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# Chinese Adaptations: African Agency, Fragmented Community and Social Capital Creation in Ghana

Katy N. LAM

**Abstract:** Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in Ghana perceive themselves as vulnerable, as regularly they encounter problems and their businesses fail. The adaption experiences of Chinese entrepreneurs in Africa, especially non-traders, remain largely unstudied. By looking at the interactions of newly arrived and established Chinese migrants with institutional actors, partners, local employees and other Chinese in Ghana, this paper shows the multiple dimensions of how Chinese entrepreneurs' migration adaptation evolves, and how they create social capital to develop their businesses in Ghana. From the Chinese perspective, established entrepreneurs condemn the recent numerous "new" Chinese in Ghana as part of the root cause of problems, on account of their "poor quality and bad behaviour"; by comparison, the newly arrived Chinese attribute their challenges to deficiencies in the local people and institutions of the host country. The negative experiences of Chinese entrepreneurs in Ghana provide further evidence for, not only African, but also local Chinese agency from below, and suggest that the rising Chinese presence does not necessarily improve the social status of Chinese entrepreneurs or create a stronger, more unified Chinese community on the continent.

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**Keywords:** China, Ghana, African agency, migration adaptation, social capital

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## Introduction

One day a local teenage boy came to my shop and stole a suitcase. My local worker and I ran out and chased him. Finally, we caught him in the middle of the market. However, local people from the crowd came and surrounded us. They shouted at us and questioned why we could treat a kid like that. The crowd accused my local worker because, as a Ghanaian, she was helping a Chinese but not her people. My worker then dragged me back to the shop. (Ms. Y., a Chinese suitcase trader in Makola Market, Accra, Ghana).

Chinese migrants often shared their negative experiences, difficulties and even failures during the author's fieldwork in Ghana. Considering themselves as "vulnerable", the Chinese migrants' perception of their status in Ghana runs contrary to the widely publicized image of a "powerful China in Africa", a representation common in international and African media reports and political discourse since the 2000s.

In the popular image, the "Chinese" on the African continent are often presented as strong, monolithic actors, who are implicitly equal to the Chinese state, whereas the "Africans" are undifferentiated and regarded as victims, who are powerless in the encounter (Large 2007; Strauss and Saavedra 2009). The analysis and images of China in Africa projected in media reports and political discourse are consistently homogeneous and simplistic (Mawdsley 2008: 518). Certain condemnations of Chinese behaviour in Africa are not accompanied by proof; for example, rumours about China exporting convict labour to developing countries, including Africa, were circulated extensively and accepted as a fact without a single piece of evidence (Yan and Sautman 2012).

The Western media's tendency to focus mainly on the negative aspects of the Chinese in Africa contributes to the construction and propagation of the "bad China" or "Fu Manchu" ("the amoral, greedy and coldly indifferent Chinese" mirrored "the sometimes mistaken or frustrated but essentially well-intentioned West (Dr. Livingstone) in Africa") image across the world (Mawdsley 2008: 523). The "Chinese-ness" takes on a greater importance than the underlying, larger problems reflected by the Chinese presence. Yan and Sautman (2013) illustrate how labour conflicts in a Chinese-related mining company in Zambia are reported and instrumentalized. It is the "Chinese-ness" of the conflict that is often put in the spotlight and adapted as appropriate for an "anti-Chinese" discourse by interna-

tional and Zambian media and politicians. The labour discontent in fact reflects a persistent socio-economic problem in the country that is historically rooted in the privatization process that took place under the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s (Lee 2009: 649–650).

The dominant, “monolithic China” perspective overlooks the multiplicities of actors and the dynamics taking place in China–Africa encounters. Reacting to this overemphasis, numerous ethnographical studies published in recent years have helped to deconstruct this unitary image and provide multiple perspectives, ranging from labour relations, migration trajectories and socio-economic profiles of Chinese traders in African cities. (For example, but not exclusively: Alden, Large and Soares de Oliveira 2008; Kernen and Vulliet 2008; Lee 2009; Dobler 2009; Sautman and Yan 2009; Haugen and Carling 2005; Park 2009.)

But only recently have several scholars explicitly highlighted the existence of the reverse dynamic: weak Chinese and strong Africans – for example, the Chinese as “vulnerable employers” (Giese and Thiel 2012), and “African agency” by African actors against the Chinese to “advance their own interests and aspirations” (Mohan and Lampert 2013: 109). According to the French sociologist Jean-François Bayart, Africans have always taken an active role when faced with external interference, such as during colonization and the imposition of the SAPs in the 1980s (Bayart 2000). Rubbers (2009), for example, illustrates how, even nowadays, the business success of European immigrant entrepreneurs is significantly subject to their relationships with local administrative actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Taking Ghana as the country focus, this paper<sup>1</sup> aims to provide further empirical evidence on the dynamics of Chinese adaptation and local agency power in Africa. The author will first look into how negative experiences are generated through Chinese migrant entrepreneurs’ interactions with the three types of Ghanaian actor that the Chinese encounter most frequently and that play an important role in

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their migrant life: institutional actors, business partners and employees.

Additionally, in the context of the substantial rise in Chinese migrant populations since 2000 (Ma Mung Kuang 2008: 645–647; Park 2009: 5), studies focusing on the internal dynamics among Chinese migrant populations remain limited, but provide some clues to suggest that the Chinese community is rather fragmented (Ho 2008; Giese 2013: 146). Dobler (2009) argued that the considerable increase in the number of Chinese traders in Namibia has led to social stratification among the Chinese migrants, especially between the established and the newly arrived. Furthermore, fierce competition among Chinese companies in some African countries is often reported (for example, Kernén and Vulliet 2008: 82; Haugen and Carling 2005: 631; Dobler 2009: 716; Giese and Thiel 2012: 4).

In Ghana, the Chinese migrants' sense of vulnerability does not correspond to the fact that ties between the Chinese and African governments have intensified and Chinese economic power on the continent has become more visible since the turn of the twenty-first century. Established Chinese entrepreneurs condemn the recent numerous "new" Chinese, whose "bad quality and behaviour" are part of the root causes of the problems; whereas, the newly arrived Chinese attribute their challenges to the deficiency of the local people and the institutions of the host country. These contrasting opinions suggest that the Chinese experience in Ghana is diverse and evolving, and that the community is fragmented and heterogeneous.

