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## **Taking 'development cooperation' and South-South discourse seriously: Indian claims and Ghanaian responses**

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## Abstract

Indian interaction with the global South is at a crossroads. For a long time wedded to Nehruvian values of South-South cooperation, there are now considerable claims that economics underpins interactions. This article looks at current Indian 'development cooperation' in Ghana and, crucially, also asks what form Ghanaian responses take. The article concludes that while the rhetoric and ideas behind South-South cooperation are toned down, there are still ideas: Indian 'development cooperation' is partly ideologically and normatively informed, is not simply national interests, and has effects; whilst being extremely broad in content and significantly adding to global re-conceptualisations of development assistance.

## Keywords

India, Africa, Ghana, South-South, development cooperation

## Introduction

India's presence on the African continent has grown exponentially in the last decade. Indeed, it is a conundrum as to why the literature on India in Africa has not increased exponentially as well, particularly if one were to compare it to the burgeoning presence and equally burgeoning literature on China in Africa. This relative gap in the literature, and in particular the gap concerning the African perspective, is one which this article aims to begin filling. India's presence is now important right across the continent and across a broad range of activities. Specifically, it is their 'development cooperation' – to use Indian terminology – that is most of interest here. Indian 'development cooperation' is, though, an ill-defined and slippery concept which encompasses many activities which could just as easily be labelled commerce as aid. Concurrently, it appears that we are also seeing a period of flux in Indian thinking where previously dominant South-South discourse harking back to Jawaharlal Nehru is now more seriously challenged by notions of Indian national interest. In turn, Indian attitudes then contribute to the increasingly fast changes in global thinking in what has been dubbed a 'post-aid' world.

The first part of the article then aims to unpack what India claims to be doing in Africa vis-à-vis its 'development cooperation' and what it actually is doing in Ghana, inevitably in comparison to Chinese and Western activities. Naturally, India is not one monolithic whole and is broken down into layers of activity where necessary. The second part of the article is a mirror image of the first part in that it investigates the Ghanaian perceptions and responses, again at various levels, to Indian claims and activities. It is the aim of the article to take the discourse seriously and to probe whether it is actually reflected in Indian words and actions and to what extent it is accepted in Ghanaian responses. In this way, a more accurate picture of contemporary India-Ghana relations and, to a degree by extension, India-Africa relations can be ascertained. Note, however, that the efficacy of Indian or other

assistance is only alluded to as far as it impacts on the relationships. The article follows two periods of fieldwork in Delhi and Accra.

### **Notions of International Engagement with Africa**

In response to the Cold War world of partial decolonisation and continuing North-South political and economic inequality, the 1955 Bandung conference, at which Nehru was a leading organizer and player, presented the first articulations of a Southern political identity and a different world order.<sup>1</sup> Despite the immensity of the task and the limited results over the ensuing 30 years, the idea that the South could challenge Northern hegemony and work together in South-South cooperation became firmly a part of the discourse (Acharya, 2016). Essentially killed during the 1980s by the global neo-liberal shift, it was re-awakened in the mid-2000s broadly through the needs and imperatives derived or following from the rapid economic expansion predominantly in China and India but also in other larger and economically-expanding Southern states such as Brazil, Malaysia and Indonesia (Gosovic, 2016).

At the same time, the quality of South-South cooperation and the drivers of individual Southern states' actions have been interrogated. First, it has been noted that the rhetoric of South-South cooperation has changed from the often fiery dependency theory of the first incarnation containing anti-imperialist tropes and challenges to the world order; to a less threatening contemporary version which concentrates on respect for sovereignty, mutual benefit and development assistance within the current global framework (Morvaridi & Hughes, forthcoming). Second, the underlying motivations of Southern states have been questioned. A common realist perspective assumes rhetoric, such as South-South discourse, to be articulated and employed in the interests of the state (Mearsheimer, 2001). On the other hand, a constructivist perspective gives credence to norms within states and the power of ideas, like South-South cooperation and 'development cooperation', which can trump the materialist concerns of interests (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

International involvement and aid in Africa has a long and tortuous history. Dating back to European colonial times in the idea of a *mission civilisatrice* which coexisted with European national interests, this scenario provided the interests/ideational debate which continues to this day when considering Western aid (Harris, 2013). Further, since the dying days of the Cold War, the giving of aid has come with stringent and monitored economic and political conditionalities which insist on neo-liberal reform – economic liberalisation, democracy, civil society, etc. - further testing the seriousness of Western aid. Indeed, Chinese and Indian rhetoric is often placed in contrast to the West.

