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Of Mines and Markets: Labour Regimes and Agency in Chinese-Structured GPNs in Zambia

Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

2013

Róisín Hinds
DECLARATION

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SUMMARY

Over the last ten years, the presence of Chinese capital on the African continent has vastly increased. Investors are creating thousands of jobs in a variety of sectors, integrating African workers and consumers into distinct production networks, owing to the heavy state involvement and ownership of capital in the extraction sector. One strain of critical perspectives on Sino-African relations are concerns that Chinese investors are exporting much criticised labour conditions to Africa. This is given weight by the many protests, strikes, and demonstrations that have occurred in Chinese-owned workplaces on the continent. This thesis is an attempt to understand such actions. It asks: what are the forms of labour agency found in Chinese workplaces in Zambia, and what factors influence such action?

In attempting to answer this question, the broad analytical framework adopted in this thesis combines Labour Geography with the Global Production Network approach. By combining these two perspectives, one can obtain a holistic analysis of labour agency that considers the wider socio-embedding of labour spaces as a constituent factor for labour agency. The two workplaces investigated are the Chambishi economic zone in Zambia’s mineral rich Copper Belt province and the Kamwala market in the capital city, Lusaka. These areas occupy distinct positions within Chinese-structured GPNs: mineral extraction and retail. The methodological strategy for data collection was multi-method. Semi-structured interviews were the primary source of information, alongside a questionnaire survey, field-note observations, and archival research. Nearly 200 informant interviews were carried out in the completion of this project, and I spent a one-month period shadowing lower-level regulatory agents from the Zambian Ministry of Labour and Social Services.

This thesis argues that both horizontal and vertical factors have an influence on the types of labour agency workers adopt, and the variable successes thereof. In both cases, the labour regimes constructed compare unfavourably with other workplaces in Zambia, and are characterised by low pay, casualisation, and poor conditions. The horizontal factors at play in shaping labour agency include local histories, interfaces between workers and
state regulators, and the role of trade unions. While, the vertical significance relates to the distinct nature of ownership in Chinese-structured GPNs, namely a high level of state involvement and ownership of capital in the extraction sector compared with independent, private entrepreneurs in retail.

Workers in the mining sector have been able to utilise the entanglement of geopolitical and commercial interests to win limited concessions from their employers. The types of labour agency workers adopt here are predominately, but not exclusively, collective and involve the use of overt strikes and protest action. These have been undertaken without the sanctioning of unions - reflecting workers distrust of union representatives - and have, on several occasions, resulted in violence. When workers tie such agency to wider political events - crossing the blurred line between political and diplomatic interests - they have been able to receive limited concessions. Comparatively, independent investors in the retail sector can enter and construct labour regimes without the same political burden. In expressing their agency, those who are employed here favour covert strategies of resilience that help them deal with the day-to-day realities of their employment, but which do not fundamentally change their working conditions. In lacking a common collective identity, these actions are undertaken individually or in small groups and include, for example, theft and taking extended lunch breaks.

These arguments are underlined by two broader theoretical considerations. Firstly, much analysis of labour agency has tended to pivot on capital-labour interactions. This thesis argues the need to consider the wider socio-spatial embedding of a labour system and, in particular, the role of the state, as constitute influences on labour agency. Secondly, it is often argued, particularly by some African political elites, that Chinese investors are offering an alternative to western neoliberal models of development. This thesis contends that rather than offering a clear alternative to neoliberal restructuring in Zambia, Chinese investors have been able to take advantage of it. This is by exploiting low labour standards and a weak regulatory environment that were enabled through privatisation and structural adjustment. Chinese investors are then, in one sense, further grounding neoliberal ideals in particular locales in Zambia through the labour regimes they are constructing.
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>CNFMMC</td>
<td>China Non-Ferrous Metals Mining Corporation</td>
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<td>CCS</td>
<td>Chambishi Copper Smelter</td>
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<td>FOCAC</td>
<td>Forum on China Africa Cooperation</td>
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<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign Direct Investment</td>
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<td>FFTUZ</td>
<td>Federation of Free Trade Unions of Zambia</td>
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<td>GCC</td>
<td>Global Commodity Chain</td>
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<td>GVC</td>
<td>Global Value Chain</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>LIU</td>
<td>Labour Inspections Unit</td>
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<td>LLCR</td>
<td>Local Labour Control Regime</td>
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<td>MFEZ</td>
<td>Multi-Facility Economic Zone</td>
</tr>
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<td>MLSS</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMD</td>
<td>Movement for Multi-Party Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNC</td>
<td>Multi-National Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUZ</td>
<td>Mineworkers Union of Zambia</td>
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<td>NFCA</td>
<td>Non-Ferrous China-Africa</td>
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<td>NIDL</td>
<td>New International Division of Labour</td>
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<td>NUMAW</td>
<td>National Union of Miners and Allied Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PF</td>
<td>Patriotic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
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<td>SEZ</td>
<td>Special Economic Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOE</td>
<td>State-Owned Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNC</td>
<td>Trans-National Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDA</td>
<td>United Democratic Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIP</td>
<td>United National Independence Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCCM</td>
<td>Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCCZ</td>
<td>Zambia-China Cooperation Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCSMBA</td>
<td>Zambia Chamber of Small and Medium Business Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCTU</td>
<td>Zambia Congress of Trade Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZDA</td>
<td>Zambia Development Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZFE</td>
<td>Zambia Federation of Employers</td>
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1. Introduction

In July 2006, workers in the Chambishi Copper Smelter, a Chinese owned company in the heart of the mineral-rich Zambian Copper Belt Province, downed tools. Complaining of poor working conditions and low levels of pay, the workers’ amassed outside the company’s gates, encouraging colleagues arriving on later shifts to join. Reflecting on the incident in 2010, one participant claimed, ‘The Chinese do not treat us properly…It’s like a worker who treats his tools badly, if he continues eventually the tools will break – if these investors, these Chinese, if they treat us workers badly one day we will break too’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 32). A year previous Chambishi had been the scene of the single largest industrial accident in the history of the Zambian state – an accident at the Chinese owned Chambishi explosives factory which killed 50 workers (BBC News 21.04.2005). Largely attributed to safety failings, this incident prompted a wave of anti-Chinese sentiment that reached a peak during the country’s 2006 general election campaign. Michael Sata - then leader of the main opposition party the Patriotic Front and currently the President of Zambia – tapped into urban discontent with Chinese investors, famously denouncing them as ‘infestors’ (Times of Zambia 10.08.2006) and claiming that ‘Zambia has been mortgaged to China’ (The Post 6.09.2006). While he was unsuccessful in winning the 2006 elections, Sata received significant support from voters, topping the polls in urban centres in Lusaka and the Copper Belt Province – areas which have seen the greatest influx of and most publicised responses to Chinese capital.

Within the last two decades China has emphatically registered its presence on political and economic landscapes across the African continent – a process which has been described by some as the most significant development for Africa since the end of the Cold War (Alden 2007). This involvement is a manifestation of a remarkable evolution in Chinese foreign and economic policy that began some thirty years ago with the introduction of a series of economic liberalisation reforms¹. These repositioned both the state and Chinese economy in the global economic system, and paved the way for the

¹ Selective liberalisation opened the Chinese economy to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Though this was first restricted to four Special Economic Zones (SEZ), soon FDI was permitted country wide, fundamentally changing the nature of the Chinese economy (See Lin 1999). Simultaneous to this, Beijing expanded and intensified bilateral relations around the world, having an increased involvement in international organisations, and joining regional bodies (Tull 2006: 460).
‘rise of China’ as a global economic force (See for example Baum 1991; Young 1995) – a phenomenon which has attracted considerable academic attention interpretations\(^2\) (Broadman 2006: 2; Li 2008; Arrighi 2007). Although China has a long history of engagement with Africa – traceable as far back as to Ming Dynasty diplomatic missions\(^3\) (Alden et al 2008: 3) – modern relations have their origin in the 1950s, when connections were forged between anti-colonial struggles for independence and what was the ‘revolutionary period’ of Chinese foreign policy from the 1950s to 1970s (See Mohan and Power 2008). Running throughout these interactions was an emphasis on ‘south-south cooperation’ and the two regions similar historical experiences of oppression and exploitation – a narrative of Afro-Asian solidarity that has proved to be an important foundation for the evolving China-Africa relation today. Modern interactions are more pragmatic in character than ideological. China desires access to African resources and markets, rather than forwarding an alternative socialist vision.

It is not merely the scale of economic engagement that warrants attention, but also the speed with which it has accelerated. In the space of just six years, from 2000 to 2006, Sino-African trade increased from US$10 billion to US$55 billion (Keenan 2008). By 2011, bilateral trade reached a record of US$160bn according to the Chinese government (China Daily 16.11.2011), making China the continent’s largest individual trading partner and surpassing its traditional partners in Europe and the United States\(^5\) (BBC News 21.05.2012). Current trade flows are largely reflective of economic complementarities between the two regions; China pursues Africa’s natural resources to sustain its domestic growth, while Africa has an increasing demand for foreign investment as well as low-cost Chinese manufactured goods and machinery (Taylor 2009).

\(^2\) Li (2008) for instance contends the so called ‘rise’ of China will trigger a ‘demise’ of the global capitalist system, while Arrighi (2007) - building on Frank’s (1998) thesis that the geographies of capitalism would be relocated to East Asia – argues that China offers an alternative economic model.

\(^3\) Which themselves offer an interesting contrast between Asian and European approaches to the continent – being that the former provided diplomatic assistance whereas the latter engaged in a mission of exploration and conquest. For further see Alden et al. 2008.

\(^4\) This period of interaction is associated with the Maoist era (1949-1976).

\(^5\) If European actors are taken collectively – as the EU – China ranks as Africa’s second biggest trading partner.
As with the growth in trade, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from China into Africa has experienced a similar rise. The Chinese Ministry of Commerce claim that this increase is as much as 46% per year over the last decade (Quoted in Renard 2011: 18). While official statistics from the Chinese state should be approached with a sense of caution, in the absence of alternative sources of information they do however provide a useful indication of long term trends and the direction of capital flows. In 1996, the stock of Chinese FDI in Africa was US$56 million (UNCTAD 2007). In the space of 12 years (by 2008) this had increased to US$7.8bn (Schiere and Walkenhorst 2010: 559). The most recent research estimates accumulative Chinese FDI in Africa to be in the region of US$40bn and increasing still (Financial Times 19.06.2012). While the geographical spread of FDI is quite diverse, in terms of value it tends to dominated by a few resource rich states - mirroring trade complementarities between the two regions. Figure 1 above illustrates a snap shot of investment in 2005. While the data here are somewhat dated – given the speed of the increase since – it does offer a useful indication of the geography of investment. As clearly indicated, FDI at this time was predominately channelled into the
mineral rich regions of Algeria, Sudan, Zambia and South Africa. By 2007, Nigeria had become the largest recipient of Chinese investment (receiving 20.2% of FDI flows) followed by South Africa (19.8%) and Sudan (12.3%) (UNCTAD 2007).

Representations of China’s role in Africa vary from optimistic assertions that investors are providing much needed capital, to pessimistic claims that the forms of Chinese investment – in being focused on extraction rather than manufacturing - offer little developmental gains. The tone among much some western media has been decidedly alarmist, with publications variably purporting the ‘China threat’ (Mawdsley 2008). Headlines such as ‘The dragon tucks in’ (The Economist 30.06.2005), ‘Will the world become Chinese?’ (Die Zeit 2.5.2005), and ‘Insatiable Beijing scours the world for profit and power’ (Financial Times 12.01.2006), feed into the narrative of China’s ‘scramble’ for Africa (The Independent 04.11.2006; See also Mawdsley 2008). Most recently, South African President Jacob Zuma has warned that the unbalanced nature of Africa’s trade ties with China are ‘unsustainable’ in the long term (Financial Times 19.07.2012).

Attracting particular attention are the interactions between Chinese business and African labour, which have been broadly presented in a negative light. Trends in the literature speak of tense labour relations, hostile interactions with trade unions, and poor working conditions (e.g. Lee 2009; ALRN 2009) Concerns have been raised that Chinese firms are ‘exporting’ much-criticised labour conditions to Africa (IHLO 2006; Human Rights Watch 2011: 9), with Chinese officials in Namibia adding fuel to this fire by proclaiming that workers’ ought to ‘suffer now’ so that future generations can benefit (ALRN 2009: 39; Zimbabwe Independent 12.04.2010). From Nigeria to Mozambique, South Africa and Algeria, workers’, trade unionists, and politicians have articulated their concerns with the labour regimes opted for by some Chinese businesses (see for example All Africa 5.07.2009; Global Times 31.03.2010).

Given such perceptions, it is perhaps not surprising that workers in various Sino-African workplaces have attempted to improve their conditions through various forms of industrial action. While the forms this agency takes are naturally diverse - given the range
of employment, labour regimes, and trajectories of labour - that which attracts the greatest amount of media attention tends to be collective demonstrations such as strikes, protests or riots. Beyond this however, there is much scope to consider the everyday interactions between African labour and Chinese business and the types of labour agency employed by workers in these situation.

Perhaps nowhere else in Africa have the interfaces between Chinese business and African labour attracted as much attention as in Zambia. A country possessing significant natural resource wealth, particularly copper\(^6\), Zambia has long held diplomatic ties with the Chinese state and, in recent years, has been a key destination for Chinese overseas investment. As elsewhere in Africa, the speed with which levels of economic engagement have increased is notable. In 2001, the value of Chinese capital investment in Zambia was US$71.1 million. In the space of 6 years this had grown to US$835.9 million (\textit{Times of Zambia} 4.04.2011) and by the end of 2011 it had increased further to US$2.4 billion - equalling approximately 20% of the Zambia’s annual GDP (\textit{Reuters} 20.01.2011). The centrepiece of the modern Sino-Zambian investment strategy is the creation of a Multi-Facility Economic Zone (MFEZ) in the Copper Belt Province and a sub-zone on the outskirts of Lusaka. This commitment is worth US$800 million in Chambishi and US$100 million in the capital, and is expected to create upwards of 6,000 jobs (\textit{ZDA} 05.02.2010). The zone and sub-zone represent just one of six (possibly seven) economic zones the Chinese state is currently supporting the construction of in Africa (Bräutigam and Xiaoyang 2011). Beyond this, it is estimated that over 200 Chinese businesses – both state-owned and private – are currently operating in Zambia, creating over 15,000 jobs in various sectors (\textit{Mail and Guardian} 10.01.2011). The interfaces between Chinese capital and Zambian labour have attracted particular attention, owing, perhaps, to two high profile incidences of unrest. In 2005, workers’ protests at the Chambishi Copper Smelter turned violent as shots were fired by management into crowds of their employees. Five years later a similar situation occurred in the south of the country at the Chinese-owned Collum coal mine, when Chinese managers shot at striking employees (Financial Times 18.10.2010).

\(^6\) China is now the world’s largest consumer of copper so the economic complementary here is clear (\textit{The Economist} 2005).
Despite the attention that has been paid to Sino-African labour relations in the media (See for example *The Economist* 22.04.2011; *Financial Times* 7.05.2012), there is (so far) very limited academic research conducted on the matter. Where labour agency is examined it is broadly presented in a limited descriptive rather than analytical manner, focusing on what workers' did and when rather than an analysis of why agency is expressed in one way rather than another (See for example Gill and Reilly 2007; Alden 2005). Further, the perspectives of those labouring within Chinese companies in Africa are noticeably absent from commentary on Sino-African engagement. This thesis calls for a more sophisticated analytical understanding of labour agency in Chinese workplaces; one that not only accounts for agency as a response to labour conditions, but also considers how the wider socio-spatial embedding of labour spaces has an influence on the strategies of workers' attempting to improve their pay and conditions. Such reconsideration both unpacks labour agency among its temporal and spatial dimensions and reconnects the agency of workers' to the social structures in which it is embedded.

1.1 Reconsidering Labour Agency

A reconsideration of this nature naturally draws from the recent work of labour geography – a labour-centric approach to understanding capitalism that foregrounds workers as 'active geographic agents of change' and emphasises the 'spatial variability of labour market processes' (Coe 2012: 1). While studies in this emerging field of enquiry are diverse, there are certain key thematic strands in the labour geography literature. These include the formation and regulation of geographically specific labour markets (e.g. Peck 1996, 2001; Hanson and Pratt 1995); agency expressed by collectively organised workers (e.g. Herod 1997, 1998; Wills 1998); explorations of workplace and personal identity (e.g. McDowell 2009); and the material landscape as an influence on the forms and outcomes of labour struggles (Mosher 2004; Mann 2007). Labour geography seeks to counter trends in much of the academic globalisation literature which tends to presents workers' as recipient victims of expansionist capital, rather than active participants in its actualisation; actors that respond to the changing realities of globalisation rather than actively shape them (See Herod 2001; Castree et al. 2004). The centrality of labour agency to labour geography analysis is well established (Coe 2012), though concerns have been raised that it remains under theorised (Castree 2007).
particular, there is a seemingly narrow focus on certain forms of worker agency – usually that which is expressed collectively and by unionised employees⁷ - at the expense of others, and also limited consideration for the intersections of class, race, and gender as an influence on the actions of workers.

Recent strategies to develop a more considered account of the agency of labour have gained some conceptual currency through interacting with literature on the Global Production Network (GPN). This is an approach to the internationalisation of production which contends that the complexity of the global economy is most adequately represented by the concept of a network, rather than the more linear value and commodity chain analyses (Henderson et al. 2002). GPNs can be thought of as interconnected operations of firm and non-firm actors through which goods and services are produced and distributed. They are dynamic, globally organised, and responsive to both internal and external circumstances. While labour is an ‘intrinsic part of the production process’, the significance of labour to the functioning of GPNs is rarely represented (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011: 221). In this regard, the dialogue between labour geography and GPNs offers much needed space for considering how the actions of workers’ can rework systems of governance in production networks (Ibid.). From the labour geography perspective, GPNs help to identify the landscapes of labour agency, both in terms of the actors that are engaged in a production network and the differentiated social and cultural landscapes that workers’ operate within (Silvey 2003). This also assists attempts to ascertain whether or not the position of workers within a production system has an influence on the type of action they engage in.

This thesis argues for an alternative analysis of Sino-Zambian labour agency that not only draws from the dialogue between labour geography and GPNs, but also demands a consideration of the State. Significantly, the actions of workers are conditioned by the sphere of regulation, and in most situations it is the state that fulfils this role. However, in the case of Chinese capital, a recognition of the influence of the state on labour agency is particularly important given the heavy state involvement, ownership and engagement in

⁷ An exception to this is Rogaly (2009).
Chinese GPNs (Carmody and Hampwaye 2010: 86). Resource driven bilateralism has been a key strategy in China’s modern foreign policy approach, and in addition to many of the Chinese firms operating in Africa (particularly those involved in the resource sector) being large State Owned Companies (SOEs), private entrepreneurs are able to access financial and other assistance from Beijing (e.g. Tull 2006). The central role played by the Chinese state thus adds a distinct dimension to Chinese GPNs in Africa which must be considered in the analysis of labour agency.

Through an exploration of the socio-spatial influences on labour agency, this thesis not only provides an original contribution to the growing body of literature in China-Africa studies, but also advances the GPN-labour geography perspective in what are underexplored workplaces. While much of the literature on globalisation and global production networks abstracts workers’ from the processes of production and accumulation, this thesis - by unpacking agency in production networks - seeks to place labour at the heart of the analysis.

1.2 Capital, state, and labour: Setting the parameters of this study

The central research question posited by this thesis is **what are the labour regimes and forms of labour agency adopted by workers in Sino-Zambian GPNs, and what factors influence such action?** To answer this question, the analysis must recognise the socio-spatial influences on labour agency within Chinese GPNs before exploring the micro geographies of labour agency in workplaces which occupy distinct places within production networks. The GPN approach has been adopted as this complements a ‘horizontal’ analysis of labour agency with a ‘vertical’ analysis (See for example Henderson et al. 2002; Neilson and Pritchard 2009: 36-37). While vertical considerations incorporate the governance of production networks, horizontal influences include, but are not limited to, local histories, the influence of gender, or regional connections such as migration. The workplaces under analysis represent two ends of Chinese structured GPNs in Africa. They are the Zambia-China Corporation Zone in Chambishi – an industrial site which focuses on the extraction and processing of copper – and the Kamwala market retail centre in Lusaka – an area of formal and informal trading where Chinese business
owners sell low-cost manufactured textiles and small electrical goods. In addition to occupying distinct places in their respective GPNs, these sites also have different labour regimes, historical experiences, and forms of worker organisation. They thus represent rich sites of comparison when adopting the GPN framework.