Along this vein, it will be argued that, in addition to the agency power exercised by Ghanaians, the Chinese also have to adjust to that exercised by "other Chinese" in Ghana. The substantial increase in the number of Chinese businessmen operating in similar business sectors in Ghana over the last decade and their diverse adaptation strategies could cause disturbances and conflicts among this group, as in other African countries.

The first Chinese settled in Ghana in the late 1950s; several decades of Chinese migration to Ghana will be useful in making comparisons and understanding how adaptation evolves and improves with time. The author will document the experiences of Chinese business people from diverse sectors, especially those "hidden" from the public scene, like Chinese manufacturers and entrepreneurs who do not own shops in the visible commodity market in Accra. Chinese entre-

preneurs running businesses outside markets in African capital cities still remain largely unstudied (Gu 2009). By recounting the experiences and strategies of established and newly arrived Chinese in dealing with the four types of local actor (Ghanaian institutional actors, business partners and employees, along with other Chinese), this paper aims to provide multiple Chinese perspectives from below on how local agency affects them, and what resources they create, and how, in order to respond to this agency during the different phases of their migration adaption process in Ghana.

## Migration Adaptation and Social Capital

Regarding migration adaption and resources, theoretical considerations suggest that, right from the beginning of the migration adaptation process, a migrant has to deal with the question, consciously or not, of “how to acculturate” (Berry 1997: 9). A classic definition of acculturation refers to

those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups (Berry 1997: 7).

At the beginning, acculturation can be a negative or even disruptive experience. Nevertheless, it usually leads to positive adaptation after some time. Integration is viewed as the most effective acculturation strategy for successful adaptation, for which “willingness for mutual accommodation” is a key feature of integration (Berry 1997: 24).

In international migration studies, social capital is one of the most studied adaptation resources, because of its potential to substitute other forms of capital: human capital (for example, education, skills, professional experience (Potocky-Tripodi 2004: 60)) and financial capital (how much one has in the bank account). Reviewing the numerous definitions of “social capital”, Zhou and Lin (2005) concluded:

Social capital is not lodged in the individual but in the structure of social organizations, patterns of social relations, or processes of interactions between individuals and organizations. That is, social capital does not consist of resources that are held by individuals or by groups but of processes of goal-directed social relations embedded in particular social structures (Zhou and Lin 2005: 261).

Social capital can be assessed, created and mobilized in social networks and relationships, and it enhances an individual's human capital to attain a better socio-economic status (Lin 1999). Therefore, for a migrant, whether his/ her network can create useful social capital plays an important role in migration adaptation (Portes 1998).

More and more international migration studies recognize that immigrants' original ethnic-minority communities in the host country and ethnic solidarity are important sources of social capital for positive migration experiences (Zhou and Bankston 1994; Zhou and Lin 2005). Increasingly, the conventional "best adaptation strategy" theory of assimilation "where the best adjusted are those who are most acculturated by abandoning their group membership" is contested (Zhou and Bankston 1994: 842; Alba and Nee 1997). Nevertheless, the surge of Chinese international migrants with heterogeneous socio-economic backgrounds (in terms of, for example, education, provincial origin or profession) in the last decade has resulted in various strategies and levels of ability to create resources for adaptation among Chinese migrants. The class segmentation in the Chinese migrant populations contributes to a fragmented community, which offers little solidarity to mobilize resources to defend itself collectively as an ethnic minority (Zhou and Lin 2005: 279–280).

Even though most international migration studies have investigated immigrants in developed countries, social capital theories have been applied widely in understanding diverse social relationships, not exclusively in the migration area (Portes 1998; Lin 1999). In addition, the majority of Chinese entrepreneurs moved to Ghana under their own initiative without any linkage to or support from the Chinese state. Therefore, it will be useful to check if and how these Chinese migrants create or mobilize social capital as a resource to enhance their adaption.

## Methodology

The data used in this study was collected during two field research trips to Ghana between November 2009 and December 2010 with a total duration of six months, using semi-structured interviews and the participant observation method. Chinese private business in Africa is often taken as the visible Chinese shops concentrated in the commodity markets of numerous African capital cities. However, in the

course of the first field study, the author discovered that, although numerous Chinese shops are located in the Makola commodity market in Accra, a significant portion of Chinese entrepreneurs operates in other sectors and outside this visible spot. This matches the observations of Giese and Thiel (2012: 4) that there are approximately 147 Chinese trading companies operating in Ghana, which is approximately one-third of the total 500 Chinese companies registered in Ghana (Chinese Embassy in Ghana 2011). By participating in social events and visiting social venues that are popular among Chinese, the author was able to encounter these “invisible” Chinese from different sectors and social backgrounds.

As part of the research, the author interviewed people from more than 80 Chinese companies in Ghana, with the length of interviews lasting from a couple of hours to several hours over the course of multiple sessions. Most interviews took place outside a formal interview setting. The author spent hours in their offices and shops to understand their everyday interactions with Ghanaians, and was invited to numerous dinners, during which the Chinese shared much of their business and living experiences, some of which were difficult to touch upon in a formal interview format. The interviewees became more frank and willing to share details of their personal experiences in casual chat, once they felt more socially familiar with the author. A significant part of the most interesting information was collected during these numerous dinners, chats in shops or houses or cars, in karaoke clubs and casinos and at sports venues. In addition, the author’s experience as a voluntary interpreter (English and Mandarin) for several Chinese businessmen in their negotiations with local actors (partners, potential business partners and employees) provided more in-depth insight into the true nature of these interactions. Therefore, apart from semi-structured interviews, participant observation was an important investigative approach for this study.

## Chinese Migration to Ghana

### The “Established” Chinese

The first Chinese entrepreneurs in Ghana were Hong Kong industrialists who came to set up factories producing enamelware, textiles, tobacco, steel products, thong sandals and other products exclusively



for local and regional markets in the late 1950s (Anonymous 26 2009). In the 1980s, Taiwanese entrepreneurs started to arrive in Ghana and operate in the manufacturing and trading sectors (Anonymous 1 2010). At the same time, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) from the Chinese mainland started to seek international business opportunities during the 1980s. The first Chinese SOEs in Ghana were mainly businesses from the construction sector that had won development project contracts financed by Chinese cooperation programmes, or from international organizations and developed-nation cooperation programmes. Other Chinese SOEs active in light industries came to Ghana looking for export markets in the mid-1990s. Some of these SOEs left, but certain branch representatives decided to remain in Ghana and set up their own private businesses (Anonymous 2 2009; Anonymous 3 2010).