As an example of the new breed in Africa, China is now the second largest player in Africa after the US and far from immune from these discussions. Often presented as the dragon preying on poor African states for their oil, minerals and markets, China is portrayed as

concerned entirely or mostly with national interests (Lee, 2006; Kragelund, 2015). During the Cold War, China was primarily concerned with exporting Maoist thinking, but most would consider this imperative evaporated. However, China now portrays itself as still concerned with Chinese 'exceptionalism' and its own normative projections (Chou, 2015). They say that this is historically consistent and emphasizes political equality, mutual benefit, sovereignty, non-interference and win-win cooperation and even shared semi-colonial subjugation and developing country status. Many of the tropes of contemporary South-South cooperation are thus included. Others note that Chinese assistance focuses on mineral-rich countries; that China dominates and interferes in relationships; and that the shared status does not pass scrutiny. Further, the considerable number of Chinese workers and traders that have now migrated to Africa and the quantity of cheap imported Chinese goods has had detrimental effects on Africans and African economies (Alden and Large, 2011). Indeed, the interests/ideational debate continues here.

Finally, from the other side of the table, there are African responses to outside developmental assistance. It is noted that there is a long history of close relations with ideologically or historically adjacent non-African powers, while it is also argued that Africa has been systematically exploited over time, particularly within a dependency paradigm. However, African leaders and states have also been seen as using outsiders - 'extraversion' - which views Africans in government and elsewhere as adeptly playing off outsiders to prop up their precarious political positions or to further their ambitions (Bayart, 2000). In yet another form of the interests/ideational debate, this article will consider the Ghanaian angle. How India and Ghana contribute to global shifts in aid thinking is then deduced.

### **Rationale for Ghana**

Ghana has been selected partly as it is a largely stable African country with a slowly growing economy since the mid-1980s despite a prior three decades of political turmoil, coups, military juntas, gross corruption and economic mismanagement following independence from British colonialism in 1957. Ghana has successfully completed its seventh closely contested election in a row since 1992, including two presidents stepping down according to the constitution - Jerry Rawlings in 2000 and John Kuffour in 2008 - with three turnovers of power. GDP grew by around 4 per cent in the 1990s and between 4.35 per cent and 14.0 per cent from 2002 to 2013 and by no means is this all about oil which came online in 2010. Indeed, growth in 2014 and 2015 showed a significant decrease, alongside an IMF bailout in 2014 and quite severe electricity shortages. Of course, the problems of the weak state are not alien to Ghana and patronage and corruption are prevalent, but there is relative calm in Ghana's state-society and ethno-regional relations. Indeed, in 2010, government and Western donors agreed that Ghana should aim to be aid-free by 2020, and Ghana published its own *Ghana Aid Policy* subtitled *Towards Middle-Income Status* (MoFEP, 2010). All this remains conjecture, of course, but does reflect medium-term aspirations. Ghana has also

been chosen as it has a long, if fluctuating, history of relations with India and a small but growing Indian community. These features give scope for historical comparison but do not present a dominant part of the narrative as they might in the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

## **India in Africa**

Somewhat different from the Western and Chinese cases, India emerged into independence with Nehru's strong notions of solidarity and non-interference with other post-colonial or soon-to-be post-colonial countries. Whether the continued emphasis on these imperatives continues beyond the rhetorical and in what format is the question at hand here.

Despite the longstanding need for resources at home, India is not new to the realm of international development assistance. Its programmes began after independence but did, however, start small and focused mainly if not entirely on the sub-region, mostly in recognition of its limited financial capabilities. Importantly, though, there was already at the start a strong ideological commitment. In this, Nehru provided the key impetus: non-interference, respect for sovereignty, solidarity and the formulation of a more equitable world should inform India's relations with other developing states. Loans, grants and technical training were the main format of development assistance, and in 1964 the (still-existing) Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scheme was founded and became the main instrument for training, skills development and experience sharing (IDCR, 2013).

However, since the early 2000s, Indian assistance has massively expanded in scale, range and substance, due in large part to India's own economic expansion. Notably, this has persisted across three Indian prime ministers: Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998-2004) of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Manmohan Singh (2004-14) of the Indian National Congress, and the BJP again under Narendra Modi (2014-). India has transformed from being the largest recipient of aid in the 1980s to becoming a much larger donor and net creditor to the IMF and its focus now goes well beyond South Asia. Equally, there is a clear shift in the way that development assistance is deployed. Introduced in the early 2000s, India's Lines of Credit (LoCs) have become key processes in hugely expanding its 'development cooperation'. Disbursed by India's EXIM Bank under the guidance of the Ministry of External Affairs, LoCs are loans with subsidized interest rates which have grown enormously since 2003: just ten years later, the EXIM Bank had 167 operational LoCs covering 75 countries amounting to US\$8.57bn (EXIM Bank, 2013). Important to this article, Africa has become an increasingly key interlocutor in Indian 'development cooperation, underlined in 2016 by the Indian president, vice president and prime minister who between them made visits to twelve countries across Africa in three months.

