are developed for future research at organizational level where there is currently a dearth of empirical evidence (see Figure 1).

These theoretical assumptions from the discussion above, which are now taken into an examination of the available evidence of China's engagement at organizational and operational level, are as follows.

*Assumption 1: The historical context of China's presence in Africa is one of anti-imperialism, which appears to lack the motivation to civilize/modernize and proselytize, and to denigrate African values and institutions, and to impose 'modernizing' conditions such as governance, human rights and democracy. This is at variance to the historic context of the presence of Western countries.*

There is much evidence in the literature reviewed above, and in the popular press, of negative assumptions of China's engagement that can be explained by the challenges posed to the predominance of the West through changing geopolitical dynamics. China's presence in particular is heralded as a new imperialism and is challenged by commentators and academic as being sometimes negligent of Africans' human rights (as for example reported by Human Rights Watch, 2011, in Zambia's copper mines). To effectively research Chinese engagement at organizational level it is necessary to historically contextualize this engagement in the light of China's relationship with African countries through the decolonization period, and to be mindful of China's stated general policies of mutual benefit, rather than assuming a motive to directly exploit and/or to modernize, which are general concomitants of a colonizing/imperialist ethos. This assumption would prompt an appraisal at organization level to determine the extent of mutual respect of African and Chinese practices, together with involvement of African managers and workers that may be reinforced by the implications of the second theoretical assumption.

*Assumption 2: There is a strong commercial motive, the need for natural resources to fuel China's industrial growth, and to expand markets also to fuel the domestic economy. The motive to purely exploit may be modified by the historical context of China's coming to Africa, the sense of 'Third World solidarity' and contributing to Africa's development, and the political motivation of China's seeking friends and gaining influence in the world in line with its expanding financial influence.*

Although there may be a need for Chinese MNEs to get the best possible deal (for example for natural resources, and to operate competitively and as cost-effectively as possible, including with regard to wage bills, and employment contracts including the casualization of labour in areas such as Zambia's copper mines indicated by Lee, 2009), if this assumption that commercial exploitation may be modified by friendship and solidarity is reflected at organizational level one might expect to see Chinese-African team-working, mutual learning, and possible reverse diffusion of knowledge (Zhang and Edwards, 2007), and this should be investigated accordingly. Yet this may be moderated by the third assumption.

*Assumption 3: The ethos of superseding individual human rights by the exigencies of national development, and conflating the interests of state, organization and employees has correspondence in the regard for trade unions as a function of organizational HRM, paternalistic management practices, low worker participation, egalitarian wage distribution among employees, which is likely to moderate Western HRM influences on Chinese corporations and impact on management practices of Chinese corporations in African countries.*

Mutual cooperation and respect at the strategic level of policy from the Chinese government and intentions of senior managers and business leaders may reflect weakly at organizational level in view of paternalistic management brought from China, and reflected in HRM practices (which themselves may be moderated Western practices). Yet again, in its turn, paternalistic management may be seen in a more positive light through non-Western eyes (Aycaan, 2006) in view of the fourth theoretical assumption.

*Assumption 4: A growing emphasis on harmonious social relations and social cohesion informed by Confucianism that emphasizes humanity or a capacity for benevolence and compassion (ren), yet within the structure of hierarchical relations, duty and obligation, and emphasizing a person's social embeddedness, particularistic and paternalistic relationships appear to have a correspondence with African Ubuntu, and may suggest synergies with indigenous African values.*

If Chinese managers are displaying paternalistic management styles this may incorporate humanistic values together with a sense of hierarchy, and be reflected at organizational level in regarding ones staff, and looking after them, as one would one's children. This needs further investigation when interrogating HRM practices. Yet, again, this may be moderated by the fifth assumption.

*Assumption 5: Confucian relationalism may qualify ren in that collectivism is held to be specific to in-group members, and therefore may not apply to African employees.*

This is an assumption that should be borne in mind, although as discussed above, *ren* may well be directed towards African staff. Yet this assumption should also be informed by the reports of Chinese nationalistic tendencies mentioned above ((Dikkoter, 1994; Jacques, 2009; Shen, 2009) which may reinforce an exclusive in-group ethos among Chinese managers in corporations in Africa.