The Chinese community in Ghana perceives these businessmen and their Chinese employees from Hong Kong and Taiwan, together with the management staff and ex-representatives of Chinese SOEs, as being “established” and more successful. Until the late 1990s, the Chinese population in Ghana numbered around a couple of thousand (Anonymous 2 2009; Anonymous 3 2010).

## The “New” Chinese

As in many other African countries, starting in the 2000s, numerous newly minted private entrepreneurs from China started arriving in Ghana, along with a few more representatives of Chinese state-owned construction and telecommunications enterprises. These new arrivals operated predominantly in the trade business and increasingly in other sectors like real estate, manufacturing, medical, advertisement printing, restaurants and hotels, gold-mining, farming and intermediary services. These “new” Chinese entrepreneurs and their Chinese employees outnumber the “old” Chinese population in Ghana and are much more visible, as many traders keep shop in the biggest commodity market in Accra, Makola Market.

The Chinese population in Ghana was estimated to range from less than 10,000 in the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, as per several scholars (Sautman and Yan 2007; Ho 2008: 59–60; Giese and Thiel 2012: 3), to 20,000 in 2010, according to the Chinese Embassy in Ghana, which received the figure from the Ghanaian Immigration Department (Anonymous 25 2009; Anonymous 24 2010). The Em-

bassy alone cannot document the number of Chinese arrivals, as Chinese nationals are not obligated to report to the Embassy upon their arrival in Ghana. Several attempts at direct enquiry at the Immigration Department (Anonymous 27 2010), through interviews and official letters, did not yield a figure either. Even though department officials claimed that the relevant statistic did exist, they were not ready to communicate this with the wider public.

In terms of location, the businesses and housing residential accommodation of the Chinese is dispersed throughout in Accra and its neighbouring city of Tema, where most of the Chinese factories and the port for incoming containers are located. A handful of Chinese traders, construction companies and Chinese restaurants and hotels are based in Kumasi, an ancient royal city in central Ghana.

## Adaptation to Ghanaian Institutional Actors

Mohan and Lampert (2013) highlight that African actors within and beyond the state level are able to exert agency power in order to advance individual interests. Elsewhere in Africa, officials have been reported as asking for personal favours from the Chinese (Haugen and Carling 2005: 656). Compared to the past, in recent years the Chinese in Ghana are increasingly finding themselves targets of extortion by Ghanaian officials. As a result, Chinese businesspeople in Ghana do regularly give “tips” (小费, *xiaofei*, extra money) to officials, either upon “request” from the latter or pro-actively as an incentive for officials to bypass red tape. Recent arrivals to Ghana reported that they were surprised by the levels of corruption relating to everyday micro-administrative procedures, something they said they experienced less and less over the years in China.

## The Newly Arrived Chinese and Everyday Administration

The tightening of visa restrictions is an instrument for controlling, or demonstrating the African government’s control over, the Chinese presence. Dobler (2008) illustrates how, in Namibia, the issuance of working permits for Chinese nationals was restricted following a growing negative debate on China in the media. Tang (2010: 364) also reported that complex visa and work permit procedures were a gen-

eral problem that made it harder to engage Chinese staff to work in Angola and in the DRC. In Ghana, visa applications depend on the changing political atmosphere and public debate, as well as immigrants' personal networks. Chinese companies reported, for example, that their visa applications were suspended or took much longer to process during the period surrounding the Ghanaian presidential election at the end of 2008. In early 2009, Chinese traders in Makola Market were the subject of a high-profile visa inspection by the police. Ms. Y., who had come to Ghana the year before, was one of the Chinese traders affected by the clampdown. She said:

The police came to the market and caught a dozen Chinese, including myself, as they suspected that we did not have visas and all the necessary documents for our business. Without being given a chance to explain, we were taken to the police station. The Chinese Embassy sent someone to the police. That person [from the Chinese Embassy] read a text to us in *English* about what the Embassy and we could do. But we didn't understand a word. Someone among us understood some English and translated to us afterwards. The Embassy person then left without really helping us. In the end, as in fact we had all the necessary documents and we found a solution ourselves, we were released after eight hours (Anonymous 4 2009).

The "solution" undoubtedly involved the transfer of money. Active members of a Chinese association proposed the organization of a strike to protest against what they considered "unfair treatment of the Chinese", but the Chinese Embassy "discouraged" them after learning about it (Anonymous 5 2009). This is one example where the new Chinese entrepreneurs say they have found the Chinese Embassy unhelpful when they have problems. Without adequate local knowledge and networks, the new Chinese feel obliged to pay a "tip" in order to "oil the wheels" of daily administration.

Obtaining a visa is also subject to personal networks and individual strategies, both of which are areas in which inexperienced Chinese migrants are less resourceful. When unable to apply for a visa successfully by themselves or simply to save themselves the effort, many Chinese will resort to an agent, either Chinese or Ghanaian. This strategy is practical for those unfamiliar with local procedures and language; however, they may easily fall foul of procedures. For instance, Mr. M., a factory owner, was subject to a visa check by immigration officials while his passport was with an agent for a visa

extension. Although Mr. M. did not have a receipt issued by the Immigration Department to prove that his passport had been sent for a visa application, it did not cost him much to resolve the situation,

Those officials did not want to listen to our explanation. They just wanted money. In the end, we gave them 20 cedi [approximately 15 USD] and they left (Anonymous 6 2010).

For Mr. K. and his Chinese colleagues in their curtain shop, it was much more expensive to send the officials away: At first, they tried to apply for their working visas directly through the Immigration Department, but their request was declined. So they asked an agent to apply on their behalf. In the meantime, immigration officials came to check their visa while their application was still being processed through the agent. Because they did not have a work visa to show, they were brought to the police station and fined 2,000 GHS [1500 USD] per person.

In the end, we negotiated to 1,000 cedi [approximately 700 USD] per person. [...] The officials even sent their wives to choose curtains at our shop [...] perhaps it was part of the remaining fine (Anonymous 7 2010).

By contrast, Mr. C., who works in the gold-mining business, considered the fine to be money well spent, as long as the visa was forthcoming. He attributes his smooth visa applications to his good relationship with the immigration officials, a relationship that is maintained by paying substantial fines and giving presents regularly:

Recently, we needed to get visas for eight people. My friend in Immigration told me that it was somewhat difficult to process all of them together these days and proposed to do two first. Several days later, he told me that all eight visas had been done. This friend just called me saying that he wanted a new mobile phone. I said no problem. I will keep my promise and give him one in two days (Anonymous 8 2010).