There are three sub-questions which logically follow from the central question. These frame the analysis and contribute to the scalar dimension of this thesis - moving from an extra-local to local analysis. The first of these questions considers the historical embedding of labour and labour agency. While this primarily functions to provide context, it does offer some pertinent empirical evidence that contribute to the argument of the thesis. The sub-questions are:

- **Historical experience**: How have labour regimes and labour agency in Zambia been constituted by the processes of globalisation, across the different economic periods of the Zambian state (developmentalism to neoliberalism)? What resonance does this history have for current forms of Sino-Zambian labour agency?

- **Nationally-scaled regulation/the governance of GPNs**: What is the role of the Zambian state in constituting labour regimes and agency, and how, if at all, has this been impacted by the modalities of Chinese globalisation. In particular, the role of the Chinese state within some production networks? Additionally, what are the interfaces between Chinese business, local regulatory institutions and labour, and how have these interactions influenced the strategies and approaches of workers’ agency?

- **The micro geographies of GPNs**: What are the strategies and forms of labour agency found within the chosen case study areas, and what factors influence and shape workers’ strategic options? What role, if at all, does workers’ position within a GPN have for the choice and outcome of agency?

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8 Retail is an intrinsic part of production networks, though it is not a production process per se. Economically, production and consumption have to be considered part of the same network – if there was not consumption there would be no production. For a discussion of retail spaces in GPNs see Coe (2003; 2004).
What this thesis does not intend to do is to map Chinese Global Production Networks per say, or map one GPN in particular. The complexity and dynamism of production processes – being continually in flux in response to both internal and external circumstances (See Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010: 221) – would make a mapping exercise of this nature beyond the scope of this study. Rather, this thesis takes aspects of the Global Production Network approach to provide a broad relational framework. This thesis also does not intend to explore labour agency from the Chinese perspective. The interest here is exclusively on Africans workers and how they co-create the labour regimes they encounter. In this regard there is an acknowledged positionality towards the subject matter, the implications of which are discussed in the methodology chapter.

The central argument presented in this thesis is that labour agency is shaped by an institutional matrix of horizontal and vertical factors. More specifically, that it is the intersections between Chinese business (state and private capital), the Zambian state, and labour that actively construct labour regimes and agency. While fundamentally different configurations of these factors are found in each case study, in both locations workers' have developed effective strategies for confronting actors that are organised at extra-local scales. This is intertwined with a further (related) argument. That workers' position within the GPN has implications for the strategies and forms of labour agency, and the variable successes thereof. Of significance here is the relative autonomy of entrepreneurs in retail compared with the high level of state ownership of capital in mineral extraction. Investors in the mining sector have both political advantages and burdens in the operation of their business, owing to the nature of ownership. There is a blurred line between what constitutes industrial relations and what constitutes a diplomatic issue. For example, in October 2010 supporters of disgruntled workers at a Chinese owned coal mine in the south of Zambia targeted their protest against the Chinese Embassy in Lusaka, rather than the offices of the mines operators, which were a short distance away (Global Post 05.08.2012). The Chinese government has also been compelled to make statements following incidences of unrest at its State-Owned operations in other parts of Africa (for example in Sudan). Workers' in Chambishi have been able to harness this factor and, using overt protest strategies, have received some (limited) concessions from their

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6 See Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small (2008).
employers. This is when agency feeds into political events. In comparison, those who invest in retail can act with greater independence owing to their autonomy from the central state. Workers in the independent retail sector favour covert strategies of resilience that are conducted independently or in small groups.

These arguments are underlined by a broader theoretical consideration. It is often argued, particularly by some African political elites, that Chinese investors are offering an alternative to western neoliberal models of development (See Hess and Aidoo 2010: 371). In 2006, the former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo proclaimed to the Chinese President Hu Jintao, ‘the twenty-first century is the century for China to lead the world. And when you (Chinese) are leading the world, we (Africa) want to be close behind you’ (See Michel and Beuret 2009: 11). Zimbabwean Robert Mugabe similarly espoused the advantages of Chinese engagement, averring, ‘To this day we bear the lasting scars of that dark encounter with colonialism, often described in the west as civilising....We have turned east, where the sun rises, and given our back to the west, where the sun sets’ (The Guardian 19.04.2005). This thesis argues that rather than offering an alternative to neoliberal restructuring in Zambia, Chinese investors have been able to take advantage of it. This is by exploiting low labour standards and a weak regulatory environment that were enabled through privatisation and structural adjustment. The empirical data indicates that the labour regimes constructed in these Chinese-owned workplaces are often considered worse by employees because of the poor wages and conditions. Chinese investors are, in one sense, further grounding neo-liberal ideals in Zambia through the labour regimes they are constructing.

In building these arguments, the thesis will have five chapters. Chapter Two, the literature review, analyses important theories and relevant bodies of work that contributes to the thesis’s broad theoretical framework. A useful starting point here is an identification of the changing nature of production processes. Beginning with a discussion of globalisation and global production networks, this chapter identifies the complexity of processes of production and attempts to situate labour within such dynamic systems. This includes an exploration of theories of labour agency and Local Labour Control Regimes (LLCR), and a discussion of how GPNs can frame key elements of labour’s strategic terrain. In this
chapter I establish that adopting an explicitly spatial framework – a combination of labour geography and the GPN approach – can add important dimensions to understandings of working life and, in particular, the agency of labour.

Chapter Three is a discussion and reflection on the methodological approach adopted in the completion of this research project. Aspects covered here include a discussion of, and justification for, the case study selection, and an analysis and critique of the multi-method, interpretative methodological framework adopted. While I encountered a variety of responses from interviewees, in the main workers within the chosen Sino-Zambian workplaces showed initial hesitation to engage in discussion - particularly with someone whom they deemed an ‘outsider’. In this methodology chapter I explore the challenges of access and reveal the strategies I adopted to counter such problems. In addition, I discuss issues of positionality, ethics, and language, and how assess how (if at all) these impacted on the research processes.

The next three chapters provide the main body of the thesis. The first two focus on wider socio-spatial aspects of the study which have implications for the strategic options available to workers, while the last chapter analyses the micro-geographies of globalisation and how labour agency plays out in the these particular spaces. Chapter Four considers the history of Zambian labour. Specifically, the analysis here is concerned with how Zambian labour regimes and agency have been constituted across the different economic periods of the Zambian state: from independence to the modern wave of Chinese resource-driven bilateralism. This is as an important consideration as history shapes workers’ interpretations of their present-day conditions and, crucially, their expectations from capital. Neither foreign investment nor the processes of labour occur in ahistorical vacuums, and an appreciation of the history of Zambian labour only adds valuable insights for this current analysis. Chapter Four establishes the centrality of labour in Zambian national politics, and shows that the position of workers and the trade union movement has been weakened by neoliberal policies through the progressive introduction of structural adjustment programmes. While in the main this chapter seeks to contextualise labour agency, in itself it does offer some original contributions on the
Chapter Five analyses the governance of production networks as a constituent factor which influences labour agency. The construction of labour regimes and processes of regulation are fundamentally translocal – that is, they are impacted on and influenced by factors that operate on various scales. Labour geography has come under criticism in some quarters for failing to account for how nationally-scaled factors shape the possibilities for workers actions (Bergene et al 2010). The state, as a regulator of labour markets, clearly has an important role to play in transformative labour politics - not least through legislative provisions and regulatory processes. This Chapter, then, seeks to explore the Zambian state’s role in shaping the prospects and potential for labour agency. In the first section I consider Sino-Zambian bilateralism and the interactions between central Zambian state elites and the Chinese state, and state-owned enterprises. Then, I move to consider the localised interfaces between Zambian regulatory agents and Chinese capital. The empirical data drawn from here includes a one month period shadowing labour inspectors from the Ministry of Labour and Social Services (MLSS). The chapter argues that power, sovereignty and bi-politics in Zambia are being expressed through particular forms of state under-regulation of labour. While there is a poor labour regulatory climate in Zambia more broadly - exemplified by a lack of investment, staff incapacity, and weak and inefficient enforcement – with Chinese capital specifically there are particular challenges. Lower-level regulatory officials perceive favouritism toward Chinese investors in the conduct of Zambian political elites, which lessens their willingness to fulfil their functions. Conversely, many workers perceive these regulatory officials to have been co-opted by Chinese capital in a similar manner to political elites, and thereby refuse to cooperate with their efforts.

These findings lead onto Chapter Six in which I analyse labour control regimes and labour agency within the two case study areas. First, I detail metrics of labour, such as benefits and remuneration, casualisation, and health and safety, and discuss strategies of workplace control in relation to Sino-Zambian interactions. Here I establish the precariousness of employment in both locations and the central areas of concern workers
seek to address through their agency. Then, I delve into the particularities of labour agency in both locations. I begin by considering the resonance of trade unionism and role of state regulators in each area, making important observations about the construction of collective identities therein. This is followed by an analysis of particular forms of labour agency. While that found in Chambishi is large-scale overt, and collective agency, the identified strategies of workers in Kamwala are covert, small-scale and individual, or with a few other colleagues. This chapter argues that both horizontal and vertical factors have a role to play in forms, strategies, and variable successes of labour agency. Horizontal factors include local histories, the labour control regimes constructed, as well as the cultures of trade unionism, while the ‘vertical’ influence relates to the nature of ownership and position of a workplace within a production network. In being characterised by a high level of Chinese state involvement and ownership, the mining sector commands more political and media attention than retail. Workers here have been able to utilise this to their advantage and, by tying strategies of overt collective agency to wider political events, been able to receive some concessions from their employers. Comparatively, those employed in Kamwala favour resilience strategies which help them deal with the day-to-day realities of working life but do not fundamentally change conditions.

Concluding, I reiterate the central argument that labour regimes and agency within Sino-Zambian workplaces are fundamentally constituted by an institutional matrix of factors, which operate at various scales. These factors include the Zambian state, Chinese state and capital, and labour themselves (including social histories and contexts) – as well as the nature of the particular GPN labour reside within. I also draw on the wider theoretical considerations of this argument. Chinese investors in these spaces of employment are not offering an alternative to the neoliberal model – rather, they have taken advantage of it. Chinese investors are reinforcing neoliberal ideals in particular locales through the labour regimes in Global Production Networks. I emphasise the conceptual gains that can be found through embedding labour within the processes of production, and highlight the importance of considering labour as socio-spatially embedded within wider structures - which both influence and constraint the actions of workers. Here, I also review the steps that were taken to complete this research project and assess whether the central research question and sub-questions were fully addressed. Additionally, I identify potential areas
where this research could be expanded. While this thesis does not intend to offer policy recommendations for the Zambian state, in the conclusion I do wish to present some suggestions to Zambian regulators and trade unions to seek to improve the conditions of workers'.
2. Globalisation and Global Production Networks: Making Space for Labour

This thesis is concerned with how Zambian workers experience and participate in south-south globalisation, in workplaces that are at two ends of Chinese structured GPNs: mines and markets (retail). In order to contextualise the empirical data and establish the conceptual framework within which the analysis occurs – that which combines labour geography and the Global Production Network (GPN) – this chapter reviews the various bodies of work that attempt to situate labour within processes of production. In particular, it explores the potential for labour agency within Global Production Networks and argues that workers' positionality within GPNs should be central to the analysis of labour conditions and strategic options. There are three sections in total, each representing an important component of GPNs and theme within the literature – production processes, labour and the state). A fundamental starting point for the reassessment of labour regimes and agency is the ‘changing nature and scale of the organisation of capital’ (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010: 221). To that end, the first section will explore the dynamics of globalisation, taking a critical look at foreign direct investment theory and the various attempts that have been made to understand the global integration of markets. This section establishes the growing complexity of the globalised economy and argues that this is most appropriately characterised as Global Production Networks (GPNs) (Henderson et al. 2002; Coe et al. 2004; Dicken 2007).

The second section critiques literature which looks at the position of working people within a globalised economy. Beginning with a discussion of evolutions in productive organising, I explore the changing balance of power between labour and capital in various systems of work. While there is a healthy and diverse range of literature on labour, much of it shares a common - and I contend flawed - analytical perspective: that labour is a passive actor in the processes of production, able to respond to the actions of capital rather than actively shape them.

This awareness leads to the third section, where I introduce ‘Labour Geography’ as a theoretical approach which foregrounds workers as active agents of geographical change
(e.g. Herod 2001). Here I identify the key characteristics which give this emergent field an (albeit loose) coherence, and subscribe to its core stipulation that adopting an explicitly spatial framework can add significantly to understandings of working life. Rather than being a passive recipient, labour should be considered an active participant in both the shaping and outcome of processes of production and work. I explore two aspects of workers’ experiences that are central to the labour geography analysis and this thesis: labour control regimes and labour agency. This section will also identify the need to situate labour within GPN narratives. While there have been a number of recent explorations of labour within networks and chains, academic approaches have largely excluded working people from global network and chain concepts (Riisgaard and Hammer 2011: 170). There has been limited systematic exploration of how workers’ position within GPNs affects labour-capital relations, conditions, and agency, despite GPNs framing key elements of labour’s strategic terrain.

Having reflected on production processes and labour, in the final section I analyse the state as an active component of GPNs. This is an essential consideration, as labour regimes and agency can be conditioned or influenced by the spheres of regulation. In most cases it is the state that fulfils this role, remaining the ‘pivotal institutional apparatus which regulates the lives and politics of workers’ (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010: 223). Yet as production processes become increasingly complex, the capacity of the state to manage or regulate economic activity has been reduced, generally (Cox 1987; Glassman 1999). This section explores the complexities of statehood in the context of globalisation, showing that states are often influenced by competing constituencies at both global and local levels - for example making local investment environments attractive to international capital in a manner that retains the support of domestic constituents. I argue that the comparative and competitive advantages of economic spaces, historical precedence, and the embedding of state and society, are important factors in the reconstruction (if any) of modalities of state power (Jessop in McGrath-Champ et al. 2011: 26). I emphasise the need to embed labour and GPNs in the state, and consider regulatory systems as an influence on the actions of workers. Concluding this chapter, I reiterate the geographical significance of globalisation, the need to adopt an ‘embedded’

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10 A notable exception to this is the recent article on labour agency in manufacturing industry in Pakistan by Lund-Thomsen (2012)
2.1 The Dynamics of Globalisation and Global Production Networks

Within the last two decades, the realm of economic geography has arguably been dominated by one word: globalisation. While a singular unitary definition remains elusive, there are two common threads that can be identified in most approaches. First, globalisation has been read as a process of global integration or interconnectedness (Held et al. 1999). Tabb (1999: 1) for one speaks of ‘the process of reducing barriers between countries and encouraging closer economic, political, and social interaction’, while Mittleman (1997: 3) understands the dynamics of globalisation as ‘a coalescence of varied transnational processes and domestic structures, [which allow] the economy, politics, culture, and ideology of one country to penetrate another’. This perspective is particularly useful in identifying one of the key characteristics of globalisation - the flows and circuits of capital, goods, and people that criss-cross the globe. Transnational Corporations (TNC), or Multinational Corporations (MNC), are said to be the lead drivers of this process, and the key agents of national deregulation in finance and trade (Cox 1996: 23). To reduce costs, increase production efficiencies, and enter new markets, companies are increasingly looking beyond their national borders for economic opportunities. As such, production processes are no longer local, national, or even regional, but have become organised (to a varying extent) on a global scale (Herod 2003: 125). Consider for example raw materials sourced from Africa, processed and manufactured in Asia and sold as products to European markets.

Though ‘interconnectedness’ is clearly a dominant theme in globalisation discourse it has come under criticism in some quarters for failing to account for the variability of integration (Hirst and Thompson 1992: 394; Ruigork and van Tulder 1995: 119). Hoogvelt (2001), for instance, argues that rather than expanding and increasing the number of actors involved in the global economy, globalisation has instead led to the deepening, or spatial ‘involution’, of the capitalist system. In this reading, some areas of the globe are deeply integrated into international markets, while others may remain
comparatively on the outside. Relatedly, some remain sceptical of how fully globalised the world economy is (Hirst and Thompson 1992: 394). Considering this critique it is perhaps more apt to speak of globalisation as a process of variable interconnectedness.

Second, accounts of globalisation tend to pivot on the notion of time-space relations. From this perspective globalisation is read as a process that *reshapes temporal and spatial organisation* in the contemporary capitalist system (Herod 2009: 3). It is said we now live in a ‘shrinking globe’ (Agger 1989), where we witness the ‘acceleration of just about everything’ (Gleick 1999), and in an ‘epoch of simultaneity’ (Foucault 1986). Technological advances in communications and transport are rapidly transforming spatial and temporal relationships between different parts of the world. Where once letters were the only means of correspondence, now high speed internet access provides almost instantaneous communications between opposite ends of the globe. From sail to steam, freight and aircraft, advances in transportation technologies have not only radically transformed trade and commerce, but integrated peoples and societies. Giddens (1990: 64) notes, ‘globalisation can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa’. Along similar lines, Harvey (1990: 299) speaks of the ‘annihilation of space through time’. Drawing together strains of these ideas, it is apt to speak of globalisation as a process of variable interconnectedness which challenges temporal and spatial organisation, and influences economic, social and political spheres. Before exploring attempts to understand this integration of markets and peoples, it is first important to gain grounding in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) theory, in order to understand why companies choose to operate abroad.

2.1.1 Foreign Direct Investment Theory

The geography of the global economy is shaped largely by the actions of TNCs, primarily through their decisions to input FDI (or not) in particular geographical locations (Dicken 2003: 198; also Letto-Gillies 2003: 140-141). While the relative significance of TNCs is variable (for example from location to location, or sector to sector), there are few parts of the world that have not either directly or indirectly felt the influence of transnational
operations. In some cases, as Dicken (2003: 199) notes, ‘the influence on an area’s economic fortunes can be overwhelming’. While there is no single micro-level theoretical explanation for foreign investment, there are useful attempts to understand the activities of TNCs and spread of FDI. Hymer (1960; 1976), in what was the pioneering theoretical approach, took as his starting point, the realisation that domestic firms must possess some intrinsic advantages over foreign firms in terms of, for example, their knowledge, access, and footing in local markets. Therefore he deduced that for foreign firms to enter these markets they must thus have some firm-specific asset that would enable them to offset and counteract such clear indigenous advantages (1960: 33). This may include access to raw materials, ability to exploit economies of scale, or reduced transportation costs – in sum, factors which enable the foreign firm to out-compete an indigenous company in their domestic market. Given the need for such assets, Hymer (1970: 441) finds MNCs ‘typically large firms operating in imperfect markets (such as a monopoly or more likely under oligopoly conditions)’. While this theory provides a thought-out explanation of why firms enter into international operations, it offers little on their subsequent development once established in international markets. As Dicken (2003: 203) contends, however, such critique should be placed in terms of the ‘understanding prevailing at the time’ and that ‘by that criterion, [Hymer’s] contribution was immense’.

In an extension of Hymer, Vernon (1966) explored the product life cycle as an attempt to understand the growth of FDI. The ‘life cycle’ is identified as a five stage process of introduction, growth, maturity, saturation, and decline of products or services. Introducing an explicitly locational factor to the analysis of international investment, Vernon argues that the geography of production will depend on the stage of the product cycle. In the early stages, it is argued that labour and production will occur in the home region or country in which the product was conceived, with overseas demand catered to by exports. As the product matures, production facilities may move away from the point of origin as the company seeks reduced production and distribution costs (for example consider the differences in labour costs across Europe, never mind those in Asia). Eventually, as the item becomes standardised, production would again shift to low-cost regions in the developing world (Dicken 2003: 204). While the product life theory had

11 For further extensions on Hymer see Caves (1971) and Buckley and Casson (1976)
some resonance in initial overseas investments by US firms for example (Dicken 2003: 204), it is unrealistic to think this linear sequential pattern is adopted by firms in today’s complex global economy, characterised by network trade.