Measuring aid and assistance levels across donor countries is, however, a severe challenge. There are problems in what is included, given that - beyond grants - loans, bartering, tied aid and training are components of some but not other countries' programmes. Accompanied by the limited availability of differentiated statistics, particularly in India and China, the comparisons become almost meaningless. For instance India's Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (TEAM-9) is a substantial credit facility across nine mostly resource-rich West Africa countries, a project which would not comply with OECD aid guidelines. Given that the corporate world is very much involved in Indian and Chinese assistance, a better if rather crude overall comparison would be bilateral trade figures. Despite a recent economic slowdown, India-Africa bilateral trade increased from US\$3bn in 2000 to US\$75bn by 2015 and has kept pace with the similarly huge expansion of China-Africa trade which stood at US\$160bn by 2015. As Africa's fourth largest trading partner after the US, China and the EU, India is now a significant player on the continent.

India's grants do exist (see examples in Ghana below) but it is LoCs that comprise much of India's assistance to Africa. In 2008, at the inaugural India-Africa Forum Summit, India increased its LoCs to Africa from US\$2bn to US\$5bn (IDCR, 2013, p.4); by another US\$5bn at the following Summit in 2011 (India Post, 2011); and by US\$10bn at the third Summit in 2015 (ADB, 2016). A majority (around 60 per cent) of all Indian LoCs heads towards African states, a large proportion in the direction of West Africa. However, while a total of US\$7.4bn concessional credit was offered by India in the past two summits, only US\$3.5bn had been disbursed by late 2015. Although these were used to finance 137 projects in 41 countries, it was only 51 per cent of the total on offer (MoEA, 2015).

There is, however, considerable debate inside and outside Indian government as to the purpose of all this assistance. There is in addition a panoply of Indian players from politicians to bureaucrats to businesspeople, all of whom may differ in their interpretations and agendas. India's 'development cooperation' is such a broad church that it is not often clear what the motives are, even on the rare occasions when expressed explicitly. The different viewpoints can also sometimes be seen as reinforcing and at other times contradictory. However, broadly, it is possible to identify several recurrent themes.

Some, adopting an approach based on interests, suggest that Nehru-style South-South solidarity is diminishing rapidly (Taylor, 2012; Mohan, 2003). True to realist interpretations, the 'development cooperation' of the twenty-first century simply disguises New Delhi's *actual* economic and strategic motivations in Africa (or elsewhere). 'Development cooperation' is then used as a tool to leverage commercial ventures. The increasing use of LoCs may then be seen as an indicator of this trend. Effectively tied loans with a stipulation that a minimum of 75 per cent of procured goods and services should be supplied by Indian companies, it is possible to view LoCs as simply instruments of trade and a means of market entry for India's private sector.

In addition, changes in the institutional arrangements in New Delhi for governing development assistance may also speak to this shift. As a key example, the recently created Development Partnership Administration (DPA) was placed within the Ministry of External Affairs, thus sealing an institutional link between 'development cooperation' and broader foreign policy strategies often associated more closely with national interests. Equally, the aforementioned expansion of assistance into mineral-rich West African states – beyond the historical allegiances with Anglophone Nigeria and Ghana – can be seen as a bid for resources, in particular oil of which India imports as much as 75 per cent of its needs. Finally, there is a geo-strategic dimension in which India requires support for its claim as a leading global nation. African countries may supply diplomatic support for New Delhi's aims of having a greater say in global institutions.

There are times when the Indian government can be quite overt concerning its trade, commercial and strategic interests (see interviews in Ghana below) but it is almost always accompanied by ongoing appeals to Nehru-style South-South solidarity – although not articulated as such by current Prime Minister Modi or his party, given their longstanding antipathy towards Nehru; indeed Nehru is now barely mentioned (Vittorini, n.d.). However, the ideas of Nehruvianism and alternative global norms, sovereignty and economic development are still seen as more relevant than realist interpretations would have it (Hall, 2017a; Chacko, 2014). For instance, the DPA stridently asserts that India's 'development cooperation' is not aid and refuses to use such terminology as aid and donor, preferring partnership and cooperation.