Similarly, with regard to tax declarations, established Chinese companies hire their own Ghanaian auditors to deal with officials directly, whereas new and small-scale businesses tend to negotiate by themselves. The tax amount is sometimes not related to business volume, but rather to how businessmen negotiate with officials. Mr. H., a shoe trader, was negotiating with an official from the Tax Bureau about the amount of a fine for non-declared business profits when the au-

thor visited his shop one day. His partner took me out of the shop and said,

If there are other people around, the official will be afraid of being recorded. [...] The Tax Bureau doesn't provide a payment receipt for fines. The fine amount can be negotiated. It can be 10,000 even if the tax you have to pay is 3,000. But the official will say an amount of 30,000 at the beginning so you have to negotiate (Anonymous 9 2010).

Chinese entrepreneurs frequently have to deal with local officials in relation to administrative procedures. Because of language barriers, unfamiliarity with their rights and the local regulations, or simply for convenience, the newly arrived Chinese, in particular, find themselves in a difficult position to negotiate or decline if a handy shortcut is offered. They feel that they cannot easily alter the practice of extortion. They either consider it a local custom because “here people [from the government] like tips” (also known as “fines”, where Ghanaian officials are concerned) or react with what they regard as pragmatism to “buy” convenience, even if they believe that they have not violated any laws. Thus, they respond positively to officials' solicitation of additional fees or even voluntarily propose to pay extra in order to get their administration done quickly or to get rid of an immediate annoyance.

## Political Protection for Established Chinese

Well-established Chinese entrepreneurs in Ghana have their “friends” in different essential departments (like customs and immigration) and encounter fewer of the above problems. Mr. E., a Chinese manufacturer who has been living in Ghana for over 30 years, was even offered Ghanaian citizenship, but he declined, as his five-year, renewable residential visa was sufficient for him (Anonymous 10 2010). Likewise, Mr. Z., who recently came to join his relatives who have been in Ghana for a long time, successfully obtained his visa through formal and proper procedures, without paying anything extra.

As the government of Ghana keeps rotating between the two dominant political groups (the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party), established Chinese consider it important to have connections with people in both parties. “We do not get involved in politics, but we need to verify the information we hear

from the media”, said one of the most successful Chinese entrepreneurs (Anonymous 11 2010). When these established Chinese entrepreneurs encounter a problem, they will seek help from their powerful “friends” rather than, as commonly assumed, from the Chinese Embassy. For instance, Mr. R., the factory owner, told how his government friends helped to prevent his factory from being closed by another official:

One day, an inspector from the Standards Board came to examine my products and did not accept my explanation [of why products were not identical in weight]. He said, “I don’t care, and I have the right to close your factory.” Then, I invited him for dinner and apologized. He still didn’t change his mind and wanted to disqualify my products. Then, I told him, “Let me see your power. But I doubt that you have the power to close my factory.” Afterwards, I wrote a letter to the Ministry of Trade to complain. An official later told me, “He (the person from the Standards Board) won’t bother you again.” [...] I know many people in the government (Anonymous 12 2010).

These Chinese businessmen, who enjoy political protection, have been living in Ghana for more than ten to twenty years and they usually speak fluent English. They have spent time and possess the capacity to understand how local business functions and power groups interact. These Chinese entrepreneurs can eventually negotiate their place and develop strategic friendships with the local elite.

Despite having a useful local network, however, the established Chinese are finding that their previous social status as privileged “foreigner” is now being threatened. They attribute the cause of their social degradation to the behaviour of “new Chinese of bad quality”, who make the whole Chinese community the collective target of “law enforcement” and extortion.

The newly arrived Chinese don’t behave well. They have low levels of education, don’t understand the rules and don’t speak English. They believe that problems can be solved if they pay *xiaofei* [tips]. This encourages government officials to ask for *xiaofei* from the Chinese all the time and they don’t respect the Chinese anymore (Anonymous 2 2009).

Such discourse on the “new and bad Chinese” is now prevalent among the Chinese in Ghana. The old days when the Chinese were a

privileged ethnic minority in Ghanaian society are gone. A veteran Chinese migrant to Ghana had this to say:

In the 1970s, when there were shortages of supply in Ghana, people had to queue to buy food. When a Ghanaian saw a Chinese, they would let the Chinese pass to buy first. At that time, Chinese business was very successful and rich.

He continued:

Before, at a road checkpoint, when the police saw a Chinese, they saluted us. And now, they just ask for money. [...] Now, at around 9 o'clock every night, the police set up barricades on the road to casinos. The main purpose is to stop Chinese cars [as many Chinese go to casinos at night]. Some Chinese don't understand English and usually give tips to the police in order to pass [even if they don't have any problem]. They encourage local officials to continue this kind of bad habit with the Chinese (Anonymous 13 2009).

By agreeing to local officials' demands for cash payments or bribes, the Chinese migrants are taking part in further enforcing the agency of the institutional actors in Ghana and are inadvertently stimulating their appetite for bribes. As one Chinese put it:

Before, 1 cedi was sufficient. But some Chinese started to pay more and more to get things done. Now 100 cedi [as "tips"] is not even enough (Anonymous 3 2010).

It becomes a vicious cycle.

## Adaptation to Business Partners

### Typical Failures among New Chinese Entrepreneurs

Business failure among Chinese entrepreneurs is claimed to be common. A rough estimate by the Chinese themselves revealed that approximately half of Chinese businesses fail. Failure related to Ghanaian partners or customers is not rare. The experience of Mr. F., a Chinese trader in bed materials, is typical among new Chinese entrepreneurs.

The general pattern is that local partners buy a small amount from a Chinese trader and pay immediately. After doing this several times, the Ghanaian partners/ traders successfully build up trust

among the Chinese. The Chinese start to consider these local partners to be people within their circle, in which people are bound by mutual trust and support. The next time the Ghanaian partners come, they buy a large amount on credit. Since there is “mutual trust”, the Chinese traders allow their local partners to take the merchandise without paying right away. Afterwards, it is often very difficult to get payment back. Mr. F. came to Ghana a few years ago and spent the second half of his stay reclaiming debt payments from his local partners who were his retail vendors. He spent every day calling his partners, going to their shops to check if they were there. When he managed to find them in their shop and talked to them, his partners would usually promise that they would pay in a few days. However, several days later, the partners were out of contact again for some time. The next time that Mr. F. managed to talk to them again, they promised a new payment deadline. The pattern of hide-and-seek and promising to pay repeated many times. In the end, Mr. F. finally sought help from the police (and he also paid “tips” to the police in the hope that this would motivate them to take action faster). However, nothing changed. Mr. F. then employed a lawyer to file his case at the local court, hoping that legal action would achieve a better result (Anonymous 14 2010).