These theoretical assumptions can now be used to interrogating the available data on Chinese organization in Africa, and through setting an appropriate research agenda. However, Mohan and Power (2008: 23) warn of the importance of ‘..disaggregating ‘China’ and ‘Africa’ since neither represents a coherent and uniform set of motivations and opportunities’. Lees (2009) speaks of the necessity to ‘..re-evaluate the different logics and impacts of, for instance, extractive, industrial and merchant capitals from China which are all active in today's Africa. Although the current author is aware of this issue, a detailed analysis of these further sets of variables, as well as the different sectors and sizes of Chinese organizations operating in different African countries that may have different motives, is unfortunately beyond the present scope of this article. China's presence in Africa still appears overwhelmingly to be through state owned enterprises where one might expect some degree of commonality: in 2006 there were over 800 Chinese enterprises operating in Africa, at least 674 or 84.25% of these were state-owned enterprises (Alden & Davies, 2006). This is the main focus of the current analysis.

## **What Do Chinese Companies Take To Africa?**

The next stage of this analysis is to interrogate the available evidence on China's engagement at organizational level, to understand better how the above theoretical assumptions may or may not be reflected at this level of analysis. This first looks at the nature of employment in Chinese SOEs, as this has appeared as one of the most contentious issues in the literature examined above;

then at the extent to which this creates local jobs in contrast to contentions that Chinese companies bring to Africa their own workforces; next, in view of the type of employment this appears to create, the extent to which Chinese MNEs contribute to up-skilling their African workforce; and then to look at the nature of community engagement of such organizations. Following this, the final area examined is perhaps the most difficult in light of the lack of empirical evidence: the issue of mutual learning (see Table 1).

### ***The nature of employment in Chinese organizations***

Shen (2007) reminds us that although international HRM and industrial relations practices are informed by home-country practices, MNE managers cannot assume a simple transfer of systems to overseas subsidiaries because of political, legal, economic and socio-cultural differences. Studying eleven Chinese MNEs with subsidiaries in a range of developed and developing nations, the research indicated that the companies generally paid higher rates than the market average in developed countries to compensate for the lack of training and development opportunities which the MNEs were weak in as well as employment participation and involvement, and these higher wages attracted host country national while those 'soft' aspects rarely caused labour disputes. Yet subsidiaries in developing countries (including in those in Africa) paid low wages with poor working conditions, in contrast to the generally good working conditions they operated in developed countries.

There was a tendency therefore to localize employment standards but also in the developing countries these standards tended to be lower than their Western counterparts, explaining why most labour disputes took place in the MNEs' developing country subsidiaries rather than in their developed country ones, even though disputes were less than in the home country. However, Shen (2007) also maintains that labour standards were to a certain extent influenced by the low labour standards in China, and that the (generally negative) attitudes of senior managers toward unions in the host country subsidiaries, including recognition and involvement in negotiating employment terms, were mainly influenced by the home country industrial relations system.

These findings are reflected in a study of Chinese investment in Africa by the African Labour Research Network (Baah & Jauch, 2009). The authors summarize their findings across ten countries in this area as follows.

'Although working conditions at Chinese companies in Africa differ across countries and sectors, there are some common trends such as tense labour relations, hostile attitudes by Chinese employers towards trade unions, violations of workers' rights, poor working conditions and unfair labour practices. There is a virtual absence of employment contracts and the Chinese employers unilaterally determine wages and benefits. African workers are often employed as "casual workers", depriving them of benefits that they are legally entitled to'.

Their findings also indicate that Chinese employers are among the lowest paying in Africa compared with others in the same sector. They give the example of African workers in the copper mines of Zambia being paid 30 per cent less than those in other copper mines in the country. Within the Chinese companies they surveyed it appeared that only workers with strong union representation achieved pay rates above the national average. Yet they go on to explain that following the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s with wide-scale privatizations and mass retrenchments, Africa's trade unions are weak as they struggle to recruit non-permanent workers and those in the informal economy, saying that 'Employers, including the Chinese, take advantage of flexible labour markets and undermine collective bargaining' (Baah & Jauch, 2009: 14). They also note differences among countries, sectors and individual companies, observing that 'In Nigeria, for example, there were Chinese companies with exemplary working conditions and labour relations alongside others where workers rights are frequently abused' (Baah & Jauch, 2009: 66). Human Rights Watch (2011) also report the poor conditions in Chinese

MNEs in the Zambian coppers mines, with local workers denied access to trades unions, yet noting these conditions had improved notably.