Dunning (1980; 1993) provides one of the more relevant interpretations of FDI in the ‘eclectic paradigm’. Here it is claimed that firms will engage in international production when they possess certain ownership-specific advantages over competing firms of other nationalities; when such ownership-specific advantages are internalised (i.e. the firm choosing to exploit them itself rather than outsourcing them to other firms); and when there are location specific factors that make it more attractive for firms to exploit assets in foreign rather than domestic locations. Going further Dunning (1988; 1994) establishes four categories for classifying FDI. First, resource seeking FDI - that which seeks natural resources and factor production inputs; Second, market seeking FDI - identifying and exploiting new markets for developed products; Third, efficiency seeking FDI – a practice of production specialisation where firms seek to reduce production costs and diversify risk by exploiting differences between global production and factory prices; and fourth, strategic asset seeking FDI – where firms or assets are purchased to advance a company’s global competitive position. While Dunning’s approach has been criticised as ‘merely a list of factors likely to be important in the explanation of the modern [TNC]…than the explanation itself’ (Taylor & Thrift 1986: 11), it provides a useful conceptual structure within which particular cases can be examined (Cox 2003: 207)\(^\text{12}\).

2.1.2 The New International Division of Labour

The growth of FDI and restructuring of production processes on a global scale has important implications for labour which were explored in the theory of the New International Division of Labour (NIDL) - a revision on earlier attempts to theorise productive relationships between individual units (nation-states) (See Fröbel et al. 1980; Friedman 1986). Previous inquiries were concerned with the divisions that arose when a small number of industrial countries provided manufactured products in exchange for raw

\(^{12}\) For another perspective on TNCs see Vernon (1966; 1971; 1974; 1979)
materials from the developing world. Yet this system underwent a fundamental restructuring in the 1960s and 1970s, with the emergence of the ‘Four Asian Dragons’. Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, achieved spectacular economic growth, not through exporting raw materials, but rather manufactured goods. Conversely, from 1965 to 1980, those countries at the ‘core’ of the global economy deindustrialised in terms of both manufacturing as a portion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the percentage of the labour force employed in industry (Mittleman 1997: 4; see Arrighi and Drangel 1986: 55-56). With industrial upgrading, East Asian countries sought to move away from the production of high labour intensive goods and diversify into technology intensive, high value products. Mittelman (1997: 4) observes of this time:

‘no longer was there a dichotomy between a small number of industrial countries and a Third World providing primary products. An emerging world market for labour and production entailed massive industrial relocation, the subdivision of manufacturing processes into multiple partial operations, major technological innovations, large-scale migratory flows, and the feminisation of labour’.

Pioneers of the NIDL approach, Fröbel and his collaborators (1980: 46) contended that observable changes in the global production process – production moving from core to peripheral countries, where ‘world factories’ were established for the production of export goods - were the outcome of ‘the conditions for the valorisation and accumulation of capital’. Such movement was considered necessary due to ‘industrial conflict, increased reproduction costs, and the growing organisation of migrant communities [preventing] the attainment of a high level of exploitation’ (Cohen 1987: 223). In developing countries by comparison, labour remained comparatively unorganised and (from the capitalist perspective) underutilised. Though the NIDL approach is a fruitful means of understanding the evolution in global production processes, it is flawed in claiming that industrialisation in the globe south was new. The authors failed to recognise, for example, the experience of Import Substituting Industrialisation (ISI) as a strategy for economic development in South America in the 1930s and 1940s (See Gereffi 1990).

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13 See Smith 1776 [2008] for one of the earliest attempts to understand the global division of labour. Here he contrasts the position of the isolated producer with that of the modern industry.
2.1.3 Network and Chain Theory

A growing consensus has emerged in some quarters that the concept of a ‘chain’ or ‘network’ is the most appropriate way to represent economic integration\(^\text{14}\) (Coe et al. 2008). Global Commodity Chain (GCC) and Global Value Chain (GVC) perspectives first emerged in the late 1970s (Wallerstein 1974) but were updated twenty years later as an attempt to grasp the reality of new forms of industrial organisation\(^\text{15}\). Rooted in transnational production systems, GCC perspectives ‘link the economic activities of firms to technological and organisational networks that enable companies to develop, manufacture, and market specific commodities’ (Gereffi 1997: 64; See Gereffi 1994; 1995; 1999a; 1999b). Global Value Chains trace the complex activities that firms and workers engage in to bring a product from conception to consumer. In its simplest form, a value chain is ‘the process by which technology is combined with material and labour inputs, and then processed inputs are assembled, marketed, and distributed’ (Kogut 1985: 15). Both perspectives have a broad affinity with narratives on the emergence of the ‘new international division of labour’, yet actively break with some of the more static terms and typologies used by NIDL advocates, such as that of core and periphery (Gereffi 1994).

A global commodity chain is ‘sets of inter-organisational networks clustered around one commodity or product linking households, enterprises and states to one another within the world economy. These networks are situationally specific, socially constructed, and locally integrated, underscoring the social embeddedness of economic organisation’ (Gereffi et al. 1994: 2; See also Dicken et al. 2001: 98). Gereffi (1996: 429) considered chains as an emergent outcome of globalisation: ‘one of the central contentions of the GCC approach is that the internationalisation of production is becoming increasingly

\(^{14}\) This has also been accompanied by some criticism. For example see Thompson 2003 or Sunley 2008.

\(^{15}\) There are certain commonalities between these approaches, perhaps most crucially their concern with the spatiality of production. While there are intimations of the importance of space to capitalism in some of Marx’s writings\(^\text{16}\), it is Lefebvre (1976) who provides the first explicit attempt to connect the functioning of capitalism and its spatial organisation (Herod 2003: 114). He notes, ‘Capitalism has found itself able to attenuate (if not resolve) its internal contradictions for a century, and consequently, in the hundred years since the writing of Capital, it has succeeded in achieving “growth”. We cannot calculate at what price, but we do know the means: by governing space, by producing space’ (Lefebvre 1976: 21). Lefebvre links capitalist space to the reproduction of social relations of production, grounding his argument in the assertion that ‘socially produced space (essentially urbanised space in advanced capitalism) is where the dominant relations of production are reproduced’ (Soja 1989: 91-92). Capital’s success lies in part in its ability to construct the appropriate material geographies that enable the ‘extraction and realisation of surplus value’ (Herod 2003: 115).
integrated in globalised coordination systems that can be characterised as producer-driven and buyer-driven commodity chains’. Prominent in capital and technology intensive industries, producer-driven commodity chains are characterised by the vertical exercise of corporate power downwards from headquarters to subsidiaries, and the converse flow of value upwards from subsidiaries to headquarters (See Henderson et al. 2002). By comparison, buyer-driven commodity chains, which Gereffi sees as typical of large retailers and branded merchandisers such as Nike or Wal-Mart, the bulk of value addition occurs in the processes of branding and marketing rather than in the production stages. Gereffi argued that global buyers can, and do, exert a strong degree of power and control over spatiality dispersed production networks even when not ‘owing’ production.

While the global commodity/value chains framework did draw attention to the role of networks in driving transnational production, recent research has highlighted its limitations in accounting for the variety of network forms (See for example Sturgeon 2002; Sturgeon and Lee 2001). Production processes are inherently dynamic and in flux; changing as opportunities arise. Hudson (2004: 462) contends, ‘economic processes must be conceptualised in terms of a complex circuitry with a multiplicity of linkages and feedback loops rather than just “simple” circuits or, even worse, linear flows’.

2.1.4 Global Production Network

The Global Production Network (GPN) perspective seeks to go beyond commodity and value chain formulations and account for the complexity of production networks (See for example Ernst and Kim 2002; Dicken 2003; Henderson et al. 2002). As Lund-Thomsen (2012: 1) notes, this is achieved through highlighting the roles ‘all kinds of network structures and actors (such as states, GNOs, trade unions, and local communities), local institutional contexts, and the embeddedness of economic activity in broader social relations’ have in the structuring and outcomes of production systems. There are two crucial benefits that can be gained from adopting a networked approach. First, GPN analysis forces an identification of ‘non-firm actors as constituent parts of the overall

\[16\] For further details on the differences between buyer and producer driven chains, and more on the dimensions of GCCs, see Gereffi 1994, Henderson et al. 2002 and Bair 2009.
production system’ (Coe et al. 2008: 278). As Coe et al. (ibid.) notes, networks do not exist in a vacuum rather they ‘exist within a diversity of multi-scalar structures within the global economy’, such as states, local communities, and particular social contexts. These structures can have complex and significant influences in how production systems operate. As such, GPN is not just about producers, but includes all actors in the production process.

Second, network analysis recognises that the articulation and outcome of GPNs is fundamentally influenced by the socio-spatial contexts in which they are embedded (Henderson at al. 2002). Put another way, GPNs are a ‘simultaneously economic and political phenomena...[they]...resemble contested organisational fields in which actors struggle over the construction of economic relationships, governance structures, institutional rules and norms, and discursive frames...[they] exist within the “transnational spaces” that [are] constituted and structured by transnational elites, institutions, and ideologies’ (Levy 2008). Central to this is a recognition of the territoriality of production networks, or ‘how they constitute and are re-constituted by, the economic, social and political arrangements of the places they inhabit’ (Henderson et al. 2002). It is apt then to speak of GPNs as being shaped by both the vertical forces (the governance of GPNs) and horizontal factors (the social relations of production, the spatial location of work and employment, and the local cultural context) (Lund-Thomsen 2012; also Carswell and De Neve 2012). As Levy (2008: 26-27) puts it, GPNs are ‘integrated economic, political and discursive structures with a degree of structural stability, but subject to challenge by strategic actors’.

In common with other phases of production literature described previously, the GPN approach remains relatively silent on the issues of labour. Though the expansion of the capitalist system and functioning of production networks depends on the integration of vast supplies of workers into systems of production and consumption, there is a tendency to overlook or undertheorise labour. Workers are assumed to be an ‘intrinsic part of the production process’ though typically presented as passive recipients of capital’s search for cheaper wages and increasing profit (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010: 221). In the following section, I consider representations of labour in globalisation literature and argue
that the recent theoretical advance of labour geography – combined with a GPN framework – offers significant conceptual gains when analysing labour regimes and agency.

2.2 Labouring in a Globalised World

While the experience of labour in this modern era of globalisation is naturally diverse, there are common observable trends in the situation of working peoples throughout the globe. Narratives on labour in the context of globalisation present a broadly pejorative picture. Roy Chowdhury (2004: 105) considers that ‘in a period of marketization, labour is disempowered on several dimensions: the numerical decline of the organised workforce; weakening trade unions; and, frequently, the politically right-ward turn of social democratic parties which shift to neo-liberal, market oriented policies’. As expansionist capital seeks greater efficiency, labour adjustments, such as casualisation and outsourcing, have become a key source of competitive advantage (Padmanabhan 2011: 2). Another characteristic is the ‘exteriorisation of economic relationships that were previously internal to the structure of companies’ (Herod & Aguiar 2006: 4). For instance, where once some businesses internalised the reproduction of labour providing health care, education, and housing to employees, now there is a tendency to rely on other actors, such as the state, to fulfil this role. The globalised system has also seen a notable dismantling of government regulations concerning labour protections. This has been achieved through a systematic lowering of labour standards or making voluntary what were once compulsory regulations (Herod & Aguiar 2006: 4). Direct changes to labour laws that make it difficult for workers to unionise, for instance, reflect a growing assault on collectivism that is mirrored by the suppression of unions in the private sector (Cam 2002). Some authors (Gray 1998) point to the failing levels of global unionisation and the diminishing influence of organised workers on political parties, while others (Hirst & Thompson 1999) argue that both workers and national governments are powerless to the demands of neoliberal globalisation.

A common thread running through the above approaches, and representative of a broader trend in globalisation narratives, is the tendency to present labour as a passive actor in the
processes of production. With the exception of that which focuses on the migration of working peoples, globalisation literature tends to portray the emergence of the global economy as ‘capital’s creation’; ‘the logical outcome of the expansionary nature of capital, and the new economic and political reality to which labour must respond’ (Herod 2001: 131). Workers are relegated to the fringes of discussion (Collins 2003) and where they are mentioned, globalisation is seen as something that happens to workers, rather than labour being an actor or participant of such globalising processes. Take for instance the contrasting narratives on capital and labour mobility. While capital is projected as free to move from one location to another, labour is conceived as necessarily confined to place – and that the most appropriate strategy of workers to engage in globalisation is to make their local environments more attractive to international investment (See for example Kanter 1995; Bryan & Farrell 1996). A valid attempt to counter this passive representation of labour is the labour geography approach, which is the concern of the following section.

2.3 Labour Geography: labour control regimes, agency, and GPNs

The contemporary field of labour geography analyses the practices of globalisation and capitalism through the eyes of workers and introduces an explicitly spatial dimension to understandings of working life (Herod 1998, 2001; Hanson and Pratt 1995; Peck 1995; McDowell 1997). Drawing from radical, feminist, and economic geographers from the 1970s and 1980s, the labour geography approach takes as its starting point the realisation that workers are active participants in the processes of expansionist capitalism. While the field today is sufficiently large and diverse, there are a number of characteristics which lend it coherence (Castree 2007: 855). First, labour geographers have an obvious interest and focus on geographical questions as they relate to labour. Castree (2007: 855) notes, ‘labour geographers take it as axiomatic that geography matters to workers while workers, conversely, matter to geography’. It is contended that non-geographical approaches to work and employment miss some of the central aspects of the story; that geography is not merely ‘background scenery’ (Herod et al 2001: 176), and that it has a ‘constitutive’ role in what happens to workers and how they respond (Castree 2007).

In trying to understand why ‘geography matters’ to work and employment practices, it is perhaps useful to first consider some of the geographical debates concerning
globalisation. First, globalisation has been projected as heralding the ‘death of distance’ (Cairncross 2001), leading us to a ‘borderless world’ in which ‘nothing is overseas any longer’ (Ohmae 1990: viii). Advances in communications and transport, as such an argument goes, have eliminated the ‘friction of distance’ and made geographical location less significant (Herod 2001). Second, such formulations highlight the supposed mobility of capital and ease with which it can move from one place to another in the pursuit for more favourable conditions. As Hudson (2001: 22) frames it, excluding land, ‘labour is the most place-based of the factors of production’. In this view, capital is able to transcend space while labour is confined to place (though this is variable by skill level and region): ‘a confinement that will encourage workers to be quiescent if they hope to secure their economic futures through drawing mobile capital to their community’ (Herod et al. 2007: 250). These examples highlight the challenges associated with theorising a process such as globalisation, where geography is at once both crucial (where capital’s mobility enables it to play workers in different places against each other) and irrelevant (arguments that place no longer holds sway).

I contend, that on the contrary to place losing its significance in the context of globalisation, the particularities of location and place become all the more important. Why, for instance, would a European clothing firm choose to locate its textile production centres in Asia rather than Europe? What leads oil companies to set up operations in some resource rich regions, at the expense of others? Place - as incorporating all the specific locational factors, from fiscal controls to labour markets – quite clearly matters. As McGrath et al. (2011: 6) acutely summarise, ‘where such capital does in fact choose to locate often hinges upon almost imperceptible differences in conditions between places. The result is that rather than location becoming increasingly irrelevant for mobile capital in a shrinking globe, paradoxically the specifications of place actually become ever more important as globalisation unfolds’ (McGrath et al 2011: 6) At the basic level, particular businesses have to be deeply embedded in local landscapes to enable production and accumulation to occur, not least through the integration of supplies of labour. Companies such as public utilities and large industrial operations have to invest significant costs in local structures – factories, pipe lines, infrastructure for example - that arguably prevent
their immediate relocation (McGrath-Champ et al. 2011: 5). Harvey’s (1972; 1973; 1976; 1978) analysis of capitalist urbanisation illustrates that the dynamics of accumulation are reflected in the geographies of urbanisation. Specifically, he contends that flows of capital shape the built environment, producing structures necessary for production and consumption to take place. For instance, the construction of roads to allow natural materials to reach production centres, manufactured goods to reach shops, and consumers to purchase products. Such examples indicate that place, and being embedded in particular environments and locations, not only matters to workers but also to forms of capital (Herod et al. 2007).

Initially, as labour geography emerged as a sub-discipline, attention was quite squarely on issues of paid employment and production (Herod 1995). Yet in line with the geographical and social diversity of employment relations this did not remain the case for long. Inquiries into labour geography no longer ‘begin and end at the sites of commodity production’ (Castree 2007: 856), but rather incorporate, among others, the geographical structure of labour organising (whether this transcends place boundaries and the implications therein, whether it is union or non-union based), the local particularities of labour markets, and wider social factors that may influence labour markets and regimes (whether there are any social constraints on access to work for instance) and so on. Herod et al. (2001: 177) summarise this transition as an evolution ‘from an initial focus on the role of labour in industrial (re)location to embrace issues as diverse as the organisation of domestic work, the social constitution of workplace identities, the governance of local labour markets and labour control regimes, and emergent forms of labour activism from the very local to the truly global’.

Multinational corporations, then, have to marry two seemingly antithetical tendencies - to be adequately imbedded in particular locations to allow production and accumulation to occur, and to remain sufficiently mobile to take advantage of opportunities where they should arise elsewhere (Smith 1990). Smith notes, ‘it is through their ability to secure the making of the geography of capitalism in some ways and not others that capitalists as individuals and as a class are able to guarantee their continued survival, together with that of capitalism as a social system’ (Herod 2003: 116). The production of an economic landscape that is unevenly developed, then, is a central characteristic of how the capitalism as a system operates (Rainne et al. 2011; See Davis and Monk 2007).

Harvey (1999) notes such constructions as ‘spatial fixes’, and claims that they are not only essential to the processes of production, but are the basis for the uneven development and refashioning of capitalism. This is seen as an outcome of ‘the continuous re-structuring of spatial configurations through revolutions in value’ (Harvey 1999: 426). For a related discussion of capitalism and urbanisation see Walker (1981)
The fast-changing geographies of capitalism present notable analytical challenges to labour geographers (Herod 2003), which, for Castree (2007: 857), are as diverse as considering scales of unionisation and the micro politics of union activity, to understanding how businesses use geography – ‘both material and discursively’ – to control places of work. While labour geography is said to place workers at the heart of the analysis of the capitalist system, it has however been criticised for failing to centre on ‘working people’ (Mitchell 2005: 95; Castree 2007: 859). This critique contends there is an ontological separation by some labour geographers of the employment component of a person’s life from their wider existence - as if one exists in a separate sphere from the other. The weakness of this approach is that it fails to account for the complex and multi-layered nature of working life, for instance, in terms of class and non-class identities, local issues, and family and social interactions, which themselves can provide rich forms of holistic analysis of working life. As Rainnie et al (2011) contend, ‘it is impossible to understand what goes on within a workplace without understanding how that workplace is embedded within the locality within which it sits and...how it is also embedded within the broader regional, national and global landscapes’. Recent attempts by some labour geographers have, however, attempted to address this abstraction and seek to ‘re-embed labour’ into wider structures and relationships such as the state, local communities and production networks (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011). In the following section I consider how such analytical embedding is enabled in two particular aspects crucial to labour geography (and this thesis): the labour control regime and labour agency.

2.3.1 Labour control regimes

In order to analyse labour within production systems coherently, a recognition of power and embeddedness within such systems is crucial (Riisgaard and Hammer 2011: 170). A helpful concept in this regard is that of the local labour control regime^19 (LLCR). This is defined by Jonas (1996: 325) as ‘[a] historically contingent and territorially embedded set of mechanisms which coordinate the reciprocities between production, work, consumption and labour’s reproduction within a local labour market’. The social need to

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^19 Castree et al. (2004) note the use of the term ‘regime’ as ‘to denote a place-specific system of social relation, norms, rules and habits inside and outside the workplace through which employers make their profits’.
control labour is one of the first imperatives of capitalist production and analysis of labour control mechanisms is not new (See for example Burawoy 1985; Scott and Paul 1990; Davis 1986). What the LLCR concept does add to the understanding of working life is an explicit recognition of the spatiality of worker-employer relations and, in particular, how these are influenced by local and extra-local connections at various scales. Jonas (1996: 325) sought to develop a place based theory of labour control that was simultaneously sensitive to local-global tensions, i.e. horizontal and vertical influences.