Others who suffered from similar problems gave up their claim in the very early phase. They took it as a “lesson fee” and learned to become much more careful with local partners. Many Chinese entrepreneurs consider Mr. F.’s efforts to be useless, because they do not believe that they will be paid even if they take legal action. Their reasoning is that either the court will show more sympathy to the poorer (that is, the local) side in its decision because “Chinese are white, so they are richer”, or, that even if the Chinese wins the case, whether or not the local partners are able to pay will remain uncertain, based on the experience of those who went through similar court procedures. For many Chinese entrepreneurs, legal action is lengthy; time and effort are better saved for other business. Mr. F. is considered a rather “less pragmatic” businessman. The “loss of face” due to his failure to get his debtors to pay was too much to handle, especially in relation to his business partners in China. Nonetheless, he returned to China in the end and left the court case for a Chinese friend to follow up on.



## The “International” Local Partners of Established Chinese

Having local partners as retailers is necessary, as foreigners can operate only at the wholesale scale in Ghana. Those who largely avoid the debt problem outlined above do so by getting their clients to pay in advance before they deliver the order. This has been common practice, particularly in the manufacturing sector; however, the status quo is now changing, and experienced Chinese entrepreneurs blame this on the newcomers, who are reluctant to impose strict payment rules in order to attract more business clients by offering payment flexibility. Consequently, this is forcing other competitors to do the same. Therefore, many Chinese companies report having clients’ payments due for long periods of time, but they are not in a position to change the situation and often just have to go along with this.

Despite such problems, there are advantages in forming partnerships with local businessmen. When selecting a local partner to invest and run a business with, experienced Chinese entrepreneurs tend to choose those who are “international”. In the case of Mr. J., he chose a Ghanaian partner who is also the director of a multinational company in West Africa to join his two high-end Chinese restaurant businesses. His reason for getting a privileged Ghanaian was important: “I need protection. But I don’t want to be involved in politics. My Ghanaian partner knows many people in the country” (Anonymous 15 2010).

Furthermore, Ghanaians of foreign origin are also preferable. An established Chinese opened a furniture shop with an Indian:

The advantage of cooperating with an Indian is that when we sign a contract with locals, it is my Indian partner who represents the company. He has Ghanaian nationality; his house and family are here. People don’t worry that he will run away (Anonymous 3 2010).

This highlights how forming local partnerships is essential for Chinese businesses, though trust-building between partners is a challenge. Chinese entrepreneurs have to rely on the local elite to reinforce their position, and those Ghanaians of foreign origin – for instance, Indians or Lebanese – are considered a good alternative, as they share a similar background as ethnic minorities, but possess a broader and better local network.

## Adaptation to Ghanaian Employees

### Management Problems: Whose Problems?

The author's fieldwork in Ghana shows that Chinese companies tend to hire locals and that the percentage of human resource localization is high, especially in large- and medium-sized Chinese companies. Nevertheless, managing staff of a different ethnic origin is a real challenge.

According to experienced Chinese businessmen, staff mismanagement is another major reason for business failure among Chinese entrepreneurs. Many new Chinese entrepreneurs come from family-run, small-scale businesses themselves, and usually only have a very basic understanding of English. Furthermore, they do not have proper management experience and consequently tend to encounter more cultural challenges when handling local staff. They usually apply what they believe to be workable conditions, but often their local workers remain "lazy", "unfaithful" and "untrustworthy". The newly arrived Chinese businessmen attribute these "characteristics" to "cultural" differences and put them down as the root causes of management problems. For inexperienced Chinese, the solution is to frequently replace their "unsatisfactory" local workers. For example, since opening her business, one new Chinese restaurant owner could not retain her staff for more than one month. The last time that the author visited her restaurant there were no waiting staff at all. "It is difficult to get workers. They work two days, have some money in their pockets and then don't come back again", said the owner. However, the recruitment difficulties may have been due to reasons other than the financial one she offered. On one occasion when the author was at the restaurant, she saw the boss trying to explain to her only remaining waitress how to provide good customer service. She was trying to communicate primarily in Mandarin Chinese, with only some simple English words appearing from time to time such as "you", "this", "boss" and "no good", with plenty of gesticulating. The waitress was responding to her in English. On following their conversation, it became clear that neither of them understood anything the other was saying. The Chinese owner became very frustrated and angry, as she had explained so many times, but the waitress seemed unable to remember. The waitress almost burst into tears, saying that she wished

her boss would be more patient. She told the author that she did not know what to do as she did not understand a word her boss had said (Anonymous 16 2009a, 2009b, 2010).

As local employees are always found to be unsatisfactory, small Chinese entrepreneurs in Ghana tend to be reluctant to provide a written employment contract or payslips. “Unjustified and frequent absence” or “the locals often do not show up for work a few days after receiving their salary” are among the most common justifications for this. Faced with such a “casual” working attitude from the local employees, a contract seems redundant because sometimes after just two days, the worker may not show up again or is fired. However, such shortcuts around local employment laws can be turned around and used as evidence against the Chinese employers. Chinese bosses may dismiss workers if the latter are found to have been stealing from the company. The dismissed local employees often report or threaten to report to the police the fact that the Chinese employers have violated labour laws by not providing a working contract, and demand compensation. In such cases, the Chinese entrepreneurs are usually furious because they believe that they treat their workers well (for instance, by always giving them gifts) and they believe there are grounds for dismissal if the worker concerned has been found to be stealing. The Chinese entrepreneurs usually end up giving money to the worker or to the police to avoid conflict, as they do not want to make trouble because they do not believe that they are able to defend themselves within the local legal system.

## Localizing Management and Motivating Strategies

Established Chinese entrepreneurs believe that the Chinese should take the blame for management problems:

First, the Chinese look down on the locals. Second, the Chinese consider that the locals to be thieves. In fact, you just need a system of supervision to control it. Third, the Chinese believe that if they treat the locals well, for instance by giving them gifts, the locals should be grateful and work harder, but the locals don't keep this in mind. For them, we, the whites, ought to give them, the blacks, presents (Anonymous 11 2010).