It is difficult to make a direct comparison between employment conditions in Chinese-owned organizations and locally-owned organizations in African countries, as there is a dearth of wide scale studies of employment relations outside South Africa. While Chinese MNEs are accused by such studies as the one discussed above of ignoring workers' rights in African countries, Wood (2011: 316) tells us for example that in Mozambique generally although labour laws have been changed in areas such as strengthening minimum wages '...these have been widely ignored by employers'. In Nigeria generally Ovadje and Ankomah (2001: 180) reported that 'Given salaries are very poor, a pay rise occurs only after hard bargaining and sometimes violent strikes'. Debra (2001: 202) reported that 'in spite of the influential role of the trade union movement in Ghana, many employers still treat trade unions with suspicion'. Suspicious attitudes reported of Chinese managers towards unions (Baah & Jauch, 2009) appear in line with local attitudes generally and this perhaps reinforces Shen's (2007) assertion that Chinese companies tend to localize employment standards. Brautigam (2011a: 12) also reports that in terms of low pay and hiring contract labour to avoid paying benefits 'A study by Namibian labor unions pointed out that the Chinese were following the same practices as local African firms'.

The other direct comparison that is difficult is with employment in the informal economy. Liimatainen/ILO (2002) has estimated that in Zambia 43 per cent of urban employment is in the informal economy, in Mozambique 30-40 per cent of urban households were dependent on the informal economy; and, in Ghana an estimated 89 per cent of the labour force was employed in the informal sector. Certainly, for example in Zambia it may be possible to make a like-for-like comparison of employment conditions in copper mining firms, yet in terms of job creation, low wages and poor conditions prevailing generally, high employment, and a high dependency on informal earning activities, a different type of analysis has to be made, and beyond the scope of the current work, while it is possible to conclude:

*Proposition 1: Employment conditions may be expected to be generally low in Chinese MNEs, yet commensurate with those of local firms, while generally lower than Western MNEs.*

### ***Expatriates versus local employment: creating local jobs***

Kingdon, Sandefur and Teal (2005) argue '...that the failure of African labor markets to create good paying jobs has resulted in excess labor supply in the form of either open unemployment or a growing self-employment sector'. What is China's role in taking up that excess supply? This appears to be another area where a Western antithesis towards China's engagement with Africa gives rise to negative assumptions. Brautigam (2011a: 4-5) points to the common assumption that Chinese '...companies bring in all their own workers and refuse to hire Africans'. She recounts that, as was seen above, this mainly applies to oil-rich countries where local labour is relatively expensive, but otherwise fieldworkers have largely reported Chinese projects having a majority of Africans in their workforce, and 'For example, a researcher who recently visited Cameroon expecting to find large groups of Chinese workers found instead that every construction site she visited had Cameroonian workers under Chinese managers.' This is also reported in Chen, Goldstein and Orr's (2009) study of Chinese construction firms where, although much variation among countries and organizations, on average Chinese organizations employ half Chinese and half local labour, although in skilled jobs this drops to 10 per cent local employees. They also note the tendency towards more localization of labour. This may be in view of Chen and Orr's (2009) report that Chinese construction firms affirm that they are in Africa for the long haul.

Research undertaken by the Centre for Chinese Studies at Stellenbosch University also provides some support for this, as well as qualifying it by reporting that:

'..... it was noted on several occasions that the use of Chinese labour was dependent on the level of and availability of skills in the local market. In instances where the requisite

skills were available locally, the preference was to use Chinese labour in the capacity of supervision, engineering, design or at a more senior level with tasks involving technical expertise, such as the grading of roads and the operation of sophisticated machinery. Chinese companies have no automatic preference for Chinese labour, but given the lack of specialised skills in many African markets where aid projects are being implemented, the import of Chinese skilled labour is sometimes required. ....In these cases it is easy to note where misperceptions around the employment practices of Chinese companies may have arisen, as it may appear that Chinese companies are importing manual labour, when, in reality, Chinese labourers are brought in for their skills.’ (Davies et al/CCS, 2008: 17).

This suggests that:

*Proposition 2: Chinese organizations are contributing to local labour markets by taking up excess labour mainly by employing unskilled African labour.*

### ***Up-skilling of local labour***

The extent to which Chinese MNEs may be contributing directly to the up-skilling of predominantly unskilled labour, if there is a tendency to import skilled Chinese labour, needs also to be investigated in view of a lack of evidence in this area. In a more general sense, Brautigam (2011b) reports a commitment by the Chinese to providing short-term training to 15,000 African over three years in poverty reduction, new leather technologies and other areas not specifically linked to projects, and to train 1,500 principals and teachers, 1,000 doctors, nurses and health sector managers in the thirty countries receiving new hospitals. Vocational training also figures highly in China’s aid-financed construction, with centres being opened in Ethiopia, Uganda and Angola. She gives other such examples, yet the extent to which Chinese MNEs are involved directly in such capacity building (a clear strategic goal of China’s overall engagement with Africa) remains to be investigated. At this stage it may only be possible to conclude as follows:

*Proposition 3. The direct up-skilling of unskilled labour in Chinese organization may be limited, and confined to specific capacity building programmes.*