A useful analytical departure when conceptualising labour control is regulation theory. This proposes that relatively stable periods of economic growth ‘depend on mechanisms coordinating on the one hand, the social and technical organisation of production and labour integration, and on the other, the conditions of wage determination, labour reproduction and consumption’ (Jonas 1996: 326; See Aglietta 1979; Lipietz 1987). Within the regulatory framework, Harvey (1989) for instance links shifts in consumption habits and patterns with changes in corporation’s labour control measures. He shows that social regulation is, in part, derived from the geographies of labour control. Peck and Tickell (1992) explore local control mechanisms as an element of global social regulation. Beginning with an analysis of the uneven impacts of deregulation in Thatcherite Britain and later revising this to take account of the contradictory effects of neoliberal globalisation (Peck and Tickell 1995), the authors introduce the concept of the ‘local mode of social regulation’. This is a way of describing specifically local regulatory experiments which produce locally specific or distinctive forms of labour control, accumulation strategies, state structures and consumption habits (Jonas 1996: 325). Peck and Tickell (1995: 325) conclude that ‘local modes of social regulation may be a necessary corollary of globalisation/localisation, but whether they are an attainable one remains to be demonstrated’.

A helpful starting point here is found in Burawoy (1985) who distinguishes between three forms of industrial ‘factory’ organisation, and the labour regimes that are found therein. The first system, ‘market despotism’, is where ‘anarchy in the market leads to despotism in production’ (Burawoy 1985: 89). Here, force triumphs over consent, with workers coerced into the production process through direct force or restrictions on livelihood
options. The absence of collective labour organisations exacerbates workers’ inability to resist arbitrary coercion. The second factory system, the ‘hegemonic regime’, sees certain modifications for the benefit of labour. The state plays a role in lessening workers’ dependence on capital by introducing social security and labour legislation which variably curtails the power of arbitrary coercion. The third regime is one of hegemonic despotism. Here labour is seen as increasingly vulnerable to the internationalisation of capital and finance, while the viability of businesses themselves is under threat due to global competition. Burawoy notes (1985: 263) ‘the hegemonic regime entailed constraints on the deployment of capital, whether by tying wages to profits or by creating internal labour markets, collective bargaining and grievance machinery’. The result is that, ‘where labour used to be granted concessions on the basis of the expansion of profits, it now makes concessions on the basis of the relative profitability of one capitalist vis-à-vis another’ (Ibid: 150).

Burawoy’s account in some regards echoes Braverman (1974: 57) who spoke of labour in the capitalist system becoming progressively alienated by the processes of production. Yet the author goes further in stressing the political and ideological effects of labour regimes, remaining adamant that the political processes of production should not be separated from the processes of labour. Discontent with industrial systems was famously highlighted by Polanyi (1944), who hypothesised that the ascendency of market forces would have negative effects on society and generate counter-tendencies and greater demands for social protection. Of the free market economy he argued that it ‘could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society’ (Polanyi 1944 [2001]:3), and that it is the ‘disembeddedness’ of the markets from society that is the root cause of disorder20.

At a basic level, then, what are labour control strategies? Historically, capital sought to control labour by extending its dominance beyond the workplace and into the spheres of reproduction and consumption (Jonas 1996: 327). This was often achieved through

20 The accuracy of the latter proposition is perhaps made problematic if one recognises that markets themselves are social constructions. It is arguably more apt to speak of the disconnection/disembeddedness of the processes of production and accumulation from the local social contexts.
systems of corporate welfarism that engendered a sense of paternalism and loyalty between the employee and the employer that extended beyond material wages (See for instance Granovetter and Tilly 1988; Melling 1992). Indirect strategies such as providing housing, healthcare, education, and transport enabled capital to retain a degree of control over labour time that was particularly helpful in maintaining a flexible labour power (Hareven 1982). For instance, a business which had control over transport and housing could (to some extent) dictate when a worker entered the workplace and when they were able to leave. Such strategies also had a cultural effect of engendering a sense of reciprocity and loyalty between capital and labour that Jonas (1996: 327) notes may increase productivity more than direct or despotic means of labour control. Furthering on this point, Melling (1992: 192) contends,

‘If the contract of labour and the prerogatives of the employer are the foundations of capital’s power over labour, cultural values are an essential part of reciprocal relations in production. The need for the employer to enforce the implicit terms of labour contract sets the scene for a contested exchange in the workplace. The costs of surveillance and coercion explain why firms seek to establish a basic level of reciprocity to sustain the legitimate authority of the management in production’.

The Local Labour Control Regime (LLCR) approach adds an important scaling dimension to the analysis of labour control systems contending that they are locally specific, yet embedded within wider structures and mechanisms. Put another way, ‘every local regime is ‘nested’ within labour control regimes operating at larger scales that will influence, but not determine, the nature of employer-worker relations in that particular locality’ (Castree et al. 2004: 116). We have already noted that many forms of capital actively seek to take advantage of differences between labour regimes in particular locations, opening labour systems to the pressures and influences of actors that are organised at extra-local scales. The state, which will be explored in more detail in the final section of this chapter, is an additional factor which can institute policies or regulations which directly affect the constitution and operation of labour regimes. Castree et al. (2004: 116) observe ‘multi-plant firms will take decisions that reflect operations in, and across, a variety of regimes...[while] national state and other supra-local regulatory institutions will institute a range of policies that impinge upon and shape the LLCR’.
The power differentials between constituent groups in the LLCR are perhaps the greatest determinant in the operations of local labour regimes. Coe and Kelly (2000) contend that the influence of hegemonic discourses is a crucial consideration when exploring power repertoires and how they are mobilised. Consider for example narratives on globalisation being used to justify strategies of business and government such as reducing costs to remain competitive, or giving priority to knowledge workers within a locality over manual labourers. There are also very real and significant structural constraints that may impinge on the exercise of power within LLCRs, such as a legislative framework that may constrain certain forms of labour protest. Power is not a ‘zero sum game’ but rather dynamic, and responsive to changing circumstances and events. Castree et al (2004: 116) emphasise that formal and informal alliances between actors within the LLCR in particular can have important implications for the operation of labour systems. For example government seeking investment may align with capital and disempower labour by reducing legislated protections.

To summarise, in being constituted by local and extra-local actors, the local labour control regime ‘is not a static and fixed object but rather a fluid and dynamic set of social relations and power structures which are continuously reproduced and/or transformed by the forces of domination, control, repression and resistance operating at a variety of scales’ (Jonas 1996: 329). It is crucial to recognise that within an individual country, or even sector, the characteristics and operations of local labour control regimes will vary widely. Consider for example the flexible, innovative, labour systems put in place for certain employees in the technology industry, versus the more constrained systems of work in manufacturing (Saxenian 1994). The LLCR approach offers a helpful understanding of the many levels and scales of influence that impact the creation of labour regimes in particular localities. The interplays between actors involved in such constructions are often tense as each seeks to shape the labour regime to their advantage. In the following section I look more closely at labour agency as an attempt of workers to actively constitute their material landscapes21 (Ellen & Shields 1999).

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21 This broadly builds on the insights of authors such as Harvey (1985) and Lefebvre (1991) who show that material landscapes are formed rather than given.
2.3.2 Theorising labour agency

Elucidating the potential for labour agency has been a particular interest of labour geographers (e.g. Herod 2001). Concerns have been raised that labour agency is ‘both under-theorised and under-specified’ in labour geography analysis that it has become a ‘catch all for any instance in which some group of workers undertake any sort of action on behalf of themselves or others’ (Castree 2007: 858). Castree argues ‘what is missing is a discriminating grasp of worker agency that both informs and arises from a variety of empirical studies…a failure to distinguish kinds of agency and their enabling/disabling conditions leads to an inability among analysts to say much sensible about worker strategy’ (Ibid).

Before exploring labour agency, it is first useful to revisit structure/agency debates that brought the concept into a geographical frame. Such debates sought to explore the interactions between human agency and the structures within which it occurs – the conditions that enabled or constrained action. Giddens (1979; 1981; 1984), who developed structuration theory, contended that both structure and agency were implicated in all forms of social interaction and therefore an intrinsic component of social life. Structuralist approaches to labour however, fail to account for workers as ‘geographical agents’ (Herod 2001: 256). Herod (2001: xiii) contends that to add this geographical dimension there is a need to ‘understand how various groups of workers went about constructing spatial fixes in pursuit of their varied political and economic objectives’ (See also Castree 2007; Harvey 2006; Herod and Wright 2002).

Perhaps the most useful classification of agency is provided by Katz (2004), who distinguishes between strategies of resilience, reworking and resistance. Resilience strategies are those which help individuals cope with day to day working realities, but which do not fundamentally change the existing social relations. A notable example of this is Scott’s (1985) analysis which explored the often indirect and subtle mitigation strategies of ‘peasants’ in a Malaysian village. Here, for instance, local communities resisted the mechanisation of farming systems by removing batteries, putting sand and mud into fuel tanks, and disabling vital parts of the introduced combined harvester (Scott...
1985: 248). Reworking is an intermediate category which refers to workers attempts to materially improve their situation by challenging the system in its own terms rather than looking for a fundamental replacement. This includes, for instance, workers’ strategies that seek better terms and conditions such as strike action in the pursuit for increased wages. Katz (2004: 247) describes, ‘projects of reworking are enfolded into hegemonic social relations because rather than attempt to undo these relations or call them into question, they attempt to recalibrate power relations and/or redistribute resources’. Going a step further, resistance strategies involve direct challenges to the capitalist social relations ‘through attempts to regain control of labour time and its use in the spheres of production and social reproduction’ (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011: 216). Such ‘game changing’ resistance involves particular confrontations with capital and, as such, is deemed rarer than the previous two categories (Cumbers et al. 2010).

While Katz’s categories are analytically sound, Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011) identify two areas which need clarification. Firstly, the strategies of labour may not fit exclusively in one or other of the categories identified as labour agency can range across all three types (See Pike 2007). Indeed there are notable connections between each approach: resilience ‘enables people to get by, to enter reciprocal relations, and to shore up their resources, all of which are crucial underpinnings of projects to rework or resist the oppressive circumstances that call them forth’ (Katz 2004: 246). Secondly, the authors seek clarity in whether the categories identified by Katz refer to intentions of labour agency, or the accomplishments of labour agency, i.e. are they what labour set out to do, or what they are able to do? As Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011: 216) note, ‘acts falling into the categories of resilience or reworking in this analytical framework might well be experienced and described as resistance by those involved’.

Related to this, there is a need to grapple with whether agency is individual or collective. Labour geography has often been criticised for having a narrow focus on trade union agency at the expense of other forms (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011; Lier 2007), however recent studies have attempted to address this imbalance. Rogaly (2009) for instance explores the forms of labour agency adopted by unorganised migrant workers in the agricultural sector in India and the UK. He found that the spatial embeddedness of
labourers can influence their subjective experience of employment and can be harnessed as a resource used when attempting to shape economic landscapes. For instance some workers here used their mobility as a threat to petition against conditions, particularly poor food that was provided to them as part of their reimbursement package: ‘We said to the landowner: “Are we human beings or cows, how can we survive on this food?...If you don’t need us, then let us go. We’ll find other landowners to work for.” After that the food was good’ (Rogaly 2009: 1982).

In addition, there is a need to create analytical space for worker identities beyond union membership. For instance the intersections of gender, age or race and how these impact or play out in the forms and structures of labour action (Coe 2012). The temporality of agency - for example the timing of workers’ actions in the context of wider political events, and the influence this may have on success, or the goals of short term employees versus long term – is also an important consideration (See Meyer and Fuchs 2010). The many forms of labour agency is summed up to Bezuidenhout and Buhlangu (2011: 257) who contend, ‘worker agency can be informal or formal, individual or collective, spontaneous or goal direct, sporadic or sustained, and it can operate on different scales’.

Recently, perspectives on labour agency have developed a more considered, or ‘embedded’, approach which does not simply assert the validity of agency in general but rather emphasises the specificity of agency in particular circumstances. Siemiatycki (2012: 473) argues, ‘the viability of labour geography does not depend on arguing that labour is powerful. It hinges on arguing that labour can be distinct, autonomous force in particular temporal and spatial circumstances’. Situating the agency of labour within the social, economic and political structures within which it is embedded is important because, as Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2010: 221) paraphrase Marx, ‘workers might be shaping economic geographies but not necessarily with maps of their own making’. Agency, like labour control regimes, is relational, particular, and inevitably embedded in webs of relations with various actors and institutions. These social relations condition the forms and potential for labour agency in particular circumstances (Coe 2012: 2; See Coe

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22 See also Lambert and Gillan (2007) who challenge the ‘optimism of agency’
and Jordus-Lier 2011). As Mitchell (2011: 586) argues, it is essential ‘to reassert the need to situate analysis of workers’ struggles within their structural context – that is, to take seriously the already existing geography of production and reproduction’.

2.3.3 Labour and GPNs

Considering that labour geography seeks to embed labour control regimes and agency within wider geographical structures, there is an obvious complementarity with the GPN framework. Cumbers et al (2008) and Rainnie et al. (2011) point out that global production networks are as much interlinked systems of labour as they are networks of firms. Riisgaard and Hammer (2011: 186) go further, arguing that ‘labour needs to be conceptualised a priori as value producer in GVCs and thus as a social actor with its own interests regarding the organisation, spatial and political structure of a value chain’. Despite a growing body of literature on labour within GPNs (see for example Posthuma and Nathan 2010), much of the analysis overlooks how labour position within networks shapes their conditions and agency. As Cumbers et al. (2008: 372) argue ‘the centrality of labour to understanding GPNs is rarely acknowledged perhaps because it only becomes self-evident during periodic moments of overt labour action, such as in stoppages and strikes or on the rare occasions when astute labour tactics are able to bring a GPN to a standstill’. Selwyn (2012: 217) observes, ‘it is not enough for GCC analysis to illustrate how integration into GCCs by supplier firms in less developed regions impacts on labour. Rather, we are concerned with investigating how action by labour may co-determine processes of local capitalist development’.

Recent work by Riisgaard and Hammer (2011) and Selwyn (2012) presents labour agency as a constitutive element of GPN dynamics. Selwyn explores whether workers’ position within a system of production can be harnessed to achieve concessions from capital (See also Wright 2000). He cites the example of grape production in Brazil, where a well organised and militant rural trade union has achieved workers gains through a series of
stoppages in a GPN that is sensitive to interruptions. Riisgaard and Hammer (2011) call for a more holistic construction of associational power, contending it as much influenced by local and national context as GPN structures (Coe 2012:4): ‘the governance of inter-firm linkages, while crucial in structuring the terrain for labour, is always mediated by the specific local production and labour control regimes as well as the histories and orientations of the respective actors’ (Ibid: 183). In a study of labour agency and union positionalities in GPNs, Cumbers et al. (2008) show that the strategies of unions evolve through contested socio-spatial relations, and that while transnational organising is a goal of unions, in practice it is difficult to actualise. Oseland et al. (2012) and Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu (2011) found that the state played a crucial role in shaping the potential of labour agency. For Coe (2011: 4), such studies ‘reiterate the importance of how labour is produced, reproduced and regulated in different local and national contexts, suggesting that labour agency needs to be re-embedded in state formations as much as it does in the global structures of capital’ (See also Pickles and Smith 2010). In the following and final section I situate the state within the GPN framework and explore its role as governor and regulator of labour.

2.4 Situating the state: governance, GPNs and labour

Both labour geography and GPN analysis have come under criticism in some quarters for failing to account for the role of the state. (See Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2011: 239; Castree 2007: 858-860). Castree (2007: 850) notes, ‘the state constitutes a...blind spot in many labour geography analyses. Be it the capitalist state or otherwise, all too often this enormously important regulatory actor (and employer) is weakly thematised and theorised’. In this section I establish why it is important to embed the processes of labour within the structures of the state. What I seek to emphasise here is that there are multiple constituencies (local and non-local) that impact upon the exercises of state power in the context of globalisation.

23 The operations of this GPN were particularly time sensitive given the perishability and seasonality of the product.
Conceptualising the capitalist state has inspired broad theoretical debate, and while it is not appropriate to review the vast body of literature here, it is important for this analysis to consider interpretations of the state in order to understand that impacts of globalisation. As a starting point, the term ‘the state’ is in itself misleading, implying a sense of homogeneity and unity, or a singular entity. In effect, the state is a disjointed, complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Miliband (1969) contends that ‘the state’ serves merely as an analytical reference point for the multiple apparatuses and institutions, whose interrelationships in essence comprise the state body. More specifically, these are: the elective legislative and executive authorities; the administrative apparatuses; the coercive apparatuses (including the state army); the judicial apparatuses; and the sub-central governments. Jessop (1990: 267), in what is arguably the most expansive review of state theory, characterises the state as ‘a specific institutional ensemble with multiple boundaries, no institutional fixity and no pre-given formal or substantive unity’. It is apt then to speak of ‘the state’ as comprised of multiple institutions and apparatuses of varying foci. Given such diversity, it is perhaps not surprising that some contend the state as characterised by a persistent internal ‘struggle’ between competing interests (Poulantzas 1978; Jessop 1990). The multifaceted nature of the state system, and the unique constituencies and interests effecting each institution, can lead to conflicts and contradictions.

Like Sweezy (1942: 243) before him, Miliband was notable for re-establishing the instrumentalist theory of the state. The basic thesis of this approach, is that the capitalist class is able to formulate public policy which supports their long-term interests, and secure it’s introduce and enforcement through state institutions; ‘that the modern state serves the interests of the capitalist class because it is dominated by that class’ (Barrow 1993: 13). This theory was heavily criticised by Poulantzas who, though sharing a common analytical postulate that the state supports the interests of the capitalist class, had much methodological disagreement with Miliband. In what became known as the structuralist theory of the state, Poulantzas took as his starting point the realisation that there are inherent contradictions in capitalist social relations, mainly cycles of economic stagnation and conflict between capital and labour. Owing to this feature, structuralists contend that the state functions to protect and reproduce capitalist social
relations, insofar as this is not achieved through the processes of the economy (Mandel 1978: 474). While class relations may effects the functions and forms of the state, some argue that it does not automatically follow that the state will immediately act in the interests of capital accumulation (Cox 1990), nor develop structures that automatically reproduce capitalist social relations (Glassman 1999). The state is also subject to external influences beyond class forces, such as gender groups, religious communities, and regional interests (Jessop 1990: 677; Ougaard 2004: 67).

2.4.1 Globalisation and the State

The exigencies of globalisation have contributed to negative projections on the power and influence of the domestic state. Hardt and Negri (2000: xi) contend the ‘nation state has less and less power to regulate these flows [of capital and goods] and impose its authority over the economy’, while Ohmae (1990; 1995), who see states as fatally weakened, famously proclaimed ‘the end of the State’. Wriston (1992) for his part argues we are witnessing ‘the twilight of sovereignty’. Such narratives posit that that the rise of TNC’s and the growth of multi-national governance arrangements (such as the World Trade Organisation or regional trade agreements) challenge and undermine the nation-state’s capacity. Far from witnessing the by-passing of the state however, I contend that in this new era of economic and political interconnectedness, states have an increasingly active role, working to secure what Gill calls a (1992) ‘new constitutionalism for disciplinary neo-liberalism’.

Previous encounters of global integration perhaps provide a valuable prologue to considering the impact of modern globalisation on the nation state. Technological advances in communications and transport have periodically facilitated the integration of markets, from the evolution from sail power to steam, to the development of the telephone and aircraft. During these periods states neither became weaker nor less significant, and in some cases arguably experienced an expansion in state powers; ‘in countries with the most advanced and internationally integrated economies’, the

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24 For an analysis of structural power see Ward (1987)
government’s ability to tax and redistribute incomes, regulate the economy, and monitor the activity of their citizens…increased beyond all recognition’ (Wolf 2001: 179).

While there may be a nominal ‘state equivalence’ in the global state system (considering for example United Nations membership for states as large as Russia and the United States, and as small as the island of Tuvalu), the capacity of states to absorb, respond to, and indeed initiate, globalising forces varies greatly (Jessop 2011: 22). Differences in state capacity, history, power, and embedding, along with the uneven development of capitalism, mean that globalising forces do not (and indeed could not) ‘generate a uniform set of pressures on [or reactions from] all states’ (Jessop 2011: 21; Weiss 1998: 10). As Jessop (2011: 26) notes,

‘Globalisation has very different meanings for, and impacts on, postcolonial states, post socialist states, export orientated developmental, rentier oil states, and so on. The comparative and competitive advantage of economic spaces and the relative capacities of their associated states matter greatly here…oil-rich economies will experience globalisation differently from those whose chief asset is low wages, low skilled labour, while strong developmental states will experience it differently from so-called failed states’.