More experienced Chinese companies usually have a higher proportion of Ghanaian staff and some even have Ghanaians at the man-

agement level. The owners of these companies consider it to be more practical to have Ghanaians execute certain tasks rather than Chinese, particularly when dealing with local partners, employees and clients. Having locals communicate with locals can ease the problem of language barriers and, thus, the lack of understanding of the local culture and mentality that most Chinese encounter. It is also a response to political pressure to hire locals: the Ghanaian authorities have tightened the controls on the issuance of working visas, and it either takes too long or is too expensive to get Chinese staff onboard.

For instance, Mr. L., a trader of construction materials, is keen to apply a strategy of “locals managing locals” and believes that money buys quality and good service:

Our company has been going in the direction of localizing the management level. The Chinese think that the quality of locals is bad. But [...] we pay a salary of 400 to 500 cedi [approximately 350 USD] a month and we can hire local staff with university qualifications and work experience, who are capable of management. [...] Like next week, we are going to attend a meeting with some local parties. We are going to bring local staff with us to explain things because locals tend to trust locals more (Anonymous 17 2010).

In addition, the experienced Chinese businesspeople have created strategies for motivating their workers and “buying” their loyalty by learning through everyday interactions with them. To make sure that their workers show up for work, a Chinese factory owner developed the following bonus scheme:

The full attendance bonus is 17 cedi. In a month, if a worker is absent for a day, the bonus will be halved. If a worker is absent for two days or more, they won't receive that bonus at all. This is an effective method of ensuring work attendance (Anonymous 18 2010).

Another Chinese businessman believes that the salary level has to be set in a Ghanaian style to “give hope” or an incentive for local staff to work hard:

The Chinese are more pragmatic. If they think a job is worth 3,000 bucks a month, they will accept it and not expect a salary rise anytime soon. But in Ghana it is different; you should not offer 3,000 bucks right away at the beginning. You should give less, but hint to your local workers that the salary may be raised some-

time later. You have to give hope to them and they are motivated (Anonymous 19 2010).

The Chinese also seek to manage their local staff in a paternalistic way, such as by providing credits to employees to purchase a vehicle or to build a house, and agreeing to receive repayments through deducting fixed amounts from workers' salaries each month. Apart from salaries, Chinese employers sometimes show consideration of their local workers' financial burden by providing other basic necessities such as cooking oil, flour, washing powder and other items that may have become unaffordable due to inflation.

Furthermore, to avoid Ghanaian staff borrowing money too often and not coming to work after receiving their salary, Mr. T., the head of a family-run farming and supermarket business, adopted a pocket money approach:

The locals don't have the notion of saving. They spend as much as they get immediately and they will borrow money from you. What I do is, if the salary of my workers is 5 cedi a day, I give them 1.5 cedi every day. I give the other 3.5 per day in the middle of the week [or every 15 days], so that they always have something in their pocket (Anonymous 20 2010).

In addition, Mr. T. and his family members talk to their workers regularly to make sure that their private life is also going well:

If something happens within their family, we let them take some days off to go home. If it's something small that can be solved with money, we will also give them 10 cedi to get it solved. [...] [I]f they work well, we praise them. You have to let the locals know that you treat them well and you are nice to them (Anonymous 20 2010).

The language barrier is the main cause of work tensions between the Chinese and their Ghanaian staff. Mr. T.'s company gives classes in Mandarin Chinese and Chinese working culture to its Ghanaian workers. As a result, communications in the shop are all done in Chinese. The Ghanaian workers speak at least some basic Mandarin, especially those phrases related to supermarket operations such as "two dollars per kilo", "no eggs today, but we will have them tomorrow" and "it is very fresh". The Chinese owners and staff speak much more politely and patiently than when they have to express

themselves in broken English. The work atmosphere is much more relaxed than in other Chinese shops.

In reality, some established Chinese entrepreneurs have developed a very close relationship and strong mutual trust with their long-term, loyal local staff. To honour their service, some Chinese bosses may offer these members of staff trips to China. One Chinese manufacturer sent his local manager to China immediately for a medical operation once he learnt of the latter's heart problem. This kind of treatment is also useful to demonstrate to the other staff that loyalty is recognized and rewarded.

## Other Chinese

### Competitors

The Chinese in Ghana criticize the fact that there is no spirit of solidarity within their own community. The lack of Chinese community belongingness is echoed throughout the continent (Haugen and Carling 2005: 655; Dobler 2009: 716). Fierce competition among the compatriots, especially the newly arrived, is a factor behind this phenomenon. The Chinese may not know many other foreigners in Ghana, but they maintain that other nationals are much more united than the Chinese, for instance, on price:

If the Lebanese or Indians sell the same kind of products, they will agree to set the same selling price and stick to it in order to ensure fair competition. But for the Chinese, it is the contrary. If a Chinese sells a glass at 10 cedi, another Chinese will immediately make it 9 cedi. Then, another Chinese will put it at 8 cedi. In such a case, the profit margin shrinks. How can we survive? (Anonymous 14 2010).

The Chinese even attribute the lack of unity to the absence of religion: "The Chinese don't have a (common) religion. But Arabic people are religious. When there is problem, the religious chief will come to mediate and people will listen to him" (Anonymous 14 2010). Though they are not aware that the Lebanese in Ghana may not all share the same religion, the Chinese argument is that, without religion, the Chinese put profit before all other values. In addition, the Lebanese in Ghana may not be an accurate reference point as their presence in West Africa dates back to the early European coloniza-

tion period (Morrill 1962). The intra- and inter-ethnic dynamics and evolution of Lebanese migrants to Africa are sited in a different historical and political context and they have undergone a more prolonged migration process than the majority of the Chinese, who have less than ten years' experience in Ghana.

To protect their businesses, certain Chinese do not socialize with other Chinese, particularly those in the same business sector. Many Chinese companies dissuade their staff from socializing with their competitors' employees. Some Chinese shops do not permit other Chinese to enter; some even put up a sign reading "Chinese don't enter". A shoe trader provides his justification for this: commercial espionage. One interviewee had this to say in regards to espionage:

There was a time when one particular Chinese man came to our shop every day. It seemed that he was bored and just wanted to chat with someone. In fact, he paid attention to what kind of shoes were popular among our clients when they came to purchase. Sometime after, he went back to China and ordered the popular shoes from the factory, which happened to be the one I have a share of (Anonymous 9 2010).