Specifically, India contrasts its approach with that employed by Western aid. Instead of the prescriptive, top-down formulations of Western aid, India is responsive to requests. Typically, whether for training or an LoC, a request by for example an African government begins at the relevant Indian embassy or high commission and continues to the Ministry of External Affairs. While the authors were visiting the Ministry in 2013, a Sierra Leonean delegation was also in situ delivering a list of training needs. Emma Mawdsley has noted that a more didactic approach by India 'would start to look more like Western practices of setting the terms while deploying the language of partnership - something India is keen to avoid' (2010, p.371).

At a more personal level, the language used to describe relationships often reflects the official proclamations of solidarity. The notion that an 'accumulated sense of history', both colonial and post-colonial, is the basis of Indians having a 'special affinity with Africa' is part of this language (Interview with Indian senior civil servant, 2 April 2013). The phrase 'comfort level' is also used to describe a higher level of rapport between Indians and Africans as opposed to similar relationships with Europeans or Chinese (Interview in quasi-autonomous non-governmental Indian institution, 2 April 2013). Africans are then inclined more toward India, although the ongoing poor treatment of Africans living in India is difficult to square with this view (Jain-Grégoire, 2016). Finally, it is often expressed that

Africans have a level of 'goodwill' towards Indians, both in general parlance and when the impact of 'development cooperation' programmes is assessed. The generations of African civil servants trained in India also fits into this narrative (IDCR, 2013, pp.13-14).

Internationally, India has always seen itself as a developing world leader and this has not changed. Its self-perception remains as a proponent of a re-organised world power structure aiming at a more just and equitable global economy, as well as asserting India as a strategic player (Naidu, 2008). Indeed, India needs to be seen as a benign power if it is to maintain its historical legitimacy and respect in the South, even if all this is no longer couched in dependency theory and exists in a broadly neo-liberal playing field. India has a central role in the Development Cooperation Forum and the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) alliance which 'deliberately articulates different principles of development engagement, doing away with a discourse of donor-recipient and embracing claims of partnership for mutual benefit' (Mawdsely, 2010, p.368). Of course, despite the evidence above, whether India's main aim on the international stage is to reform global institutions or simply gain a place at the high table remains open.

A final aspect which further muddies the waters is a shift towards liberal underpinnings of India's development assistance. Official pronouncements and documents emerge replete with multiple references to mainstream understandings of development: the Millennium Development Goals, civil society and the private sector, 'good governance', decentralisation, strengthening of democratic institutions, and the development of democracy in divided societies (India-Africa Forum Summit, 2008; India-Africa Forum, Summit 2011). India's perception of itself as a democratic success story combining political freedom and economic growth in adverse post-colonial circumstances is a case in point. This can be seen as a model for other Southern states (Hudson, 2016). However, tensions arise if this veers into democracy promotion and then starts to look rather didactic. India has been historically averse to democracy promotion or restoration for ideological and geostrategic reasons (although there have been times it has intervened abroad), but it treads a fine line if it does not want to follow a Western narrative on democracy.

New Delhi is thus searching for a mode of engagement which can encompass its South-South rhetoric, its strategic and commercial interests and its liberal leanings. Some have seen India's multi-faceted stance as contradictory or as a sign of weakness. Its bureaucratic efficiency and political will are also criticized. One colourful comment comparing India to 'a six-horse carriage of ambition and a one-horse carriage of capabilities' speaks to an abundance of rhetoric but a lack of political and administrative follow-through (Interview with Indian academic, 3 April 2013). The LoC disbursement problems are noted above. It has been said that 'India remains ill-equipped to capitalize on all it can offer to African countries' (Vines, 2009); that India abroad lacks comprehensive public and cultural diplomacy infrastructure (Hall, 2017b); and in the case of Kenya, that 'neither the hard-nosed commercial nor the solidarity elements of India's developmental partnership are being as



effectively directed as they might be' (Mawdsley, 2010, p.371). Indeed, despite endeavouring to employ the thinking of the Bengali intellectual, Swami Vivekananda, as a guide, recent descriptions of Indian global values under Modi have also been noted as 'thin' (Hall, 2017a, p.114). However, there are some who see India's combination of imperatives as a new paradigm which could even play a defining role in re-conceptualising international frameworks (Saran, 2012).

## India in Ghana

Historically, India's presence in Ghana goes back a long way, even before the West African country obtained independence. But it was the friendship between Nehru and Ghana's first post-independence leader, Kwame Nkrumah, which cemented the relations between these two countries. Nkrumah wrote: 'As a fighter for colonial freedom I followed avidly the progress of the revolution which was taking place in India prior to her independence.....It was a natural thing that I should take inspiration from India and her leaders'. Nkrumah met Nehru for the first time in London in 1957, the year of Ghanaian independence. He was overwhelmed by him: 'Nehru was all that I had imagined he would be - and more' (Zakaria, 1989, p.110). In turn, celebrating Ghana's independence in Delhi, Nehru said:

The independence of any country is a thing to be celebrated and welcomed, but there is something more distinctive about the independence of Ghana, than perhaps of some other countries. It signifies so much for the whole continent of Africa (Chhabra, 1989, p.62).