Though I disprove the contention that the nation state is in terminal decline, I do recognise that there are aspects of truth in neoliberal discourses. As social constructions states are not immutable (Herod 2009; Ohmae 2005: 82). Their authority as an economic regulator is derived from historical and geographical particularities, and in this regard, perhaps it is inevitable that modern globalisation processes have the potential to undermine some state powers - particularly when one considers the influences of international forces on domestic policy choices. Phillips (1998) notes, ‘The process of globalisation has implied a narrowing of available and feasible domestic and foreign policy options for all countries, both as a result of the primacy of neoliberal global policy

_25_ For perspectives on state power see Gramsci 1971; Mann 1986; Nye 2004.

_26_ Herod (2009: 171) for instance asserts that if the birth of the modern nation state system is dated to the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, then modern representations of globalisation could be presented as enabling a post-Westphalian world, in which economic and political self-determination has been somewhat eroded.
agenda and as a result of a curtailment of the capacities of national states as a result of global and domestic restructuring'. Such narrowing is particularly apparent in the developing world, where countries, such as Zambia, have been variably constrained by the policy prescriptions of international IFIs (through, for example, processes of structural adjustment). Revising earlier sentiments on the variability of global economic integration, the impact of globalisation on statehood is very much dependent on the type of state involved - whether it is one that is pushing the neoliberal doctrine, one conforming to neoliberal prescriptions, or one that is resisting them, as in parts of Latin America (Sader 2008).

Globalisation is clearly not a predestined or predetermined process. Rather it is enabled and shaped – albeit to a varying degree - by the actors involved. The state, as a regulator of economies and participant in the global economy, certainly has a central role. Polanyi (2001 [1944]: 139-141), writing in 1944, comments on liberalised economies: ‘There was nothing natural about laissez-faire; free markets could never have come into being merely by allowing things to take their course...[L]aissez-faire itself was enforced by the state...Laissez-faire was planned’. Sixty years later, Wolf posited a similar view of globalisation (2001:182-183): ‘Globalisation is not destined, it is chosen....But if integration is a deliberate choice, rather than an ineluctable destiny, it cannot render states impotent. Their potency lies in the choices they make’.

Philips (1998) argues that the state is simultaneously weakened and strengthened by the processes of globalisation; a situation she denotes the ‘paradox of state power’. Situating the analysis in Latin America, she argues that ‘the internationalisation of the state provided precisely the conditions in which the state was able to recompose itself and recover its coherence vis-à-vis societal interests following the conditions of economic and political collapse...at the end of the 1980s’ (Philips 1998: 1). In simple terms, this refers to the state’s willingness to ‘blame it on the external’ (Philips 1998: 10) when implementing less palatable economic reforms. However, that at the same time, the location of decision making at regional and global levels diminished the policy making options available to national governments. Continuing this scalar analysis of statehood, Jessop contends that regional forms of economic organising have important implications
for modes of governance that are situated within the territorially demarcated nation-state. He argues, 'In the context of globalisation] what has emerged...is a multilevel governance regime with policy-making functions transferred outwards to the supranational scale, inward to the regional and/or local scale and sideways within the nation state, and in which the shift from governance to 'meta-governance' is of fundamental importance'.

Postulations on the decline of the state have been challenged both analytically and materially (Rainnie et al. 2011), with theorists arguing that they ignore the 'transformative capacity' of states (Weiss 1998: 3), as well as exaggerate how far a fully globalised economy has emerged (Jessop 2011: 21-22). Panitch (1997: 86) argues 'capitalist globalisation...takes place in, through, and under the aegis of states; it is encoded by them and in important respects even authored by them'. States have a key role in the global economy 'connecting and organising places, spaces, scales and networks inside and across their respective borders and frontiers' (Jessop 2011: 22). They are the facilitators, enablers, and regulators of economies. Jessop (2011: 23) notes 'capital reproduction cannot be secured exclusively through the profit-orientated, market mediated logic of accumulation. It also depends on crucial 'extra economic' mechanisms'. Governments maintain a role in providing the necessary conditions to enable production and accumulation to occur. This may include educating the future labour force and ensuring material needs are met to provide for the reproduction of labour, to building infrastructure such as roads, ports, and maintaining power grids. In one of the seminal contributions to state and capital interactions, Murray (1971: 84-108) speaks of the 'territorial dialectics of capitalism', and develops a 'framework which would allow for a more developed approach to the problem of the effects of an internationalised capital on existing political institutions'. Here he contends we should not speak of capital escaping the state, but rather of capital's desire to ensure the state's economic functions continued to be performed. Such functions range from being the guarantor of private property and contract, to orchestrating macroeconomics and facilitating the reproduction of labour (Panitch 1996: 86).
2.4.2 Embedding labour and GPNs in the state

Recent scholarship has argued that labour geography analysis - with its focus on production networks and local-to-global linkages - fails to account for how national scale factors may shape the possibilities for labour agency (Oseland et al. 2012: 94). Castree (2007) contends it a ‘blind spot’, while Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011) argue it is weakly thematised and theorised. Oseland et al. (Ibid.) denote this omission as reflective of a wider ‘glocalocentrism’ which overshadows the importance of processes and structures that are nationally scaled. Such structures include labour legislative, networks, and crucially for this analysis, labour regulation; ‘these national geographies are key in framing conditions for transformative labour politics’ (Oesland et al. 2012: 95).

The nation-state continues to have a centrality in the governance and geographies of global production networks, being as ‘all the elements in GPNs are regulated within some kind of political structure whose basic unit is the national state’ (Coe et al. 2009: 282).

The relations between capital and governments have been described as an ‘intricately choreographed negotiating and bargaining processes…on the one hand, firms attempt to take advantage of national differences in regulatory regimes (such as taxation)...on the other hand, states strive to minimise such ‘regulatory arbitrage’ and to entice mobile investment through competitive bidding against other states’ (Ibid). These relations are particularly complex given the mobility of corporations compared to the territorially demarcated state. While some contend that states have suffered a diminution of power (Petkova 2006), others perceive the situation as more complex, and argue that ‘strong’ states are able to have an effective influence over production networks (Coe et al. 2008). It is also important to remember that GPNs are embedded within ‘multi-scalar regulatory systems’ (Coe et al. 2008: 281), which means it is not just the national state that impacts on their operations but regulatory bodies that are organised on an international scale. Institutions such as the ILO, World Bank, and World Trade Organisation – which are constituted through states - can have notable influence on the geography of GPNs, for example through trade agreements (See Ponte and Gibbon 2005; Messner 2004).

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27 The obvious exception to this being illegal trade, for example in drugs, ivory, or counterfeit products.
28 This holds some sway when one considers the geographies of production networks in China. See Liu and Dicken 2006.
The state has a crucial role to play in the formation of labour regimes and influence on labour agency. At the basic level, the state can make certain legislative provisions for workers, such as the minimum wages, or health and safety stipulations (See for example Peck 1996; 2001). As the regulator of migration, the state controls (to some extent\textsuperscript{29}) who enters the labour market, and has an important influence on how foreign workers are perceived in society. Crucially, the state has a role in shaping what it means to be a worker in a particular locality. McDowell (2009) for instance shows that the state’s introduction of neoliberal reforms exacerbated the division between paid and unpaid work and deepened the gender division of labour. Peck (2001) similarly argues that workfare state policies redraw the boundaries of the labour market by putting welfare recipients into employment. The state can also be a provider for the reproduction of labour and in certain situations, such as in the public sector, has a dual role of employer and governor\textsuperscript{30}.

2.5 Conclusion

The geographies of production are becoming increasing complex. No longer organised on local or national scales, many systems incorporate actors and inputs that are sourced on an international level. While various theories have attempted to account for this variable integration of economies, it is the concept of the global production network that has proved to be most apt to capture such dynamism and complexity. This theoretical advance recognises that the nature and articulation of production systems is influenced by the socio-spatial contexts in which they are embedded. Despite being a fundamental necessity for their operation of production processes, labour is largely excluded from globalisation and GPN narratives. Where it is mentioned, it is broadly presented in a passive relationship with capital, able to respond to the actions of business, rather than actively participate in them. Though recognising there are significant power differentials, the labour geography approach seeks to counter this trend, contending that labour is an active participant in the geographies of production, rather than a passive recipient of the actions of capital. As the spatial embedding of capital may enable or constraint their social praxis, workers attempt to shape the local geographical landscapes to their advantage through

\textsuperscript{29} Of course this does not completely prevent the presence illegal workers.

\textsuperscript{30} Lopez (2004) found that those employed in the public sector have increased agency potential
exerting different forms of labour agency. These actions, like the GPNs within which they occur, are informed and influenced by wider socio-spatial factors.

Situating labour within a GPN helps to identify the ways in which workers are embedded within spheres of production. Crucially however, workers' actions are also influenced by processes of regulation. Here, the state has a central role. While postulates on the decline of the state power hold merit in certain cases – particularly when considering the policy options available to states in the developing world - broadly speaking the state retains a central influence in the execution of globalisation, not least through the regulation of labour markets and regimes. This chapter has shown that globalisation has increased multi-scalar influences on state power, meaning that states are not only subject to the demands of domestic constituents but also extra-local forces, for instance international economic and financial agents. Though it continues to be a blind spot in much globalisation and labour analysis, the state has a crucial role to play in the strategic terrain of labour agency and the governance of GPNs.

This chapter has established that a combined broad theoretical framework of the GPN and labour geography perspectives allows for a more considered account of labour control regimes and labour agency; it not only embeds systems of work and the actions of labour within the wider economic, political, and social structures, but considers whether a workplace’s position within a global production network impacts on the conditions of, and opportunities open to, labour. It is within this framework that this thesis seeks to reconnect labour agency in Sino-Zambian workplaces with the wider social and economic systems that surround workers. I begin this task with a historical perspective on Zambian labour regimes and agency. First, however, I will establish the methodological strategy adopted in this research project.
3. Methodology

The methodological task confronted by this thesis is essentially that of identifying and exploring the factors which mediate and influence labour agency in particular workplaces. As social constructions, labour markets are embedded within unique socio-spatial relations and processes. To accurately capture such factors this thesis, similar to other explorations in labour geography, utilises an interpretative methodological framework which allows for the expression of opinions, insights and values. In this regard, there is a natural alignment with qualitative approaches which seek to ‘elucidate human environments, individual experiences, and social processes’ (Winchester in Hay 2005; 3)\(^3\).

Typically, deviations between qualitative and quantitative epistemological approaches have been presented as a series of dualisms (Hay 2005). A common assumption has been that quantitative methods are value-free, objective, and of scientific merit, while qualitative methods are particular, subjective, and somehow ‘inferior’ to ‘real’ science (Hammersely 1992). Equating quantitative methods with objectivity and qualitative with subjectivity is a contested proposition, which fails to recognize researcher biases which can affect data collection and analysis, regardless of epistemology adopted. Feminist and post-structural critics have been to the fore in questioning the existence of objective, value free research (Hartstock 1987; Haraway 1991; Rose 1997), with Haraway (1991) averring that knowledge is both spatial and temporal. This research shares with feminist, post-colonial and Marxist critiques the assumption of situated knowledge, and aligns itself with the political economy approach that sees individual actions as being framed by, and constitutive of, broader social, political and economic structures. These critical approaches have some convergence with the realist perspective, which seeks to undercover the structures and properties that enable action\(^3\).

\(^3\) Historically, geographical inquiry has been associated with positivist epistemology (following the 'quantitative revolution' of the late 50’s and early 60’s). However, within the last 30 years there has been strong resurgence in the use of qualitative methods (See for Billinge et al. 1984).

\(^3\) For a discussion of realism in geography see Sayer, A (1985) ‘Realism in Geography’ in Johnston, R. J. (eds.) The Future of Geography, London, Methuen
The research questions posed by this project demand a multiplicity of methods of enquiry. While the underlying research approach adopted is qualitative, expressed through the use of interviews and observations, the methodological framework also incorporates quantitative methods, specifically, a questionnaire. The binary often implied in debates qualitative-quantitative approaches, does not preclude the viability of combining methods (England 1993; Rocheleau 1995; McKendrick 1999). Indeed, the use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in tandem can assist with triangulation and the verification of data (Bryman 2004).

This chapter systematically dissects the methodological strategy adopted. First, I identify the processes of case study selection and sampling of respondents; Second, I consider the field work period and analyse the research methods utilized during empirical data collection; and third, I reflect on the methodology, particularly regarding issues of power and positionality in research processes.

3.1 Research Processes

The research process was divided into three distinct periods, highlighted below. The first period focused on an in-depth analysis of secondary literature, selection of case study areas and preparations for the field work period that was to follow in phase two. Spent within my university, Trinity College Dublin (TCD), this period allowed me to engage fully with the available literature and develop my theoretical and methodological framework within which the project would be completed. Initial preparation for the field work period included participating in an ‘Adapting Methodologies for Developing Countries’ postgraduate training course at TCD and forging contacts with partners in the University of Zambia.
3.1.1 Research Sites: Selecting Case Study Areas and Sampling

The case study method may be understood as the ‘intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study – at least in part – is to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population’) (Gerring 2007: 20). The strength of case study methodology is in its ability to achieve high levels of ‘conceptual validity’ and ‘contextual comparison’ (George and Bennet 2005: 19; See also Locke and Thelen 1998: 11). For the purposes of this study, the case study approach is the most useful as it allows for the detailed examination of labour agency in different contexts.

Identifying two relevant and accessible case studies was the primary objective of the first research period. Three considerations came to the fore. Firstly, given the focus of this thesis, they had to be sites of notable Chinese investment. Secondly they had be workplaces which occupied different places in Chinese constructed production networks. Thirdly, it was hoped that when considered together, the case studies would show variation in key aspects of employment and industrial relations, such as the nature of work, labour regimes observed, and the resonance (or otherwise) of unionisation. The issue of accessibility was also a notable consideration: they had to be locations were there was a reasonable likelihood of workers engaging in the research and they had to be geographically accessible (i.e. on or close to main transport routes or urban centres). The two chosen case study areas were the Zambia-China Cooperation Zone (ZCCZ) in the
town of Chambishi in the Copper Belt Province, and the Kamwala market in the capital city Lusaka. Both of these sites fit the essential criteria: they are locations with notable Chinese investment, at two ends of the Chinese industrial complex (extraction and retail) and, owing to the different nature of work, have particular (and comparatively distinct) labour regimes. Being approximately 300km apart on predominately good roads they were also geographically accessible from each other.

Case Study 1: Zambia-China Cooperation Zone, Chambishi, the Copper Belt Province

Chambishi is an area of the Copper Belt Province that has seen a rapid influx of Chinese capital in the last 10 years. Prior to this it was a dormant mining town, with little investment since the 1970s and high levels of unemployment. The area has now become the epicentre of Chinese mineral investment in Zambia as home to the Zambia-China Cooperation Zone. This is was the first overseas trade and cooperation zone to be declared by the Chinese government in Africa, and the first Multi-Facility Economic Zone (MFEZ) to be established by the Zambian state. The investment is said to be worth US$800m (ZDA 05.02.2010) is centred on the Chambishi mine and copper smelter. Presently, there are 14 companies who have been approved to set up business in Chambishi, all of which are Chinese. The respondents I interviewed were employed at the two main firms in the zone: Non-Ferrous China-Africa Mining Plc. (which includes the subsidiary construction firm 15MCC) and the Chambishi Copper Smelter. Both of these are Chinese State-Owned companies.
At the outset, Chambishi emerged as a potential research area given the levels of Chinese investment, the nature of production and ownership (in mineral extraction and with a high level of state capital ownership), and the fact that there were a number of highly publicised incidences of labour agency occurring here within the last 5 years. Beyond this, increasing numbers of Chinese workers are migrating here for employment, introducing a new social dynamic to the local community.

Case Study 2: Kamwala Market, Lusaka

The Kamwala market is a sprawling urban retail location in the centre of Lusaka. Established in the 1940s as an informal ‘second class’ trading area for Africans, it has since become one of the capital city’s thriving retail low-cost retail centres. The main products sold here are textiles, small personal electronics (such as audio equipment and mobile phones) and second-hand clothes, locally known as salula.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Salula is a common Zambian term for second hand clothing. In the Bemba language it means “to select from a pile in the manner of rummaging”.

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The presence of independent Chinese traders in the market has rapidly increased since the early 2000’s, with Chinese merchants now found alongside more established African, Indian and Lebanese traders. With access to cheaper imports through networks in China, Chinese shop owners can undercut both formal and informal traders, including those merchandising in second hand products. The working conditions for those employed within Chinese owned shops here has been brought to the attention of the Ministry of Labour and Social Services by some workers themselves, though unlike in Chambishi, there has been limited publicity of labour regimes and agency. In addition to fitting the criteria as a workplace at the end of a production network, the inclusion of the market as a case study also sheds light on a largely under explored area of Chinese investment. Whereas the extractive sector has been discussed in various contexts, more limited research has been conducted into the presence of independent Chinese retailers in the African retail economy.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{34}Comment on Chinese associated labour practices in Africa has primarily focused on trends of informalisation within the formal sector. One example is: Gadzala, A. (2010) ‘From formal- to informal-sector employment: examining the Chinese presence in Zambia’ in Review of African Political Economy, vol. 37, 123, pp. 41-59.
Embedding labour agency within the state: the Ministry of Labour and Social Services

When this research was initially conceived it was broadly intended to investigate the state as an active component of GPNs and labour relations. The trajectories this investigation would take I did not fully know until I commenced the field work period. This was for two reasons. Firstly, while I anticipated that the state would be an important influence on labour agency, I did not anticipate how central an issue it was to workers. Secondly, issues of accessibility were a notable concern and I was unsure of the opportunities that would be afforded to me to engage with state actors. On arrival in Zambia, and as the importance of the state came to the fore, I began to investigate the opportunities to engage with state actors. My primary concern was with regulators of labour conditions – those who have localized interactions with Chinese actors and workers – rather than high-level government officials (though I did hope to engage with these for a macro-level commentary). Following a number of weeks of discussion I was able to secure periods of observation with a Labour Inspections Unit (LIU) in the Ministry of Labour and Social Services. My observations were both within the Ministry’s offices and on workplace inspection. The latter offered particularly useful insights into the interactions between Zambian workers’ and agents of the state. Observation periods were spread out over a one month period and totaled over 90 contact hours. On their request, all LIU participants were afforded confidentiality. To this end, I do not identify where their inspection unit is based. Throughout the thesis these individuals are referenced as ‘Anonymous Labour Inspector’ and the individual’s identification number, which I assigned. Observations were recorded in the field notes diary.

3.2 Field Work

Given the nature of the research, being as it demands the insights, perspectives and opinions of workers, it was important that the field work period was both substantial in length, and significant in depth. I sought to immerse myself in the case study areas to gain a richer understanding of the different labour regimes and agency and the wider socio-spatial factors within which the workplaces, and those who labour within them, were embedded. The field work period lasted ten months, from March to December 2010.
Before I commenced field work research I made efforts to ensure the methodological strategy adopted was ethically sound. Ethical issues surround every research project and they are all the more pertinent when conducting research with disadvantaged or vulnerable groups – a categorisation I contend many of those interviewed in the case studies areas would self-identify with owing to their financial status and job insecurity. In order to maintain an ethically sound approach that would protect research respondents I liaised with academics in the University of Zambia, who have expertise in the particularities of Zambian research. This became a formal process as I applied for and was granted official research clearance through the university. This process involved I submit a report on my methodological approach, copies of questionnaires and intended interview questions, and attend an interview with a senior University academic. The opportunity to discuss my strategy with a researcher who has particular expertise in researching in Zambia was extremely beneficial. Though my approach was deemed ethically sound, I was able to make certain amendments to the questionnaire to make it more ‘user-friendly’ on the basis of the panel’s recommendations. These amendments were in relation to structure and presentation rather than content.