Several times, different Chinese shop owners showed the author around Makola Market in Accra to indicate where the Chinese shops were. They just pointed to the shops from afar and told the author to enter alone next time, as it was inconvenient for them to visit.

## Traitors

This self-alienation among the Chinese comes not only from the fierce competition between Chinese businesses, but also from the circulation of "Chinese-cheating-other-Chinese" stories. Whenever they mentioned their experience of being cheated by other Chinese, the victim was far more outraged than if it had been Ghanaians cheating the Chinese. "To be cheated by Africans is ok, what they want is just money. But to be cheated by another Chinese, ha! That is terrible" (Anonymous 21 2010). It seems as if the Chinese are emotionally more sensitive to being cheated by other Chinese, even if the amount concerned is insignificant or trivial compared to their business volume. The Chinese in Ghana find it more acceptable to face cheating or business barriers caused by locals; they attribute this to their Chinese identity, their unfamiliarity with local practices and

weak local networks. By contrast, they see cheating by other Chinese as a much more dangerous problem or cycle:

Some Chinese whose businesses failed or who lost all their money turn to cheating other new Chinese. Because the Chinese know the Chinese better, so they can cheat the new ones even more thoroughly (Anonymous 21 2010).

Mr. G., who has been living in Ghana for over 15 years, illustrates how Chinese interaction with the Chinese community evolves over time:

Usually a newly arrived Chinese is passionate about getting to know lots of other compatriots. But after some time, he realizes what the real dynamic is among the Chinese, he becomes more discrete, keeps a very low profile and does not socialize much with others. Then after many years, that Chinese [person] will reappear to socialize in the Chinese community. This is because, after many years, he knows now who is trustworthy and not harmful to him (Anonymous 3 2010).

Following this logic, factory owner and trader Mr. M. is in the second phase of keeping a very low profile away from other Chinese. He has been a victim of cheating by other Chinese:

My Chinese partner ran away with all the money and he even wanted to kidnap me. He hired a few people to come to the company to beat me. Luckily someone was able to call the police in time (Anonymous 6 2010).

Now, the only social venue he visits is the Chinese church where he believes only people with a “good heart” will go, and he cooperates only with a well-connected Ghanaian partner.

## Chinese Associations and the Chinese Embassy

Despite the relatively hostile atmosphere, the Chinese still socialize in different subgroups. For example, there are three Chinese business associations in Ghana. Although the three associations claim to serve everyone in the Chinese community, the active members of each association share similar socio-economic and professional backgrounds. Each association also tries to maintain a close relationship with the Chinese Embassy and fights for its recognition as “the” Chinese association. In contrast, some Chinese are reluctant to par-



ticipate in the associations and consider them to cater more for minority interests than for the whole migrant Chinese population.

Apart from these “official” associations, there are rumours that “other” Chinese associations exist to cheat other Chinese. One of these stories relates to a building with a huge signboard reading: “Ghana Chinese Commodities Wholesale Town” that is located in a busy part of Makola Market. Although there are dozens of Chinese shops that happen to run their businesses around that building, the Chinese wholesale town does not exist and was part of an elaborate scam to defraud Chinese investors. In the mid-2000s, a certain Chinese businessman in Ghana lured investors in China to a business fair to be held in Ghana under the auspices of the Zhejiang Business Association. In fact, no such association exists. He told them that the fair would be a good opportunity to start a business in Ghana and that they could set up shops in the market afterwards. To make the scam seem more realistic, the Chinese organizer erected the sign advertising the wholesale town and things looked serious. Investors shipped containers of merchandise and wired money for customs clearance (the tariff for clearance can be as high as 100 per cent of the cost of merchandise) and other “administration fees”. But in the end, the Chinese organizer disappeared with all the money. After hearing about scams like this, the Chinese are, understandably, quite sceptical about small Chinese associations in Ghana, and this explains why the *bona fide* Chinese associations try to seek official recognition from the Chinese Embassy.

## Marriage with Ghanaians: A Springboard for Adaptation, or Isolation from Other Chinese?

Even though marriage between Chinese and Ghanaians is still rarely heard of, a few cases do exist. Mr. N. has lived in Ghana for only a few years, but has successfully developed his business in the property/ real estate sector, an area that even experienced Chinese entrepreneurs consider extremely tricky and difficult to handle because of the issues of bank credit and land ownership, according to Chinese who are interested in the sector. Mr. N.’s success is down to the fact that he is married to the daughter of a Ghanaian tribal chief. Furthermore, his wife and several of her family members work in the banking sector. Thus, Mr. N. is in the fortunate position of being able to offer help to Chinese entrepreneurs from his province of origin, Fu-

jian, if they encounter difficulties relating to the acquisition of land to build a factory. After providing assistance in this way, Mr. N. has been befriended by some Chinese businesspeople (Anonymous 22 2010).

Relationships between a Chinese man and a Ghanaian woman in the form of marriage are rare. Most intimate relationships remain casual and/or extra-marital and secret as, generally speaking, Ghanaian–Chinese relationships remain unaccepted in the Chinese community. Those entrepreneurs like Mr. N., who have Ghanaian wives, socialize only with a few Chinese and are not active in the Chinese community.

Marriage between Chinese women and Ghanaian men of Lebanese or Indian origin is more frequent. This type of marriage is beneficial to the Chinese side because it helps them to obtain residential rights and business advantages, as Lebanese and Indian men in Ghana are usually considered well settled and of higher socio-economic status. The Chinese in Ghana accept this form of marriage more readily than a marriage with an ordinary Ghanaian, which they consider to be marrying down, regardless of the social background of the Chinese wife.

One of the reasons that Chinese–Ghanaian marriages are far less accepted is that there are often cautionary tales of marriage break-ups circulating within the Chinese community, usually with the Chinese wife eventually being abandoned by her Ghanaian husband. Ms. Q. is one such example. Nevertheless, she has now managed to begin a new life and has set up a consultancy firm to help Chinese companies establish themselves in Ghana. Her business is based on her competitive edge: fluency in the main local language, Twi, and a thorough understanding of the local culture and business mentality through her experience from the (failed) marriage. Ms. Q. was not willing to speak about her experience during the several meetings the author had with her. Her story was revealed to the author by a Chinese language teacher, someone outside the Chinese entrepreneur community, to whom Ms. Q. had once opened up to in a moment of emotional difficulty (Anonymous 23 2010).