But besides having admiration for each other, Nkrumah and Nehru shared ideas of solidarity among fellow colonial and post-colonial countries and of radical cosmopolitanism. According to Neera Chandhoke, Nehru and Nkrumah were like-minded souls, friends and comrades (2016). It was therefore in those years that the two countries grew close. However, the demise of Nkrumah and the death of Nehru, and later the decline of the Non-Alignment Movement as an ideal to which both ascribed and which was informed by the spirit of Southern fraternity, brought a lull in the relationship between Ghana and India.

Whilst earlier the amity between the two countries largely developed on a political level, when the relationship took off again after the turn of the millennium, it was driven by India's commercial and economic upturn. Between 2005 and 2008 bilateral trade turnover more than trebled from US\$280m to US\$948m, finally crossing the US\$1bn mark in 2011-12. According to available figures (2015-16), bilateral trade is now worth over US\$3bn, equal to the entire India-Africa trade in 2000. India now claims to be the largest foreign investor in Ghana (Ray, 2017). In the past two decades, Indian companies have invested in more than 600 projects for a total of around US\$1bn (India-Africa Forum Summit, 2015). India's premier public sector bank, Bank of Baroda, for instance, started operations in Accra in 2008

whilst Indian private sector in Ghana now includes the subcontinent's corporate giants, Tata, Ashok Leyland, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Bharti Airtel (MoEA, 2014).

These healthy trade relations have been supported by a busy calendar of bilateral visits at all levels. President Kufuor visited India for the first time in 2002 resulting in the signing of four important bilateral agreements that included the establishment of the Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence for Training in Information and Technology (KACE) in Accra and the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA). In 2008, he visited again to participate in the first India-Africa Forum Summit. Earlier that year, the Vice President of Ghana led a large Ghanaian delegation to the CII-EXIM Bank India-Africa Conclave in New Delhi. A considerable number of ministerial visits and high-level delegations went both ways throughout the same period. Minister of State for External Affairs in the Singh government, Anand Sharma, made five consecutive yearly visits to Ghana (from 2006 to 2010) and was awarded the top Ghanaian civilian award for his commitment to South-South cooperation (MoEA, 2014). More recent visits are detailed below.

When it comes to India's 'development cooperation', New Delhi's balancing act between ideological commitments, strategic and commercial needs and liberal leanings is certainly visible in its engagements in Ghana. As mentioned earlier, since the early Nehruvian years, training, knowledge transfer, and technology sharing were staples of Southern fraternity. All these elements are still key in New Delhi's 'development cooperation' in Ghana. In terms of training, more than 1500 Ghanaians of all walks of life have participated in ITEC and its corollary Commonwealth programme in a large number of fields. Recently, around 200 ITEC slots were reserved for Ghana for civilian training programs and a number of scholarships were also offered to Ghanaian defence officials (Interview with First Secretary, Indian High Commission in Accra, 30 June 2015).

Whilst the majority of the civilian training activities under ITEC includes courses in accounts, telecommunication, IT, banking and finances, under ITEC India has also started to offer courses on 'Parliamentary Procedures and Administration' based on the only ever obliquely asserted Indian notion that it may be a democratic role model for multi-identity post-colonial states. In 2012, the Indian government supported the Ghanaian Electoral Commission with the provision of indelible ink to be used in the December presidential and parliamentary elections. These are developments worth watching.

India's reputation in education is also well-established in Ghana and the notion that Indians come with particularly relevant expertise, such as IT and pharmacy, is to some extent borne out on the ground. For instance, the first foreign university to set up a campus in Ghana was Indian. The Sikkim Manipal University established a branch in 2009 and half of its current 2,000 students study IT (although this is not part of India's 'development cooperation'). In this context, it is pertinent that the KACE, established with an Indian government grant in

2003 and jointly inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India and the President of Ghana by video conferencing, is exactly in this field. In 2004 Ghana also became part of the TEAM-9 initiative and, in 2009, the Ghanaian section of the Pan African E-Network was launched with Indian expertise and money to provide tele-medicine and tele-education.

While Nehruvian values seem to persist in India's 'development cooperation' activities in Ghana, these views are somewhat contrasted by a perceptible shift away from a foreign policy driven by idealism to one where economic interests have become more obvious. This is particularly visible as LoCs have become the preferred instruments of India's development assistance in Ghana and have financed a wide range of ventures including agricultural, construction, irrigation and rural electrification projects (EXIM Bank, 2015).