3.2.1 Language as a methods issue

The language this research was conducted in was predominately English. Though Zambia is a nation of multiple languages, English remains one of the official languages of the country, and the medium through which primary and secondary education is taught. Inevitably, the level of English ability varied enormously between respondents and so translators were used when necessary. How a researcher utilizes a translator can have dramatic effects on the data collected from recipients (Temple 2002; Squires 2009) and so demands the consideration of language as a methods issue. In selecting a translator the primary concern is that of credentials, given that the experience and expertise of the assistant will affect the quality of the translation (Squires 2009; Adamson and Donovan 2002). Following recommendations from Zambia-based researchers, I employed two assistants, each living close to one case study area and both of whom had experience of translating for academic research purposes. The translators were used individually, with the Copper Belt based translator assisting in Chambishi and the Lusaka based in the
Kamwala. Both men had excellent language abilities and were fluent in at least two of Zambia’s local languages, alongside English.\footnote{Non-English interviews were conducted in Bemba.}

The process of translation was procedural. Upon instruction the translator introduced the research project and asked the candidate if they wished to participate; I would then pose questions, which the translator would communicate to the respondent in the local language; the answers would then be translated for me at a natural time in the discussion. Due to the translators’ skills I was able to grasp the ‘conceptual equivalence’ of what the interviewee discussed, without having to demand a word for word translation. On reflection, the presence of the translators, both of whom were male, did have an influence on the research process. Workers, particularly men, showed less hesitancy in talking to me when I was accompanied by a Zambian.

3.2.2 Interviews

Interview methodology was a primary component of field work data collection within this research project. Interviews, like other qualitative methods, seek to probe and explore human relationships within specific settings, and can be useful in illuminating underlying structures and social processes which are often missed through positivist approaches (Schoenberger 1991). Rather than being a passive means of data collection, interviews are complex social interactions (Kitchin and Tate 2000: 215). In using this approach, researchers must balance the ability to develop a rapport with the interviewee, while maintaining a neutral position on the topic under discussion (Oppenheim 1992). Interviewees were selected once in the case study areas. The majority of interviews conducted in the case study areas were semi-structured, focusing on key areas of interest, while allowing the respondent a certain degree of flexibility in the way issues were discussed. They were a combination of individual and small group interviews, and lasted from approximately twenty to fifty minutes. In terms of numbers, I interviewed 73 respondents in Kamwala and 107 in Chambishi.
While the position and subjectivity of the researcher is an evident methodological consideration, the impact of the interview itself is an important, and often overlooked, component of research power relations. The concept of interview site ‘embodies and constitutes multiple scales of spatial relations and meaning, which construct the power and positionality of participants in relation to the people, places and interactions discussed in the interview’ (Elwood & Martin 2000: 649). When negotiating the location within which to interview workers, two considerations came to the fore. Firstly, it was essential that the location would make the respondents feel comfortable to discuss what were seen as quite contentious and delicate topics. Secondly, given the fear many had about losing their jobs, the site had to be safe and free of suspicion from management.

As an open public space, Kamwala market was geographically accessible immediately. Chinese owned shops were identified through discussions with market traders and confirmed by shop staff. Once the research project was explained, workers showed an ease and willingness to participate. The majority of interviews took place inside the shop as Chinese managers were absent, only coming to the market in the morning and evening to open and close business. Staff at the Ministry of Labour and interviewees in Kamwala attributed this absence to a fear of government inspections, particular concerning visa issues, though there is no conclusive evidence to this effect. Occasionally workers preferred to be interviewed outside of their specific workplace but within the market itself. I also ensured I had the permission of the ‘cashier’ - the employee with the greatest standing and authority in the shop - to speak with staff. Workers agreed to participate on the guarantee that they were granted anonymity.

In Chambishi the process was more challenging as I was unable in interview workers in their place of work. I contacted the two main mining unions to request assistance in acquiring local contacts and to make them aware of the research I was conducting. Initially, the Mine Workers Union of Zambia asked me to conduct all interviews in their Chambishi office and with groups of workers selected by the trade union leaders. Though this would have inevitably eased the burden of having to locate workers myself, I declined the offer, aware that following the MUZ proposed method would provide a
narrow respondent base, and perhaps create a perception among workers that I was aligning myself with the union body.

Figure 5: NFCA Bus Stop, Chambishi

As the workplace was out of bounds, I opted to interview workers in the communities. Chambishi's labour force predominately lives in the Chambishi Township, a sprawling residential location approximately 15km from the zones boundaries. The main difficulty of interviewing in the township was in identifying people who work for the Chinese owned firms. Preliminary visits revealed the tendency of workers to remain at home or spend time in the townships bars when they were off duty. As it was unadvised to go door-to-door around the township, and interviewing inebriated people was obviously inappropriate, I had to devise an access strategy. My approach was to locate myself at the local bus stop, where staff buses picked up and dropped off workers. This allowed me to make initial contacts with workers, who more often than not approached me. Initially, many candidates did not wish to be interviewed. This reluctance was due to their fear of reprisals from management. Given the politicised nature of Chinese investment in Zambia, and the significant job insecurity among workers, such hesitation was
understandable. Over time however, and with the continual reassurance of the independent and confidential nature of my work, I was able to secure interviews. I was frequently taken on tours of the township, introduced to miners’ families and invited for meals. I spent periods of time conversing with the miners’ wives in the local market, gaining an appreciation of the female take on a male dominated sector (98% of respondents in Chambishi were male), and their insights on the impacts the impact Chinese capital has had on the local community.

It became clear early into the research period that workers in both areas were uncomfortable with audio recording. To compensate for this, I made notes during the interview and diligently completed a field notes diary, recording both interview and observational aspects. In addition to being a standalone source of data, field notes are a useful source for contextualizing the processes and progress of research (Kitchin & Tate 2000: 234).

In addition to workers in Kamwala and Chambishi, interviews were also conducted with members of civil society and Zambian elites36. This included trade unionists, business owners, politicians, and NGO and civil society representatives. Getting access to this community was initially quite difficult. Requests were often ignored, appointments not honoured, and a lot of bureaucracy and persistence was demanded to gain access. Once secured, the ‘elite’ interview tended to be of greater formality and structure than the approach favoured when interviewing workers. The dynamic of the exchange was often more rigid and of a shorter duration. The majority of interviews were recorded and no elite participants requested anonymity, though this was offered. Once inside the elite circle, access to other members became easier as contacts snowballed. Much secondary data, including unpublished reports and statistics, were provided by ‘elite’ respondents. A full list of these interviewees can be found in Appendix I.

36 Many commentators view ‘elite’ as a problematic category. Though I accept that the term cannot be used to represent a homogenous group, I feel it is appropriate to make use of ‘elite’ to differentiate between interviewees of different economic and political power. Here the definition of elite is in line with Herod (1999) and relates to those who hold positions of power within organizations such as governments, corporations and trade unions.
When the research was envisaged I anticipated interviewing Chinese management in each workplace and key informants from the Embassy to provide a further perspective. However, the timing of the field period coincided with a particularly contentious period of Sino-Zambian engagement, during which Chinese managers at a coal plant in the south of the country shot at protesting workers. In the initial three months of field work I was able to foster some links with Chinese actors. However, following this shooting a firm wall was established in communications. It was extremely difficult to get any access to members of the Chinese community given this contentious atmosphere. The absence of more detailed Chinese participation means a particular perspective is not presented and discussed. This is regrettable, but unfortunately unavoidable.

3.2.3 Survey Questionnaire

A questionnaire survey was completed in each of the case study areas. The reasons for including this method were twofold. Firstly, the questionnaire enabled me to identify aspects that were particularly important to the participants, which could be discussed further in a follow up interview (Brenner 1985), for example perceptions of the success of trade unions or participation in strike action. Secondly, using the multi method approach can assist with the triangulation of findings, with survey data potentially complementing and validating the qualitative information sourced.

The questionnaires were initially composed in Ireland and trailed in a pilot study with workers from the Chinese owned Freedom Farm in Kamanga Township, Lusaka. The pilot showed that I would need to tailor survey questions to the skill base of respondents, and provided useful insights into certain phraseology in Zambian-English. The end product was three pages in total and contained a combination of qualitative, quantitative and likert-scale questions. At a broad level, the survey elicited information on workers’ perspectives of their treatment, representation, and views of foreign investment.

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37 For example the question ‘what time do you finish work?’ was interpreted as what year will you finish work as opposed to what hour?
38 A copy of the questionnaire has been placed in the Appendix II.
in the country. Data was also gathered metrics of labour, such as salary, working hours and over-time pay.

Workers in both locations were initially quite reluctant to complete the questionnaires. There seemed to be a sense that putting pen to paper was more ‘risky’ than participating in an interview. Personal earning information was often difficult to collect, as many workers were ‘too embarrassed’ to reveal their financial situation. Though I guaranteed anonymity, and indeed no identifying details were asked for on the forms, many respondents were apprehensive that management would access the information and that they would face repercussions. By giving a detailed explanation of the reason and intentions of the research I was able to overcome some of these apprehensions, though ultimately I did have to revise my initial estimates of survey participants. The majority of questionnaires were completed by workers themselves in my presence, so that I could clarify questions if necessary. In total, I completed 141 questionnaires in the two locations; 101 in Chambishi and 40 in Kamwala. More often than not the questionnaires were then followed up by an interview. Eighty three of those who completed the survey in Chambishi and all of the survey respondents in Kamwala were interviewed after.

On reflection, while the questionnaires provided valuable statistical data, particularly concerning metrics of labour, they revealed little of the underlying mechanisms and structures that produced the particular labour geography. It was through interviews that I was able to elucidate the emotions and complexities of labour agency; pose and attempt to find answers to research questions, and uncover the mechanisms of social processes (Winchester, 1999).

3.2.4 Observation

Supplementing the above approaches, I utilised non-participant observation throughout the research process. Observation tactics are often assumed and undervalued in geographical inquiry (Kearns in Hay 2005: 192). However, in this research project they were a particularly valuable strategy that allowed me to identify social engagements and
processes that could be explored further through discussion. In Kamwala, for example, I observed some workers increasing the prices marked on goods and creating a ‘kitty’ for sharing the additional monies. I had been in the market for a number of weeks at this stage and in no part of the discussions did workers reveal this process. Observation can also have a complementary role, providing a descriptive complement to more structured methods such as interviewing and surveys (Keams in Hay 2005). In Chambishi for instance I was able to observe the uniforms workers wore and their housing situations, whereas in Kamwala I noted the structure of the market and differences between Chinese owned and non-Chinese owned shops. These observations were noted in a field diary and added an additional contextual dimension to the data collected\(^39\). Though the use of photography would have elevated these observations, the contentious nature of the research prevented this from being a viable strategy\(^40\).

I engaged in more formalised observation processes when I shadowed Ministry of Labour inspectors on workplace inspections and inside the Ministry itself. The field visits with inspectors were beneficial exercises as they allowed me to monitor the processes of inspection, the behavior of inspectors, and, crucially, the reaction of workers. Within the Ministry similarly useful insights were gained into the processes a worker endures when making a complaint, and the challenges faced by Ministry employees. Subsequent to this period, I maintained contact with the inspectors and interviewed them at a later date.

I spent three months living with a Zambian miner and his family in a town in the Copper Belt province to gain a richer picture of workers’ reality. While the miner did not work for Chinese mines specifically, he had a vast experience in the sector, having spent decades working under the state-owned mines and later for private companies. Living in the region all his life, he had a strong awareness of the labour changes that occurred across the different economic periods of the State. Beyond gaining an insight into the impact mining has had on the lives of residents, this small ‘immersion’ period allowed me to gain a deeper appreciation of the wider social and economic challenges facing a

\(^{39}\) Field diaries are in the author’s possession.
\(^{40}\) I attempted to take photographs in Kamwala but found that having a camera in my possession made workers even more hesitant to participate in the research. On two occasions in Chambishi I was prohibited from taking photographs by security guards.
Zambian family. Through family contacts, I was able to access workers, politicians and trade unionists that I fear would have eluded me otherwise. While an immersion period of this nature can be a useful strategy in attempting to view the research from ‘within’, it does not fundamentally change the researcher’s positionality. Though I was very welcomed within the family environment, what they perceived as my ‘status’ in being a foreign researcher meant that I was treated as a guest and prevented from engaging in some of the domestic tasks with the women in the house.

3.2.5 Archives and Secondary Data

Supplementing primary data, I conducted various secondary literature reviews and archival research whilst in Zambia. The Zambian National Archives provided interesting historical context, though the quality and availability of information was variable. Literature reviews were conducted in the University of Zambia and the International Labour Organisation. Despite numerous requests I was not permitted access to the archives of the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions. This was attributed to its recent relocation from Kitwe to Lusaka, and the absence of the archivist who was on extended leave to Botswana. I was able to consult Government records from the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, though more often than not the requested documents were missing or lacking sufficient detail. In particular, from 2004 onwards there are limited statistics available on the number of strikes or collective agreements occurring in the country. In the Copper Belt Province I analysed material in the Chamber of Mines in Kalulushi, the Mine Workers Union of Zambia in Kitwe and the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines archive in Ndola. I also made use of the Special Collection in the University of Zambia library, which had some useful Zambia specific material. Furthermore, throughout the field work period I collected relevant articles from the daily and weekly press, and monitored radio and television media. As labour agency is a dynamic and evolving process this material was perhaps the most useful secondary data collected.
3.3 Interpretation and Analysis of Data

Having completed the data collection stage attention then turned toward analysis. The majority of material to be dealt with was qualitative in nature. While the interpretation and analysis of qualitative data often lacks the formalized procedure of quantitative analysis, it is possible to develop a clear set of guidelines within which to manage data (Kitchin & Tate 2000: 229). Dey (1993) describes the processes of qualitative analysis as consisting of description, classification and identifying interconnections. Classification moves beyond descriptive process to one of interpretative analysis (Kitchin & Tate 2000: 234).

The first stage in analysis was transcription. The majority of these were completed a short time after the interview was conducted. All recorded interviews were transcribed in full, with transcription codes used to identify pauses, laughs, etc. from the interviewees. On completion, the transcripts were annotated with ideas and memos relating to the data. A similar process occurred with field notes, which contained the majority of observational and contextual data. The information was initially grouped according to similar responses and observations, and then categorized more fully in line with emergent trends and patterns. Data was then further disaggregated into sub-categories. Though there is no limit to the amount of categories that can be used, Kitchin & Tate (2000: 243) propose that categorization should occur up to the point where ‘the data within categories seem to sit naturally with one another and no further division is immediately obvious’. Data was coded by hand and filled according to the research question, or indeed questions, they assisted in answering. The final stage of the analysis process involved the corroboration of data. Corroboration is an attempt to address some of the criticisms of subjectivity leveled at qualitative data, and involves cross checking conclusions and thinking critically about the quality of the data (Dey 1993: 224). Where possible, I compared the insights of interviewees with that of other respondents, or secondary literature such as government reports or newspaper articles.

Survey data was analysed using basic quantitative methods. As the surveys contained a combination of open and closed ended questions, methods of coding were particularly
important. Closed questions were relatively straightforward to classify, with each response assigned a numerical code. For open ended questions appropriate categories were identified within the responses and a coding frame constructed. Having completed this process, it was then relatively simple to complete basic numerical calculations, such as the identification of average wage, working hours, or the perceptions of state-capital collusion. Again, attempts were made to triangulate where possible, such as by comparing respondents wage levels with that presented by other researchers and, if possible, business owners.

3.4 Reflections on methodology: Power, Positionality and Reflexivity

The exercise of conducting research does not occur in a vacuum, but rather is embedded within wider structures, cultures and influences. Power relations are implicit in all processes of researching, whether in the design stage, data collection, or final analysis. Questioning the nature of power and the impact power differentials have on the collection and analysis of data is an imperative methodological consideration, and demands that we recognize our own position, as well as that of any research participants (McDowell in Rose 1997). Haraway (1991) and Harding (1987) have been to the fore in arguing that all knowledge is specific and partial. They contend that to deny these characteristics is to make claims to universal applicability which ‘subjugates other knowledges and their producers’ (Rose 1997: 307). For Haraway, ‘positioning is...the key practice grounding knowledge’ (Haraway 1991: 193). In an attempt to counterbalance the effects of positionality and subjectivity in data collection and analysis, a growing band of researchers utilize ‘reflexivity’, ‘a self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as a researcher’ (England 1994). Reflexivity offers qualitative researchers the opportunity to address some of the dilemmas of positionality and the impact of factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic position and gender (Adamson and Donovan 2002; Clifford & Marcus 1986).

In negotiating my identity in the field, three personal characteristics shaped my relations with respondents: my ethnicity, my age and my gender. My ethnicity was an obvious element of difference that brought with it assumptions that were largely based on ideas of
my power and financial status. On the one hand, this proved an obstacle to conducting research as I received unwanted attention. Though on the other, it enabled me to gain access to people and areas that I doubt would have been accessible otherwise. When interviewing the ‘elite’ respondents, age was both a barrier and an advantage. I sensed that some government officials did not take my research too seriously and because of this were willing to speak with me. On the negative, I fear that my relative youth meant I was unable to access certain people due to perceptions that my work was not of sufficient importance.

Being a female undoubtedly affected my data collection. Herod (1999) argues that the gender dynamic can shape interview relations and significantly influence the type of data obtained using this methodology. While Hyman et al (1954), writing in the 1950s, showed that interviewees corresponded and answered differently to male and female researchers. Eagly and Carli (1981) found a similar statistical relationship between researcher gender and the outcome of the study. Herod also contends that interview models and interpretations of data can be influenced by gendered assumptions (also see McDowell 1991).

In the main respondents were welcoming, friendly and helpful. However on occasion, a small, but persistent, minority of males made the research environment feel intimidating. When travelling to and from the Chambishi interview site, for example, I passed through the main bus terminus in Kitwe. Here I was followed, had abusive terms shouted at me, and on two occasions was spat on. This made me feel extremely uncomfortable and for a short period affected my confidence when researching. In Chambishi itself I faced some intimidation. This came from bystanders rather than research participants and took the form of abusive comments, unwanted sexual advances, and attempts to steal some of my materials. In Kamwala market I received similar abuse, though at both sites these lessened as time went by and people became accustomed to my presence. With some elite

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41 Similar sentiments were shared by Easterday at al. (1977) who argue that not being taken seriously as a researcher can lead females to gain access to otherwise inaccessible settings
42 Here Herod relates to the distribution of institutional power between men and women
male respondents I received unwanted advances\textsuperscript{43}. When approaching such individuals for interviews it was often suggested that the interview could take place in a bar or restaurant in the evening. Wary of the associations such an interview site may have had, and conscious that I wanted to maintain a professional approach, I requested that interviews be conducted in a place of work rather than a social space. I sought to limit the impacts my gender may have had on access by arranging interviews by email - though given the limited role of this medium of communication in Zambia, this approach was of limited success.

I attempted to address such gender based concerns by lying about my marital status, something which many female researchers have felt it necessary to do (Dua 1979; Wolf 1996). Initially, I had been reluctant to adopt this strategy as I did not wish to mislead my respondent group. However, given the seriousness of the problems I was encountering (it become a persistent feature of interview dynamics with some elite interviewees), and the fact that my marital status did not have a direct bearing on the questions I was asking, I proceeded to adopt this approach. On reflection it had varying degrees of success. Where I felt extremely uncomfortable with an interviewee, or was going through a period of sustained abuse at interview sites, I asked a male Zambian friend to accompany me. Though he had no role in the data gathering process, having a companion made the research environment more manageable.

Implicit in much literature on positionality is an assumption that power relations are in a static, fixed state, when in fact, positionalities are dynamic and in flux. Conceptions of static relations ignore the ‘dynamism of the encounter between the researcher and the researched, and the shifting nature of power relations that ensue’ (Mullings 1999: 340). While physical characteristics may be fixed, perceptions of their meaning in society are transient. Mullings thus proposes that interviewers seek ‘positional spaces’, areas where the positionalities of the interviewer and interviewee complement each other (Ibid.). She argues that such spaces provide ‘a forum for developing an empathetic understanding of the situatedness of those from whom [she] sought answers’ (Mullings 1999: 341).

\textsuperscript{43} For similar see Dua 1979
During field work, I found that my identify often shifted on various axes which reflected the person I was interviewing. When interviewing Government officials for instance, I emphasized the aspects of my identity which were considered non-threatening, such as highlighting the fact that I was a student. Comparatively, when interviewing female market traders my identity as a women and daughter took precedence.

On reflection, the methodological strategy proved sufficient to address the research questions, though there are three things which would have eased the process. Firstly, financial issues were a crucial consideration. Had I access to more funds I would have been able to hire or purchase a car – a resource which would have significantly lessened the time spent getting to and from interview sites – or employ a research assistant for a longer period of time. Secondly, it would have been beneficial to complete an initial field visit prior to the main field work period. During this time I could have organized certain logistical issues such as accommodation and become accustomed to local geographies and conditions before the main research period began.