As the Chinese community discriminates against unions between Chinese women and local men, Chinese wives do not generally get much support when marital problems occur. One day, the author received a call for help from a newly arrived Chinese woman who had

just moved to Ghana with her Ghanaian husband. She suspected that her Ghanaian husband intended to keep for himself all the business capital, part of which had been contributed by her family, and also the merchandise for their trade business. He also did not want to return her passport. This call for help was surprising, as the author had only happened to talk briefly to the woman once before. This suggests that the woman did not feel she had any other solution but to ask a researcher, one temporarily staying in the country, for help.

## Discussion and Concluding Remarks

This paper has shown the multiple dimensions of how Chinese entrepreneurs struggle, compromise and use diverse strategies to negotiate their social place and sustain their business when faced with different local actors in Ghana. The negative experiences of the immigrant Chinese provide further evidence of African and local Chinese agency in these China–Africa encounters. The Chinese in Ghana are definitely aware of such agency, yet their ability to negotiate their way successfully is not homogeneous. Disparities are especially remarkable between new and established Chinese migrant entrepreneurs, whose different experiences with local actors suggest several things:

First, some of the negative experiences of the new Chinese in Ghana are normal from a migration perspective, as migration adaptation improves with time. Entrepreneurial migration by the Chinese in Africa has been an emerging and accelerating phenomenon only since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Such migration is still rather “temporary” and “experimental” in nature, and is similar to the experience of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs to non-traditional migration destinations like Central and Eastern Europe since the 1990s (Nyíri 2003; Moore and Tubilewicz 2001). The migrants tend to first explore the host country before deciding whether to stay. The temporary nature of this exploration can lead to short-sighted adaptation strategies (like offering bribes) that may result in an undesired long-term vicious cycle. Chinese adaptation strategies have undergone many trials and errors; problems and failures are part of the results. Nevertheless, the acculturation process usually leads to a positive adaptation after some time.

Chinese adaption in Ghana proves that, even though coming from a country with better economic conditions, migrants have to acculturate and ideally to integrate and fit in, rather than expecting the adjustment to be only on the side of the host society – that is, expecting the local hosts to adjust to the incomers' presence. The better-adapted Chinese entrepreneurs show a greater effort to integrate into the local culture for mutual benefit. For instance, in employer–employee relations, they are more likely to behave as “responsible elders” and to show care (though sometimes paternalistically) towards their employees, and to fulfil the traditional role of a boss as expected by young Ghanaians (Giese 2013: 147).

As many Chinese entrepreneurs move to Ghana on their own initiatives and resources alone, one should not put down their success or resilience in an unfamiliar environment to support from the Chinese government, which is often non-existent. Chinese migrants who are unable to adapt regularly experience failure in the new environment, and if these failures are greater than their capacity to recover, they have to return home just like any other migrant in a similar situation. The adjustment strategies adopted by migrant Chinese entrepreneurs are individualistic, though sometimes similar to one another, and subject to their own knowledge and resources. The more successful Chinese in Ghana are generally more experienced in the country, better educated, and have fewer language barriers than the less successful ones, who tend to be newcomers. It is thus easier for them to understand local customs and to build business and protection networks that create social capital for negotiating a better place in their chosen environment.

Second, the Chinese community in Ghana does not provide positive social capital for successful adaptation to its new members, unlike ethnic minority communities in industrialized countries. As a relatively disparate ethnic minority in Ghana, the Chinese community tends to be fragmented and hostile, and far from being able to provide collective support; sometimes even the opposite is true, with some members even aggravating the Ghanaian agency that the Chinese have to encounter. Business competition between Chinese entrepreneur migrants is a major alienating factor among the population. Certain Chinese entrepreneurs in Ghana purposely distance themselves from other Chinese, especially those who might jeopardize their business, or simply because they feel ambivalent towards

their compatriots because they do not see that the Chinese community has any useful resources to offer.

Against the backdrop of a fragmented Chinese community with weak solidarity, new Chinese entrepreneurs cannot obtain sufficient social capital from the community to help them with their initial adaptation. Their sense of vulnerability is further intensified by the lack of available resources for support. Similarly, marrying a local Ghanaian citizen is like abandoning group membership, since this is less accepted, or even frowned upon, by other Chinese, making it even more difficult to count on support from the Chinese community in times of difficulty. Without the support of a resourceful ethnic minority community, the more established Chinese migrants have built up and rely on their own local social networks, which provide essential resources to help them to adapt and offer assistance when they face challenges. These entrepreneurs deliberately maintain mutually beneficial relationships with those local actors who can provide them political and administrative protection, both of which are the “scarcest resource(s)” as Dobler (2009: 710) puts it in his observation of Chinese traders in Namibia.

Third, the contrast between the binary image of the strong Chinese and the defenceless African in the international and African media’s perception, and the reality of Chinese adaptation and local agency in Ghana illustrated above, demonstrates how the public debate surrounding the China–Africa relationship is influenced more heavily by the dominant political and media discourses, rather than derived from observations of the real dynamics on the ground. In reality, the rising Chinese presence and the demonstration of China’s economic power in Africa does not necessarily improve the social status of Chinese migrants on the African continent (*Huanqiu News* 2012). From the Chinese perspective, those with the shortest migrant experience attribute their adaptation challenges to the deficiency of the local people and the institutions of the host country. Whereas, established entrepreneurs consider their privileged social status in Africa to be threatened by the arrival of numerous “new” Chinese, whose “bad behaviour” is condemned as the root cause of the increased solicitation of bribes by local officials and the generally disrespectful attitude of Ghanaians towards Chinese.

The discourse of the established migrants referring to the newer migrants as poorly behaved has mostly been applied to differentiate

between “rural migrants” and the urban middle class, and quite commonly as a way for members of the middle class to distinguish their social position from the rural blue collar (Anagnost 2004: 190). Such social differentiation is also apparent in other overseas Chinese communities, as illustrated by Zhou and Lin (2005) in their research in New York City. The socio-economic profile of the Chinese moving to Ghana and Africa in general is increasingly diverse, as in their migration elsewhere in the world. The class question will continue to play a more significant role in investigating the intra- and inter-ethnic dynamics of Chinese migration in the future.

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