Significantly, India's development assistance has been historically predicated on its good terms and the quality of transferable technology and knowledge is purported to be visible in most recent LoC-funded ventures in Ghana, such as the US\$1.2bn Joint Venture Fertilizer Project using gas to manufacture fertilizer; a Fish Processing Plant at Elmina; and the US\$150m Agricultural Mechanisation Service Centre (AMSEC) (Ghana Business News, 2015). All these ventures have technology and knowledge transfer built into them (High Commission of India, 2015). India commits not only to deliver a complete project, from building the various enterprises from scratch and providing training, but promises to pull out of the project after a set period unless the local authorities ask the Indian contracted companies to remain. It is precisely the provision of these long-term benefits - New Delhi argues - that sets India's 'development cooperation' aside from other development agencies (Interview with First Secretary, 2015).

Yet, Indian LoC-financed projects are tied loans. The most visible example of this is Flagship House - the new presidential palace, built by India with an initial soft loan of US\$30m. The palace was built by an Indian contractor - Shapoorji Pallonji - using Ghanaian sub-contractors and opened in the presence of Anand Sharma in 2008. The presidential palace - and other Indian LoC-financed projects - was described specifically as 'market entry' by the Indian First Secretary at the High Commission, giving the example of Shapoorji Pallonji, which had no previous record in Ghana but now has an office in Accra. This was not aid as such but a 'half-way house' (Interview with First Secretary, 2015). Similar benefits to Indian companies are expected to come via the Fish Processing Plant for which the contract for construction was awarded to an Indian private company (Expotec International) with a public sector group (WAPCOS) appointed as the supervision consultant.

In all, there is clearly much flux in the notion of Indian 'development cooperation' in Ghana and indeed considerable room for interpretation of what that cooperation means and where it might fit into an aid or South-South paradigm. In addition, and judging for example by the size of the respective Indian and Chinese diplomatic representations in Accra, there is also some question over the aforementioned horse pulling the Indian carriage.

## Ghanaian responses

Having outlined the uncertainty as to what exactly qualifies as development cooperation, or rather the breadth of what qualifies in India's remarkably broad conception, and the flux over time in Indian foreign policy thinking towards Africa and more specifically Ghana, it is thus wise to try to understand the Ghanaian viewpoints. Whether Ghanaians share India's multifaceted self-perception and whether they act upon it when choosing outside partners matters to the future of Ghana-India relations. This is, as in India's case, a multi-sectoral and multi-level phenomenon and we can only attempt to catch the broader angles. Equally, it will inevitably be comparative, particularly vis-à-vis the more recent and burgeoning Chinese presence in Ghana.

First, in terms of the Indian perception of personal relations with Africans as being informed by similar colonial histories and societies and as being characterized by considerable mutual understanding, there is some evidence to suggest that this is a shared assumption. Many Ghanaian interlocutors indicated that there was shared history and a friendship between Nkrumah and Nehru. One noted Nkrumah's symbolic walks from the presidential lodge, Flagstaff House, along Jawaharlal Nehru Road to the Indian High Commission (Interview with former Ghana High Commissioner to India, Mike Ocquaye, 27 June 2015). Nkrumah visited India in 1958, just one year after Ghanaian independence. Others noted key Indian individuals amongst the sizeable community who settled in Ghana such as the sports player and coach, DG Hathiramani. Mentioned in favourable tones by both Ghanaians and Indians in Accra, Hathiramani established table tennis in the 1950s, promoted Ghanaian players through to his death in 1988 and has a hall in the Accra Sports stadium named after him (Interviews with Ghanaian NGO head, 23 June 2015; and Indian businessman in Accra, 26 June 2015).

Indeed, at very few points were any derogatory tones detected in interviews and conversations with either Ghanaians or long- and short-term Indian residents in Ghana, involved mostly in business from medium-sized retail to factories. While Indians were noted for socialising with each other, they were also noted for their charitable activities, for not living exclusively in one particular area and for their good relations with the indigenes (Various interviews, June 2015). It was stated that many Ghanaians would have worked at some point under an Indian but this wasn't considered a distinct problem, as it can be in other countries with a small, relatively wealthy, longstanding, non-indigenous population such as the Lebanese in Sierra Leone (Reuters, 2007). Specific instances of societal problems or indeed healthy interaction were curiously thin on the ground, although some negative worker-boss stories almost inevitably emerged.