Having established and reflected upon the methodological approach adopted, attention will now turn to the main purpose of this thesis – investigating the socio-spatial influences on labour agency in Sino-Zambian workplaces. I begin this task with an historical exploration of Zambian labour and labour agency from independence to the early 2000s.
4. Globalisation, Structural Adjustment, and Zambian Labour

The Global Production Network (GPN) perspective argues that production processes and networks should be embedded within the wider socio-spatial contexts in which they occur. Central to this is a recognition of the constituent actors that influence and shape GPNs, as well as the complex social interactions in value creation. Analysing the experience and participation of Zambian workers in Chinese GPNs necessitates a recognition of the historical precedents underlying such interactions, being as neither foreign investment nor the actions of workers occur in a-historical vacuums. As a relational concept, the agency of labour in particular is shaped by workers’ experiences of capital, state and community, as well as expectations of modernity. These broadly contribute to the horizontal influences on labour agency within a GPN. This chapter, then, provides the historical context to modern labour processes by exploring how Zambian labour regimes and agency have been constituted across the different economic periods of the state. It serves to both contextualise the empirical data that proceeds and in itself offers observations of the decline in the Zambian trade union movement. Given the limitations on available data, this chapter primarily focuses on the trade union movement and high profile collective forms of labour agency - though it is with recognition that these are not the only forms of action that would have occurred.

There are four sections in total, tracing labour within Zambian economic models in chronological order. In the first section I explore the post-independence First and Second Republics, showing that the quasi-socialist developmental state - which nationalized key industry and placed limitations on foreign commerce more generally - simultaneously created expectations of ‘modernity’ among workers, whilst attempting to repress the labour movement. Paradoxically, the actions of the one party state helped to create what was one of the strongest trade union movements on the continent. In the second section, the vulnerability of Zambia’s global integration as a commodity exporter, a legacy of colonial rule, is laid bare, and the continuing viability of a state led economic model

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44 Alongside secondary sources, I predominately sourced data through the Zambian national archives and Newspapers – the quality and coverage of both of these varied year to year.

45 British authorities neglected the state’s agricultural and manufacturing sectors, favouring Southern Rhodesia as the manufacturing base for the region.
brought into question. National economic stagnation was accompanied with a surge in strikes and protests, which united the employed, unemployed, and members of the business community. This led to the introduction of the country’s first experience of structural adjustment, which did little to alleviate citizens economic woes and contributed to the demise of the single party state. The third section focuses on the advent of political pluralism and the election of a former trade unionist to the Presidency of Zambia. At this time, civil society was broadly united that a more liberalized economic system would offer the country the greatest economic gains. A programme of structural adjustment was introduced that went further than before, reconfiguring GPNs from state ownership to foreign involvement. In the fourth section I consider the implications the entry of foreign capital had for labour and the potential for labour agency. From the privatisation of the copper mines, to the impact of trade liberalization on textile workers, I show that while the Zambian trade unions have been preciously weakened, workers continue to engage in high profile collective action.

4.1 Labour and the Developmentalist State Model

Zambia achieved independence in 1964, with the United Independence National Party (UNIP) forming the government under President Kenneth Kaunda. At the onset of independence economic prospects appeared auspicious. Buoyed by favourable global copper prices, Zambia had the highest per capita income in the region (CSO 2007), and was considered by some a model of development for a continent that was rapidly moving toward political independence (Ferguson 1999). The copper industry transformed the Zambian landscape, and the imagery of newly established urban centres captured the imagination in an unprecedented way:

‘The mining towns that had sprung up....symbolised newness in a way that older cities could not. Here, unlike many other parts of Africa, the very idea of cities was a ‘modern’ one, and ‘urbanisation’ was understood to involve not simply a movement in space but an epochal leap in evolutionary time’ (Ferguson 1999: 4).

Being as industry was heavily dependent on manual workers, labour had a crucial role to play in national economic development. As such, in the initial years of independence the
State attempted to exert its power over labour by directing measures of control toward the trade union movement. Union activity was predominately concentrated in the Copper Belt Province, reflecting the geographical development of industry. The rationale behind attempting to control the labour movement was twofold. Firstly, there was a desire to wield political control over the mineral sector, being as it was of vital importance to the nation’s economic development. Secondly, the prospect of having the support of trade unions, whether this support was actual or perceived, had great political importance for the State being as it would provide a certain amount of political capital (Gupta 1974).

In the weeks following Zambian independence, UNIP introduced a Bill which set the tone for post-independence labour politics, and sought to place the party at the centre of the labour relations system. The Bill established the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) as an unelected, government devised federation to which all unions could affiliate. Though affiliation with ZCTU was not mandated, it was strongly incentivised (See Gertzel 1979). The State placed a particular onus on gaining the support of the main union in the copper industry, the Zambia Mineworkers Unions (MUZ)\(^{46}\). It was perceived that an endorsement by what was the country’s largest trade union, in the sector that was of significant political and economic importance, would give the ZCTU, and by extension the Government, legitimacy as the voice of workers. Well-funded, organised and with an established role in industrial action, ZMU initially resisted calls for affiliation, despite protests from the government. When it did eventually join in 1966, the union continually pressed for elections, expressing lack of confidence in ZCTU leadership (Larmer 2005a).

The Congress was empowered with the ability to create and dissolve member unions, alter union rules, and approve or reject strike ballots and industrial action (Northern News 16.11.1964). With the insertion of the Trade Unions and Trade Dispute Ordinance in 1965, UNIP was given the sole power of appointment of ZCTU leaders, placing political allies in key posts (Times of Zambia 01.12.1965). Unions were legally prohibited from seeking the support of foreign agencies. Notably, they were prohibited from affiliating with outside bodies and curtailed from receiving non-approved financial assistance.

\(^{46}\) The Mineworkers Union of Zambia was formed in 1967 following a voluntary merger between the Miners Union and the Staff and Mine Police Associations.
Justin Chimba, Minister of Labour and ex trade unionist, justified such measures by claiming that they functioned to protect the trade union movement from the disruptive influence of foreign bodies (ILO 1975). President Kaunda himself argued that UNIP’s measures would create strong unified trade unions that would benefit workers (Bates 1971).

Throughout the mid to late 1960s industrial action was rife, and the Zambian government grew increasingly concerned about the persistence of strike action (Larmer 2005a: 333). The number of man hours lost through industrial disputes rose from 124,738 in 1964 to 579,409 in 1966 (Burdette 1988: 83), with the number of strikes reaching a peak in 1967 at 222 (Labour Department 1969). In 1966 miners almost paralysed the country with a series of strikes which were reminiscent of the pioneering industrial actions of 1935 and 194047, and reinforced governments desire to achieve effective control over mineworkers (Larmer 2005a: 332). Major stoppages also occurred in schools (1970), on the railways (1965, 1968 and 1970) and in local councils (1968). Action was primarily driven by worker’s complaints of poor treatment by management and what they perceived as the failure of government to live up to expectations created at independence (Rakner 2003: 50). In general, it was led by workers themselves, with national union leaders calling for their return to work – indicating a sense of discord between some workers and their representatives (Larmer 2005a: 333). In Kabwe, this tension was particularly acute. Textile workers resisted union intervention in industrial disputes, claiming union officials conspired with the government to avoid addressing workers’ grievances (Kapferer 1972). In April 1967, the Minister of Labour Munukayumbwa Sipalo attacked what he perceived as workers’ laziness and emphasised the need for a ‘heavy hand’ guiding systems of work: ‘You and I know that if you were to put workers on the road to work on their own without a whip behind them, you would find them seated in the next ten minutes...I can assure you that this is the responsibility of trade union leaders just as it is the responsibility of civil society leaders and political leaders’ (Ministry of Labour 1967).

47 For details of early strike action see Henderson (1975)

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4.1.1 Nationalisation and Political Consolidation: state ownership and labour agency

In the late 1960's changes to industrial management and ownership fundamentally changed the government's role in industrial relations. The economic reforms announced at the Mulungushi Conference in April 1968 signalled the nationalisation of large parts of the Zambian economy, and introduced steps to limit foreign ownership of the country's resources, which for generations had remained largely in foreign hands. The State was to acquire a controlling interest in key sectors of commerce and industry, while expatriate controlled undertakings were to face limitations in both the commodities that could be traded and in the scale of operations. Foreigners were not allowed to own enterprises outside the centres of ten named towns. At the same time, credit and loans to expatriate businesses were to be restricted, in an attempt to free scarce finance for the 'Zambianisation' of commerce and industry. This has an immediate effect on labour, with foreign traders who knew that they were unlikely to have their licences renewed and those who relied heavily on overdraft facilities, beginning to consider whether they should shut down, decrease their labour force or operate under reduced hours (Labour Department 1970).

In 1969 Kaunda announced the government's intention to purchase a controlling share of the two major mining companies operating in Zambia, Roan Selection Trust and Anglo American Corporation, as well as exclusive control over prospecting and mining licenses. The nationalisation of the nation's key resource was of immense political and social impact. The importance mining had for the national economy at this time should not be underestimated. Largely driven by favourable copper prices, Zambia's GDP per capita in 1969 was twice that of Egypt's and triple Kenya's, as well as significantly higher than some other industrialising nations such as Brazil and Malaysia (Ferguson 1999: 6). The two mining companies were forced to relinquish 51% of their shares to the State and

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48 The policies of nationalisation were given political legitimacy by reference to Kaunda's personal philosophy of Humanism, a quasi-socialist view of society that sought to preserve African traditions while promoting economic growth. The doctrine of Humanism was introduced by Kaunda in 1967. The President published in two books: *Humanism Part I* (1967) and *Humanism Part II* (1974). For a business perspective on Humanism see Beveridge and Oberschall (1979).

49 These towns were Chingola, Mufulira, Kitwe, Luanshya, Ndola, Kabwe, Lusaka, Mazabuka, Choma and Livingstone.

50 This tended to be those involved in the supply of building materials and timber, in transport and manufacturing, and to a lesser extent, in the retail trade.
merged to become an overarching parastatal, the Zambia Industrial Mining Corporation (ZIMCO).

The Zambianisation programme presented challenges to workers, civil society and foreign investors alike, and effectively ended foreign ownership in Zambian industries. As Beveridge and Oberschall (1979: 46) reflect;

‘Each [reform] represented a gamble, in that outside technology and managerial personnel were making valuable contributions to development efforts. Each was also a gamble inasmuch as the success of the reforms depended on African readiness and ability to take the place of expatriates’

While in theory the state intended to shift ownership from foreign to public and private Zambian interests, in practice, the balance tilted in favour of the Zambian public sector (Turok 1989; Beveridge and Oberschall 1979). Young (1973: 206) notes, ‘The reforms signified that the authorities had overcome any lingering preference inherited from the colonial era for private rather than public enterprise, and also that they were determined to ensure that where the interests of private export business and the interests of the Zambian economy diverged the latter would take precedence’. The Zambian government had become a key actor in the country’s GPNs as the owner of productive capital and employer of tens of thousands of people. From 1964 to 1969 public sector employment grew over 100%, taking the number of state employees from 22,500 to 51,000 (Rakner 2003: 45).

Kaunda purported that nationalisation would help to create a ‘classless’ society that would be enriched by indigenous control over the economy (quoted in Meebelo 1986: 444). Workers were given a central role which emphasised their responsibility in the pursuit for economic development. Speaking about the impact nationalisation would have on labour, the President proclaimed:

‘The revolutionary measures we have taken of controlling a number of major industries in the county means one very important thing, and this is that if the
workers decisively put their shoulders to the wheel and greater profits accrue...the Government and therefore the people would benefit from these profits through our share of fifty-one per cent’ (Kaunda 1969 quoted in Meebelo 1986: 444)

Explicit in much government rhetoric at the time was comment linking the success of the developmentalist model, with the actions of workers. While averring the benefits that nationalisation would have for employees, Government ministers were simultaneously arguing the labour disputes were an affront to the national good: ‘The State...holds industrial investments, not for its own good, not merely for the good of those directly employed in the State enterprises, but for the benefit of Zambians everywhere. Thus, for a union to push a claim against the State is to push a claim against the people’ (Zambia 1969). The contention that industrial action was at odds with Zambian development, and indeed Zambian citizens, had important implications for labour relations. Bates (1971: 213) observed mine nationalisation ‘clarified the link between the conduct of labour and the success of development efforts, and strengthened the government’s resolve to curtail the militancy of labour’. In this era of public ownership ‘workers could no longer pursue narrow economic interests at the (supposed) expense of their rural cousins’ (Larmer 2005: 336; See also Burawoy 1972). UNIP adopted a harsh stance with protesting workers, resolving to quell any expressions of labour ‘militancy’51 (See Bates 1971). The President condemned ‘wildcat’ action, introduced a wage freeze and placed a temporary ban on all strikes (Ibid: 54).

Despite Kaunda’s ban, many workplaces continued to witness wildcat strike action. In addition to the strikes by teachers, and railway workers, employees in the copper mines continued to take action. At the Rokana mine in January 1970 for instance, workers downed tools, expressing a lack of confidence in the MUZ leadership (Labour Department 1970). During a seminar organised by the Race Relations Committee to investigate industrial disputes, UNIP Regional Secretary Michael Chileshe appeared sympathetic to the workers’ cause:

51 This point is also made in relation to UNIPs use of nationalist rhetoric to stifle opposition parties, see Macola, G. (2010) pp. 17-44
‘There is no excuse why some employers should continue to pay poor wages when they continue making fantastic profits every year. We have told our people to work hard. But with hard work we expect them to be rewarded for their hard work. When they see no difference in their pay whether they work hard or not, then they resort to wildcat strikes’ (MLSSA/25/141)

However, the official government line on protesting workers was made clear in this notable quote from the Minister of Labour:

‘My father chastised you with whips but I will chastise you with scorpions. My stepfather made your burdens heavy, but I will make them ten times heavier. Because the greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility…. In future there is not going to be quid (or kwacha) without plenty of Pro Quo… I am not going to tolerate behaviour from workers crying ‘give, give’ without them giving in return (quoted in Bates 1971: 45)’

The surge in strike action was attributed by some to be result of inherent weakness in the labour relations system (Times of Zambia 18.07.1968). John Price, the Executive Officer of the Zambia Federation of Employers, argued that wildcat strikes were due to a lack of adequate organisation among trade unions and poor communication between workers and employers (Zambia Mail 17.11.1967). President Kaunda was an ally to this thought, stating ‘the split in the trade union movement has contributed partly to the labour problem – strikes and so on – on the Copperbelt today’ (Northern News 07.01.1963). The ZCTU General Secretary himself proclaimed that ‘sweeping changes’ were necessary in the trade union movement ‘if Zambia is to overcome economic destruction caused by wildcat strikes’ (Times of Zambia 18.07.1968).

4.1.2 The Industrial Relations Act (1971)

The complaints of those articulated above largely focused on the proliferation of trade unions. Since independence the Zambian labour movement had been characterised by multiple unions per industry - the mining sector, for example, had three unions, while the
railways and transport industries had two each (See Berger 1974). The multiplicity of representation was associated with inter union conflict, overlapping membership and a weakening of collective bargaining. Kaunda himself commented that ‘...a proliferation of trade unions weakens the bargaining strength of the workers’ (Kaunda 1969). The Industrial Relations Act of 1971 was introduced in an attempt to address these issues, unifying the trade union movement by permitting only one union per industry. The Act signalled a clear break from UNIP’s policy of voluntarism that had characterised ZCTU affiliation since 1965, by legally mandating that all unions join the Congress. UNIP argued that this placed worker’s organisations in a better position when it came to negotiating industrial disputes (Labour Department 1971). The ultimate aim was to ‘replace the idea of master servant, or supervisor and subordinate, with the principle of partnership’ (Ibid.). It was through participation in trade unions that workers were said to be given full status as partners in the system of industrial relations.

At the political level, the Act was designed to create ‘a monolithic trade union organisation under the wing of the ruling party UNIP’ 52. Though the government line claimed that the legislation strengthened the power of unions and increased their independence, opponents argued that it enabled UNIP to have greater control over trade union bodies (See Larmer 2005). Clauses regulating strike activity and the industrial relations court increased the state’s control over the industrial disputes, while UNIP’s position within the workplace was entrenched by a series of party committees and worker councils. The Act effectively outlawed strike action, introducing a system of arbitration and conciliation, which made it extremely difficult to call a legal strike (Larmer 2005: 337). The Act contravened International Labour Organisation (ILO) declarations to which Zambia was a signatory, particularly those concerning freedom of association and collective bargaining (Interview with Gerry Finnegan 13.04.2010).

In 1972, UNIP cemented its position at the seat of government by declaring a single party state and placing a ban on all other political parties. The model of political authoritarianism introduced by the Party expanded presidential authority and combined

52 In the 1970s the ZCTU was incorporated into the constitution of UNIP as one of the mass organisations affiliated to the party.
populist rhetoric with executive decision making (Baylies & Szeftel 1992). On the surface, UNIP appeared to have achieved a certain political hegemony over the labour movement. Leaders from the ZCTU and major union bodies spoke in support of the Party’s policies, even when at odds with the wildcat actions of workers (Gertzel 1975: 295). But workers themselves were far from content with the economic and political situation, and wildcat strike action continued unabated. In 1971 there were a total of 18,894 man days lost through strike action, and in 1972 this figure rose to 20,874 (Labour Department 1973). In the first month of 1973 alone there were 15 wildcat strikes recorded (Ibid).

4.2 The Demise of the Developmentalist State Model

Zambia’s integration into global commodity markets as an exporter of natural resources meant that it was acutely vulnerable to external ‘shocks’. The 1973 oil crisis marked a period of international economic stagnation and brought into question the economic viability of the developmentalist paradigm in the African state. Between 1973 and 1984 Zambia’s GDP fell by an average of 1.5% a year, representing a total fall in per capita GDP of 35% (Situmbeko & Zulu 2004). The slump in world copper prices had severe consequences for the State’s budget. In 1974 copper and cobalt provided over 90% of foreign exchange and 54% of government income, but between 1977 and 1979 they provided nothing (Gertzel 1984). To compensate, the Zambian government undertook heavy external borrowing, with total debt rising from US$800 million in 1970, to US$3.2 billion in 1980. Between 1975 and 1980 waged employment decreased by 2.4% (Gertzel 1984: 82), while those who remained employed suffered a decline in the real value of their wages and conditions. Such was the extent of economic decline, the government had little option but to approach international financial organisations for assistance. Following protracted negotiations an Extended Fund Facility was agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) with the World Bank. The stipulations of the SAP meant that the Government had to introduce a broad range of policy measures including the removal of price controls, abolition of quantitative import restrictions, and interest rate liberalisation. A wage freeze was

53 Though rhetoric was dominated by ideals of restriction and centralism, a level of internal debate persisted within the Party. Political opponents were regularly imprisoned, yet opportunity remained for ‘repentance’. 89
introduced and restrictions placed on government expenditure, including subsidies on food and social services.

Despite the introduction of these austerity and liberalising measures, adjustment did not bring about positive economic growth. GDP during the adjustment period of 1983-1986 was zero, inflation rose and the budget and trade deficits actually widened (Bonnick 1997). The World Bank attributed the lack of success to the Government’s handling of adjustment, arguing that the State implemented an economic policy that was too lenient, and introduced interest rates that were too low (Situmbeko & Zulu 2004: 22). By the mid-80s, Zambia was on the brink of economic disaster. Foreign debt had grown to over $4 billion and the state owed $350 million to the World Bank and $725 million to the IMF (Cheru 1989).

While the policies of the Zambian developmentalist model were not economically sustainable, the liberalisation measures introduced were not politically sustainable in the short term. Free market reforms were extremely unpopular among both workers and the general populace. Acute shortages in basic commodities, such as oil, flour and meat, became common throughout the country. As the State rolled back government expenditure, there was a very real deterioration in living conditions. By the late 1970’s, 25% of urban households and 80% of rural were lacking the resources to satisfy basic food and financial needs (Chambers & Singer 1980).