### ***The level of engagement with communities***

According to China’s Africa policy issued in January 2006, China will: ‘unswervingly carry forward the tradition of China-Africa friendship, and, proceeding from the fundamental interests of both the Chinese and African peoples, establish and develop a new type of strategic partnership with Africa, featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange’ (MOFA, 2006). Yet it is becoming apparent from the discussion above that this type of relationship is being forged at a strategic level, rather than at an interpersonal level of employment relations in organizations. Engagement with communities also appears to be at this level. Hence a major contribution appears to have taken place in China’s engagement towards social and economic development where Brautigam (2011a: 4) reminds us that ‘In contrast to most donors, China ..... spreads its aid relatively evenly across the African continent, in every country where China has official ties. Only two African countries have not been recipients of Chinese aid: oil-rich Libya, and Swaziland, which has always had official diplomatic ties with Taiwan’. It is not the place here to discuss in detail the nature of such aid, other than to note that it is substantially different to the West, built on its own experience of combating poverty through developing infrastructure and production, and influenced by the requests of recipient countries it emphasizes business and downplays official development assistance, providing loans for infrastructure intended to reduce the high cost of production, subsidies for joint ventures to create employment and local capacity, yet also creating demand for Chinese machinery and equipment; and encouraging trade with preferential loans for buyers of Chinese goods and tariff-free access for commodities by low-income African countries (Brautigam, 2011b).

It appears that strategically China is engaging with the needs of African communities in providing important infrastructure, contributing to agricultural projects in response to needs filtered through government. Yet, again, there is lack of research on Chinese MNEs' direct engagement with local communities, but it is unlikely from the available evidence that there is any deliberate attempt of Chinese managers to engage directly other than for recruitment. Chinese expatriates tend to live in compounds in a frugal way and appear not to have much connection with the local community (Brautigam, 2011a). Although Mohan and Tan-Mullens (2009) contend that this applies specifically to technical and less skilled Chinese on fixed term contracts, it is still possible to conclude as follows:

*Proposition 4: There will be little direct contact, other than through recruitment activities, of Chinese management with the local communities within which their organizations are located except where they are involved in government supported and aided community development projects as part of a strategic initiative.*

### ***The degree of organizational learning, cross-fertilization and reverse diffusion***

Again, this is an area where strategically Chinese policy suggests cooperation and mutual learning, yet there is a lack of research investigating this at organizational level, with available contextual evidence suggesting a minimum of mutual learning. This organizational context includes language problems. This is an issue reported by Chen, Goldstein and Ryan (2009) of Chinese MNE managers in the construction sector, and more generally the African Labour Research Network study reports that 'Unions identified language barrier as one of the factors hampering smooth labour relations in Chinese companies. Chinese managers find it difficult to communicate in English, which is the official language in all the countries where the study was conducted.' (Baah and Jauch, 2009: 74). This study goes as far as proposing that '...union organisers dealing with the Chinese must learn the Chinese language.' (p. 74). This may be one of the most fundamental issues to overcome at organizational level in terms of mutual learning. It could be supposed that this may be the case in joint venture situations, where local and Chinese managers may have communication problems. A number of Chinese development projects are delivered through on-going joint venture, with an express mission of mutual cooperation (Davies et al/CSS, 2008, although Chen and Or, 2009, reported a reluctance of MNEs in the construction sector to be involved in joint ventures with local partners). With a lack of organizational level data it is difficult to assess aspects such as language and other communication issues, yet joint ventures may well provide a key to more substantial mutual learning and cross-fertilization.

The reported Western modernizing ethos in Africa (Brautigam, 2011a) may militate against reverse diffusion or '...the transfer of practice from foreign subsidiaries to operations in the country of origin' discussed by Zhang and Edwards (2007: 2147). In contrast, one might expect the professed mission of mutual learning (MOFA, 2006) would facilitate reverse diffusion in Chinese MNEs operating in Africa. Given the issues discussed above at organizational level, this may not be the case. Hence:

*Proposition 5: Mutual learning may be hampered by poor language skills, which may militate against reverse diffusion.*