However, even if this is painted in rather simplistic and vague tones, it is all in sharp contrast to recent issues that have arisen with the newly resident Chinese population in Ghana. Two

ongoing processes are immediately relevant. The first concerns illegal mining, particularly of gold, undertaken by a sizable number of Chinese immigrants in collusion with local chiefs and police. In 2013, the Ghanaian authorities launched a clampdown and deported thousands (Hirsch, 2013). Similarly in markets in Accra, there have been tensions since 2007 between African and Chinese traders, the latter accused of trading in fields for which they are not qualified and for simply invading the market, issues which have very much exercised the Ghana United Traders Association in recent times (Benzoni, 2013). Several Ghanaian interlocutors noted unfair practices and the considerable deployment of capital, which one described as 'aggressive capitalism' (Interview with leading Ghanaian journalist, 25 June 2015). The two processes contribute to a common perception of Chinese immigrants very different to that of their Indian counterparts. However, one might say that Chinese 'misdemeanours' are, quite literally, front page news while any Indian 'goodwill' is, metaphorically, buried in the supplementary section.

This is all very well, but the question remains as to whether this state of friendliness and level of expertise affects state-to-state relations, particularly in the field of 'development cooperation'. One can begin to detect some fluctuations over time – from early post-colonial enthusiasm to a mid-era fade through to a revamping in the early 2000s and an apparent slight downgrading of recent times, although one must be quite circumspect. Of particular interest here are the connections re-made in the early 2000s. Kuffour and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) came to power in 2000 with a clear foreign policy message of 'economic diplomacy'. There was, as part of this policy, a deliberate targeting of India. Indeed, one might conclude that there was something approaching a perfect mini-storm with Kuffour reaching out from Accra; a receptive Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee in the middle of his tenure; and an enthusiastic Ghanaian High Commissioner in Delhi, the academic, Mike Ocquaye, and his opposite in Accra, Kaikhisrou K. Framji, who shared a good relationship (Interview with Mike Ocquaye, 2015). Kuffour went to India twice, in 2002 and 2008. If Ghana was looking abroad for economic diplomacy, an economically resurgent India was also looking afresh at its overseas relationships. The first fruits of a new partnership emerged in the early 2000s, before many other Indian-African ventures appeared, particularly in the guise of the KACE and the new presidential palace.

It would appear at face value that there was, then, something special continuing and re-flowering in this relationship. However, one can see it from two angles: on the one hand, that of a rapport between representatives of the two countries and, on the other, a pressing economic need at both ends. Built into those two projects were both of these imperatives. The KACE was established in the form of a grant which has since been augmented, what might be considered as closest to development aid. The new presidential palace, however, was entirely different and also proved highly controversial; its naming as Jubilee House to commemorate 50 years of Ghanaian independence by Kuffour's administration and then its

renaming with its colonial title of Flagstaff House by John Atta Mills' National Democratic Congress (NDC) government is indicative of its short and fraught existence. Inaugurated in the final days of the Kuffour government in 2008, it had gone wildly over budget, to the point that the opposition under Atta Mills made much political capital of the scandal and Atta Mills refused to move there when he became president. Notoriously, he had said that he would turn the palace into a 'chicken coop' (The Ghanaian Journal, 2009). Instead, however, the palace was renamed and John Dramani Mahama, Atta Mills' successor after his death in 2012, moved in.

The KACE might then be considered purely as aid but it might also be considered as soft power. This was, though, welcomed by the Ghanaian government and remains symbolic, even of 'South-South cooperation' (Interview with KACE Director-General, 29 June 2015). The palace is much more indicative of market entry for Indian firms, but the terms of the LoC were very favourable and Shapoorji Pallonji used Ghanaian sub-contractors, unlike on many Chinese construction works. Alongside KACE, the Ghanaian section of TEAM-9 and various other projects in the pipeline, the palace was very much the show-project of the new relationship and was thoroughly welcomed by at least one half of the Ghanaian political divide. It has to be said, though, that while Kuffour's 'economic diplomacy' was indeed aimed at India, it was concurrently aimed at many other states. The palace financial scandal and the chicken coop fiasco also had the potential to spoil the party. Indeed, the diplomatic training school serving the West African sub-region, in the pipeline with Indian finance under Kuffour, did not happen. Mahama visited India as Vice President in 2010 while Atta Mills went to China, but Mahama cancelled his planned trip to India as president at short notice in 2013. A partial downgrading might be observed but Mahama's trip to the India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015, a visit to Ghana by Indian President Pranab Mukherjee in 2016 and the recent ventures outlined above suggest continued dynamism.

Good historic and contemporary relations and often an understanding at personal and state level between Indians and Ghanaians clearly feed into some sort of notion of South-South cooperation. The Indian grants, the particular sort of finance and knowledge transfer offered by Indian LoCs and the modus operandi of Indian companies appears to bolster this relationship. However, this would be far too simple a conclusion. The pro-Indian Ocuaye noted that India is a good partner but qualified that one must be pragmatic in relations with others i.e. in many cases the Chinese (Interview, 2015). An MP on the Ghanaian Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee had this to say: if you are hungry, you don't worry about who is providing the food until after you've eaten (Interview, 30 June 2015). The net is thus cast widely. Mawuena Dumor Trebarh, CEO of the Ghana Investment and Promotion Centre may have summarized well when she declared that 'India has been contributing to Ghana's development process, by providing assistance in setting up projects in the spirit of South-South cooperation, through provision of Lines of Credit and grants' (2013, p.8). In

other words, we consider whatever India is doing and however they are doing it as fine and so are happy with this version of development cooperation. One strongly suspects, in line with the diplomat and the politician above, that most other forms of development assistance and investment from wherever they emerge, particularly those with fewer strings attached, are also very welcome.

## Conclusion

So what does this mean for 'development cooperation' and South-South discourse? One might conclude that extraversion is alive and well in Ghana. One might also conclude that Ghana would prefer to work with India but that China and the West have the money and Ghana has to be 'pragmatic'. Interests appear to be important from the Ghanaian perspective. In one sense, this is not good news for Nehruvianism, as it struggles to make itself heard above the demands for economic rationales in Ghana and India. There may, however, be avenues for this sort of ideology or soft power if, like in Ghana, the Chinese deals encounter problems – the 2011 US\$3bn Chinese loan to Ghana was halted in 2014 – and Western support comes with unpleasant strings attached – in particular the almost US\$1bn IMF bailout in 2015 (Reuters, 2014; Bax & Dontoh, 2014). The interests/ideational field remains open, despite some premature reports of the death of such ideas, but within a clearly expansive notion of what constitutes 'development cooperation'.

Agency of individuals involved in the relationship also clearly matters. However, while India maintains its one horse power carriage of capabilities and the very good relations remain rather unheralded, its foothold may not seriously increase, whether Nehruvian or not. The lines of connection between Ghana and India, on the other hand, do appear relatively sturdy. The latest twists in the topography will surely emerge from Modi's BJP government in Delhi and the returning NPP government in Ghana, victorious in the December 2016 elections under Nana Akufo-Addo. Indeed, an assessment of Modi's tenure thus far suggests he is 'neither unique nor uniquely pragmatic, and like many Indian leaders before him, his pragmatism cannot simply abandon ideas and ideology', although Nehru himself has mostly disappeared from current government rhetoric (Miller & Sullivan, 2017, p.27).

India is certainly somewhat apart in Ghana from both the West – in that it is not prescriptive or interfering (Whitfield, 2010) – and from China – given India's methods and specialisms, the influx of Chinese workers and the comparison of Ghanaian views of outsiders. Thus, India is rolling out its own, in some ways distinctive, notion of South-South cooperation, one that is not radical as in Nehru's day but is still somewhat attractive to states like Ghana. This distinction must not, however, be over-emphasised, as similarities to China and the West are also clear in an overarching neo-liberal world. Indian attitudes must also not be considered static, in themselves and in their relation to individual African states. New government actors, a continued drop in economic growth, unpaid loans, or demands at

home may change the impetus. On the global stage, it is clear, however, that Indian thinking on a much broadened notion of aid or development assistance, including non-interference, non-didacticism, recipient choice, commercial elements and the private sector, is important and sometimes sufficiently similar to Chinese and other non-Western attitudes – and even elements of new Western thinking - to contribute a serious push towards re-alignment of international norms in what is becoming a ‘post-aid’ world (Mawdsley, 2017). It was once thought that in the aid arena there would be a Northernization of the South but it looks increasingly like a Southernization of the North.

Indeed, while the rhetoric and ideas behind South-South cooperation have certainly been toned down – there is no longer any real agenda to fundamentally change the global system - there are still ideas, such as Indian ‘development cooperation’, which are partly ideologically-informed and compete with national interests. These ideas are also not lacking in effect. They have re-emerged to some extent because of neo-liberal economic expansion, have been propagated within neo-liberal methods and exist alongside the many gross inequalities generated. Indeed, South-South cooperation sometimes serves to hide injustices, including within Southern states. However, they still provide at least a rhetorical alternative to total neo-liberal dominance and are part of an actual challenge to Northern political and economic presence in the South and to ways of doing cooperation/aid. The radical Cold War incarnation of South-South cooperation had some but limited impact: it may be that the reincarnation will have more impact but within a much more narrowly refined remit.

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<sup>i</sup> Definition of the South is a contentious issue. It is however suffice to say here that India and African countries are always included.