## **Conclusions and Implications**

### ***The Strategic/Operational Divide***

The perceptions of China's motives and role in African countries appear to vary from one institutional level to another. Hence the literature reviewed above indicates a suspicion of Western governments towards China. This is also reflected in statements from supra-governmental organizations with Campbell (2008: 92-3) reporting a spokesperson of the World Bank and IMF saying that China has '...undermined years of painstaking efforts to arrange conditional debt

relief', and that 'Paul Wolfowitz argued that China would weaken the hold of the IMF and World Bank over Africa and accused it of fostering corruption' going on to say that 'This was before the head of the World Bank was himself removed because of corruption'. Yet the responses from African governments have been positive (Brautigam, 2011b). This has in part been reflected by African citizens themselves. For example Brautigam (2011a: 13) reports on a poll taken in Cameroon where '70% of the respondents...were disturbed by the Chinese influx while at the same time 92%...admitted that China is good for Cameroon's economy. Also 81% welcomed Chinese products which benefited poorer parts of the population'. It seems that the main in-country antagonism towards China's engagement is coming from the trade unions. This may be, as evidenced in the above discussions, that there is a divide between strategic level engagement, and operational level within work organizations. The explanation proffered here is that each theoretical assumption in the current analysis modifies the other at organizational level (Figure 1), leading to the propositions offered above for future investigation.

Hence there is evidence of engagement with local communities at programme and project level, but not at the level of work organizations themselves. Jobs are created, but conditions are often poor. Capacity is built through specific up-skilling projects, yet there is still little evidence of this taking place at the level of the work organization where Chinese employers take on predominantly unskilled African labour. Although the theoretical assumptions offered suggest far more synergies between Chinese and African values, and indeed in previous engagements signifying mutual solidarity through struggles in the decolonization period, this should be qualified by commercial interests suggesting a need to work as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible including not paying above the local rate for labour and reflecting local employment conditions including holding a proportion of the workforce as casual labour (Lee, 2009). Chinese managers also bring with them to Africa their values, assumptions, management styles and attitudes reflected in the theoretical assumptions 3, 4 and 5 (Figure 1). These suggest a high degree of paternalism, regard for hierarchy, low regard for trade unions, and perhaps even a relationalism that may disadvantage outsiders.

### ***Implications for managers***

That mutual learning in Chinese organizations may be hampered by poor language skills (Proposition 5, Figure 1) may indicate that Chinese managers are ill-prepared to come to Africa. Synergies that may be gained from similar humanistic value systems may not be capitalized upon through a lack of awareness on the part of both Chinese and Africans. There may be more to be gained by this in Chinese-African joint ventures where joint management could more beneficially explore how to exploit these similarities. Yet there may also be much to be gained by Chinese managers better understanding the compatibilities of Chinese and Africa value systems, where they manage an African workforce. MNEs from developed Western countries may be able to offer better working conditions and wages, whereas Chinese MNEs, from a less developed economy, and having often to compete with Western firms in Africa on the basis of cost, could still draw upon closer synergistic relationships than sometimes Western firms are able to do. Both Dia (1996) and Jackson (2004) describe the disconnection between the culture of Western firms and African employees' family and community life. Where there may also be a tendency among Western firms to denigrate African community culture, Chinese MNEs could do more, perhaps through the family-oriented programmes that are a feature in China and discussed above (Jackson and Bak, 1998, Cooke, 2008). Western organizations could also learn from this.

Although Chinese MNEs appear to have done much to provide jobs in a context of over-supply of labour, they could do more in terms of contributing directly to skills development, engaging with communities, mutual learning and looking at how employment conditions might be improved in some areas. Yet these areas are still much under-research, and researchers still have much to do in being able to inform practicing managers operating in Africa.

### ***Setting a research agenda***

Any research agenda should take into account the theoretical assumptions offered in the current work, in order first to approach this area in a balanced and critical way. Despite academic 'objectivity' there is always a danger that entrenched negative attitudes can affect research, as has been shown with Western research on management and HRM in Africa (Jackson, 2004). In this regard Postcolonial Theory as mentioned above may go some way in informing a critical regard to the way knowledge is generated and transferred, being mindful of geopolitical dynamics, which the current work suggests are changing.

Figure 1 provides a beginning for taking into consideration certain theoretical assumptions derived from a critical analysis of: how China's engagement should be in terms of how this may be different to that of the West's engagement; China's professed motivation where wider socio-political motives may modify commercial motives; what Chinese MNEs may be taking to Africa, and; how Confucian relationalism may modify the way its humanism is applied to African workers. These assumptions were used in the current work to appraise the reported realities at organizational level, while deriving research propositions that can be used to hypothesize potential relationships in employment conditions, creations of local jobs, up-skilling of African labour, engagement with communities and mutual learning. That the link between strategic and operational levels appears tenuous needs further investigation through more systematic empirical research at organizational level. Currently, China's engagement in Africa has not sufficiently captured the attention of management, HRM and employment relations scholars. It is hoped that the current article will go some way in doing that and providing at least one pathway to informed empirical research.

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