National economic stagnation was reflected in an increasing level of industrial and civil unrest. Food riots, student protests and industrial strikes were accompanied by an escalation in violence and crime. Urban discontent first manifested in November 1974 when the Government significantly increased the price of basic commodities, including bread and oil. Citizens in the Copperbelt and Lusaka immediately took to the streets and the ZCTU demanded an increase in wages to compensate. Strike action in the copper mines reached a peak in 1980, with an 8 day strike that spread across the mines (Labour Department 1980). Relations between the government and unions became increasingly strained as the economy declined and industrial action increased. The labour movement
transitioned from being primarily concerned with industrial matters, to acting as watchdog on all areas of state policy, perceiving its role as highlighting ‘...the problems besetting the nation, without sweeping any dirt under the carpet’ (Frederick Chiluba quoted in *Times of Zambia* 21.10.1981). Comment from trade unionists appeared in the national newspapers, criticising not only UNIP’s policy on the economy and labour, but also wider issues of social and national importance (Lungu: 1986). When UNIP introduced an IMF sanctioned 10% ceiling on salary increments, union criticism extended to the official ideology of Humanism:

> ‘Why should the government wait for our silence?...We can’t wait for ‘isms’ to bring better things for us. That is why we say no to ideological experts...shall we wait for philosophies to bring progress? No. We must fight for our right today’ (Frederick Chiluba quoted in *Times of Zambia* 11.06.1993)

Agitation of workers and communities was met by a harsh response from the State, with police regularly deployed to disperse strikes and protests. Such was the level of police use, one trade union leader commented that it was easier to deal with private employers, as unlike the State, they did not make use of the security forces during disputes (Baylies & Szeftel 1992: 85). Labour leaders themselves were frequently imprisoned, expelled from the party for their refusal to support government policy or portrayed as being swayed by foreign interests (RH interview with Chembe 13.09.2010). By way of extending control, Kaunda was simultaneously attempting to co-opt many trade unionists into the UNIP structures. Frederick Chiluba, chairman of the National Union of Building, Engineering and General Workers (UNBEGW), was regarded as a particular threat and, alongside ZCTU General Secretary Newstead Zimba, offered a place in UNIPs central committee (Mulenga 2009). When both men refused, UNIP unsuccessfully tried to smear them by denigrating their position with workers (*African Confidential* 12.11.1990).

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54 The most famous example is the imprisonment of 17 trade union leaders who spoke out against the Local Administration Act in 1981.

55 In 1988 the UNIP Special Branch infiltrated the NUBEGW with the intention of persuading its leadership to suspend Chiluba. A suspension would have prohibited the trade unionist from standing for the position of ZCTU General Secretary, as it is a requirement to be a member of an affiliated union. When the ZCTU nullified the NUBEGW’s suspension and charged members of trying to remove Chiluba unconstitutionally, the NUBEGW took legal action. While the High Court supported the ZCTU, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the NUBEGW. Chiluba’s position was saved by the Zambian Union of Financial and Allied
Paradoxically, the statist measures introduced by UNIP to control and subjugate the unions, helped to create what was arguably one of the strongest and most financially viable labour movements on the continent (Rakner 2003: 50). This is due to two contributing factors: Firstly, by legally mandating trade union subscriptions, UNIP ensured that the ZCTU had large coffers at its disposal - as financial insecurity had limited the actions of Congress in the past, this was of obvious benefit; Secondly, in restricting the number of unions to one per industry, UNIP unified worker's voices' and strengthened the power of unions in industrial disputes.

Despite the introduction of the adjustment programme the Zambian economy saw little improvement. The IMF blamed the government for not implementing the stabilisation measures fully, while the Zambian people were berating the fact they were introduced at all (Callaghy 1990: 296). Lack of economic development and growing public discontent lead the Government to unilaterally abandon the IMF programme in 1987 and adopt its own New Economic Recovery Programme (NERP). In the year NERP was introduced, the Zambian economy grew by 3.1%, rising to 5.6% in 1988 (Bonnick 1997). This was largely attributable to Government controlled interest and foreign exchange rates, the re-activation of import controls and limitations placed on debt service payments (See Situmbeko and Zulu 2004). Despite this success, UNIP came under pressure from bilateral donors to return to the IMF. The Paris Club of lenders withdrew bilateral aid, arguing that having a programme with the IMF was one of the conditions of receiving assistance (Situmbeko and Zulu 2004: 23). At this stage, Zambia's external debt stood at US$7 billion, leaving the State with little option but to comply with the lenders requirements (Ibid.)

4.3 Political Liberalisation

Economic malaise brought into question the viability of single party rule. The labour movement, alongside business leaders and academics, had an important role within a dissenting Zambian element, who took inspiration from the democratisation of African Workers (ZUFIAW) and the Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) who gave him senior positions in their organisations, enabling him to stand as ZCTU leader.
and Eastern European states - the ‘global zeitgeist for democracy’ (Diamond 1989). The issue of democratisation was first addressed by the ZCTU in December 1989, when the General Council declared its intention to work for multiparty politics. The international momentum for democratisation provided an important stimulus to calls for change:

‘Chiluba announced at the general council of trade unions in Kitwe that since the eastern bloc had been swept by the democratisation tide, there is no way Zambia could remain an island...this tide would eventually swallow up the one party state system in our country’ (Interview with Martin Chembe 13.09.2010; also see Times of Zambia 31.12.1989)

At the 8th Quadrennial Conference in October of the following year, the Congress formally adopted the reintroduction of multi-party politics as a key political aim. The labour movement was given a central role, with Frederick Chiluba proclaiming that ‘strong and independent trade unions provide the most effective protection to the exercise of normal democratic rights in Zambia’56. Chiluba and the ZCTU were now unequivocally laying the blame for economic decline on UNIP in general, and Kaunda in particular. The growing impetus for political change was reflected in protests and demonstrations spreading across the country. What was notable about the Zambian pursuit of political and further economic liberalisation was that it was a cause that united workers, business interests and society alike. All sought more favourable economic and social conditions that were premised on the introduction of a more ‘explicitly capitalist system’ (Newstead Zimba quoted in Baylies & Szeftel 1992: 80). Kaunda’s philosophy of socialist humanism had become incredibly unpopular; ‘if this was socialism then people groaning under material hardship and unpopular conditionalities wanted nothing to do with it’ (ibid.).

In an attempt to quell the gathering momentum, Kaunda introduced the Industrial and Labour Act 1990, to ‘liberalise the labour relations system in order to bring it in line with the liberalised political system’ (The Post 13.01.1995). This direct reversal of the ‘one

56 Zambia Congress of Trade Unions: Resolution at the 8th Quadrennial Congress, 20-28 October, 1990, Kitwe; ZCTU Secretariat, 1990
union, one industry' policy of the 1970s enabled the open registration of trade unions, and stripped away the ZCTU's role as the central coordinating body. The ZCTU leadership was incensed, seeing it as an attempt to divide and weaken the labour movement on the brink of this pivotal moment in the nation's history (Interview with Fackson Shamenda 21.09.2010).

Kaunda's authority drastically receded later that year when, under pressure from the IMF, his government raised the price of maize meal by 100%. This significant price increase in what is Zambia's staple food, prompted notable civil unrest, with riots and looting in Lusaka and other main urban areas. In the capital, rioters clashed with widely deployed government forces. The police killed 27 people and arrested more than a thousand. In the milieu of the riots a group of soldiers attempted a coup d'état (Rakner 2003: 63). Ill planned and lacking resources, the coup quickly abated, though it brought thousands to the streets in support, severely weakening Kaunda's political authority. Whereas previous disturbances had targeted international financial institutions, this movement singled out the government and the one party state in particular as being the source of Zambia's economic problems (Rakner 2003). The belief that it was the internal failings of the Zambian political system, rather than the impositions of external bodies, gave further impetus to the call for political liberalisation.

On 17th June 1990 the ban on the right to organise opposition groups was lifted and three days later the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) was formed. The party was a broad based coalition of interests from business, academics, civil society and labour organisations (Bartlett 2000). MMD held its first national convention on the 27th February 1991, at which Fredrick Chiluba, former head of the ZCTU and long-time trade unionists, was elected as leader. Though UNIP tried to present the election as tribally biased, observers characterised it as one of the fairest ever held in Zambia and commented that the national executive committee of MMD represented a cross section of ethnic groups and backgrounds (Africa Confidential March 1991).
With an awareness of the strengths of the labour movement, Chiluba sought the support of his ex-colleagues from an early stage. As a newly formed political party, MMD did not have national networks or structures that were comparable with UNIP, placing it at a substantial disadvantage when it came to political campaigning. Chiluba approached Fackson Shamenda, then President of the ZCTU, to request his permission to use the Congress’s structures, nominally its network of local activists and groups (Interview with Fackson Shamenda 21.09.2010). Wary of the importance of union-party independence, Shamenda would not grant permission, stating that MMD should develop its own apparatus in parallel (Ibid). The separation of the union movement from the State was a core philosophy of Shamenda’s ZCTU leadership and was driven by an awareness of trends emerging in other post independent states:

‘We were not swallowed up like labour in some other countries, like Tanzania where the trade union movement became a wing of the ruling party...Like most east African blocs the same situation prevails...We struggled to first and foremost maintain our independence as trade unions. But that is one thing I am very proud of, that we managed to stay independent as trade union leaders’ (Ibid).

Trade unionists had by now become candid in their criticism of the UNIP government (Lungu 1986). Whereas previously the State would mount an attack on any critique, now there appeared a newfound acceptance. The composition of the ZCTU’s membership was perhaps a contributing factor in the change of approach. At this point, the Congress was dominated by the Mineworkers Union and the Zambian National Union of Teachers (ZNUT); two unions which represented areas of vital national interest to the country and as such commanded a cautious handling by the UNIP Government.

The general election of November 1991 marked the restoration of multi-party politics for the first time since the establishment of the single party state in 1972. Fredrick Chiluba’s MMD won a landslide victory, receiving 76% of the presidential vote and taking 83% of parliamentary seats (Baylies and Szeftel 1992: 76). International observers deemed the result a ‘historic step in the country’s return to multi-party politics’, while local press hailed the establishment of a ‘mature and stable democratic system of government’ in which constitutionalism would prevail (Ibid). Chiluba’s economic agenda was committed
to liberalisation through structural adjustment; viewed by both labour and business leaders as the necessary path for a country weighed down by external debt. Though critical voices of the first adjustment programme in 1983, labour leaders came to adopt the World Bank view that Kaunda’s measures did not go far enough - that it was more liberalisation, not less, that was necessary to relieve the nation’s economic burden (Interviews with Friday Mulenga, Robert Muchimba and Martin Chembe).

The desire to forge a private sector led economy was spelt out in MMD’s manifesto in the 1991 election, which stated ‘the Government restricts itself to rehabilitate and build socio-economic infrastructure with a small public sector in the midst of a basically private economy’ (MMD 1991: 14). The party’s manifesto and Policy Framework Paper - which was written in consultation with the IMF and World Bank during the election campaign - emphasised three main economic goals: to restore the country’s macro-economic stability through fiscal and monetary reforms; to remove public monopolies in industrial and agricultural sectors; and to facilitate private sector growth by liberalising price and exchange rate regulations and removing trade restrictions (Rakner 2003: 68). Zambia was now not only entering a new era of political liberalisation, but on the brink of adopting liberalising policies, the extent of which the country had never seen.


As MMD was becoming accustomed to its place in power, the Zambian labour movement was unified, financially strong and adopting an increasingly politicised role in a newly pluralist society. A trade unionist of 17 years had been elected President, and hopes were raised among business leaders and workers alike that economic liberalisation would deliver benefits for the population (Sunday Times of Zambia 24.11.1991). At the opening of the National Assembly in November 1991, President Chiluba made clear the economic challenges that the country faced:

‘We have found an economy in ruins. This year, as before, Zambia’s economy has declined...the standard of living of our people has actually fallen by some 10 per cent over the last two years...Adding insult to injury, they have contracted
external indebtedness to the point where we owe something like US$1000 to the rest of the world for every Zambian. Our economy is in ruins and even the ruins are in danger’ (Quoted in Rakner 2003: 68)

In 1991 foreign debt stood at US$6.82 billion, annual GDP growth was -4% and inflation 92.6% (Economic Report 1991-2000). The excessive scale of Zambian debt meant the State had little option but to return the IMF and World Bank for more financial assistance. MMD was quick to re-establish relations and agreed a Rights Accumulation Programme (RAP) to regain access to the IMF’s resources. The conditions attached to the RAP were more all-encompassing than earlier programmes and had a particular focus on privatisation and trade and agricultural liberalisation. In June 1992 the Privatisation Act was passed in Parliament, which set in motion the dismantling and sale of Zambia’s parastatal companies. In December of the same year, the Zambian Privatisation Agency (ZPA) was established to coordinate activities.

Though there was a sense of inevitability about privatisation, and indeed an element of enthusiasm among civil society, the speed of implementation and lack of consultation with the labour movement became a serious contention between the government and trade union leaders (Times of Zambia 03.07.1992; Sunday Times of Zambia 21.11.1992; Times of Zambia 31.07.1993; Times of Zambia 12.01.1995). In the early years of the third republic, the MMD government had a policy of not negotiating with key interest groups. This was pronounced when it came to trade unions. Fackson Shamenda was particularly aggravated by the level of communication breakdown:

'We knew the government was going to implement SAP in 1991 and we appreciated the need for it and saw it as inevitable. But we have not been happy about the failure to consult with various interest groups. We wanted to be constantly consulted at the time implementation was carried out, but this has not happened. As a consequence, government has gone ahead with reform at a pace

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57 Additional market orientated reforms included the removal of subsidies on maize and petroleum imports, reductions in public spending and the liberalisation of foreign exchange.

58 Interviews with Government officials and trade unionists indicate a willingness to accept SAP due to the dire condition of the economy and the disillusionment with socialist economics
and speed which is not in line with the development of a social safety net for the vulnerable groups’ (quoted in Rakner 2003: 82).

The pace of privatisation was staggering (See Figure 6 on the next page). In 1995, three years into the programme 102 companies had been privatised. By 1997 this total had reached 223 and by the end of 2001, 257 state enterprises had been transferred to the private sector. This represented 85% of the economy being placed into private hands (Larmer 2005b: 5).

Figure 6: Number of privatisations completed (1993-2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Companies privatised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Dec 1993</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Dec 1994</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Dec 1995</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Dec 1996</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Dec 1997</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Dec 1998</td>
<td>236</td>
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<tr>
<td>By Dec 1999</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Dec 2000</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Dec 2001</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The speed of sale called into question whether ethical rules were being observed. Joyce Nonde, General Secretary of the Zambian Union of Financial Institutions and Allied Workers (ZUFIAW), commented:

‘...we were told IMF, World Bank, were pushing...over 200 plus institutions [into] private hands, and our expectation was that implementation was going to be done properly. For example, there’s going to be a study of each and every institution. What does this institution do for the country, how do we privatise it, what will be the effects of privatisation?...We expected so much to be done, but
what did we see? Everything was done in a hurry. There was asset stripping and there was selling of institutions at a very low price to dubious people; and the workers who were laid off were not paid, they were just thrown into the streets' (quoted in Larmer 2005: 7-8).

Influential members of the Zambian elite were able to acquire small parastatals through what Larmer (2005: 7) describes as the ‘opaque’ processes of the ZPA. In a submission to the UN Committee on Economic and Social Rights in 2000, Dr Tom Kenny stated that ‘the Privatisation Act failed to guarantee accountability and transparency in the sale processes’, resulting in malpractice, allegations of corruption, and diversion of sale proceeds (Afronet 2000).

4.4.1 The Privatisation of ZCCM

The privatisation of Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) was a pivotal economic and political issue. The size of the government’s controlling share, which at the point of sale was 60.7%, and the contribution that the mining sector made to the economy, meant that the sale of ZCCM was vital to the success of the privatisation project. From the labour perspective, thousands of workers were employed in the sector, and like those of other industries, were worried about the impacts and challenges the change of ownership would present. As the State’s prime economic asset, the copper mines had long come under the gaze of the IMF and World Bank. As early as 1993, the World Bank approached the government to consider options for the sale of ZCCM. The state delayed, citing political and economic reasons. Mining union representatives initially came out in strong opposition to ZCCM privatisation. In 1992 Francis Kaunda, President of the Mine Workers Union (MUZ), publically proclaimed privatisation not an option for the mining sector (Times of Zambia 23.09.1992). This proclamation was a response to agitation among miners, churches, independent media and even some members of the MMD party as to the viability of selling such an important economic resource, particularly given its profitability at the time (Interview with Robert Muchimba 07.10.2010). The perception among society was that it would be loss making enterprises that would be sold, rather than businesses that were operating at a profit. In a response to social agitation, the State
declared it would wait up to 30 years before the mines were sold (*Times of Zambia* 26.09.1992).

Increasing international pressure could not be offset however, and when Zambia qualified for the World Bank’s Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, the State capitulated, due to external forces. The HIPC initiative demanded frequent performance assessments by the IMF, increasing pressure on the state to push through politically sensitive privatisations (Fraser and Lungu 2007). Unions themselves became divided on the issue; while the leadership of the ZCTU was growing ever more critical of the privatisation process, the MUZ was adopting a more favourable stance (*The Post* 29.10.1993). Union leader Francis Kaunda spoke of his ‘strong support’ for MMD’s economic policies, singling out privatisation in particular as being the most viable option for the mining sector (Rakner 2003). The immediate effects of retrenchment and redundancy were seen as stepping stones to better long term prospects for workers, and the growth and development of the industry (Interview with Robert Muchimba 07.10.2010). Reneging on earlier commitments, MMD began the processes of ZCCM privatisation in 1996. Between 1996 and 2000 ZCCM was split into 7 units and initially purchased by 7 multinational companies – fundamentally reconfiguring the production process from state ownership to the private sector. On the economic implications this change in ownership has, Fraser and Lungu (2007: 54) note, ‘This makes it likely that the profits from mining leave the country without having any positive impact on the Zambian economy, and rather than being re-invested in building up the national economy, will be placed in banks or re-invested in companies outside the country’. Despite the Mines and Minerals Act (1995) stipulating companies would pay 3% in mineral royalties to the state, most managed to negotiate significant tax exemptions; a politically contentious situation that persists to this day (*The Post* 30.01.2011). The World Bank observed, ‘The main feature of the mining sector is that most of the incentives are negotiated on a case by case basis by the companies which have purchased private entities from ZCCM…However in general, mining contributions to total tax revenues are extremely small’ (FIAS 2004: 38).
4.5 Privatisation and Trade Liberalisation: Implications for Labour

In this era of new ownership and governance what were the implications for labour? Perhaps the most significant impact of ZCCM privatisation on labour was the unemployment that it created. In 1976, during the heyday of copper production, 62,222 people were employed in the mines (Fraser and Lungu 2007). This situation remained fairly constant during the era of nationalisation, with 56,582 people being employed in the industry in 1991. In the run up to the sale, the government claimed ZCCM employment was excessive and introduced a substantial retrenchment process which decreased staff levels to 31,000 by 1997. As the mines were progressively sold, the work-force was reduced by an additional third almost immediately, with total employment falling to 19,145 in 2001 (ibid). In addition to cutting back the workforce, new investors engaged in casualisation, preferring to offer temporary contracts rather than taking on permanent workers. This was an inevitable shock for an employment force that was accustomed to a modernist industrial model that provided housing and additional benefits. Though statistics on categories of employment in the mines are difficult to come by, interviews conducted by Fraser and Lungu (2007) revealed that only 54% of workers in the five major mining employers are hired on permanent contracts, with the remaining employed on a fixed term or casual basis. In the context of globalisation, many employers are using informalisation and casualisation to frustrate union activity (Mulenga 2009). In Zambia, this is exacerbated by weak labour legislation that gives businesses the option of resisting union organisation by failing to recognise bodies. Indeed, communications with MUZ officials revealed a tendency of some managers to fire workers who made attempts to introduce unions into the workplace.

The modernist industrial model, which provided for the reproduction of labour during the ZCCM era, was largely dismantled by the new investors. ZCCM sold many of the houses that workers lived in, often to the workers themselves as part of a retrenchment package, leaving them only a small lump sum instead of the full monthly pension they had worked toward (Interview with Joseph Musonda 01.11.2010; See also Fraser and Lungu 2007). Reuben Mondoka, a former MUZ organiser in the Chilumba mines, recalls his experience of the process:
‘There was a Presidential order brought in that meant ZCCM could sell workers houses. This house, which for years I had fixed and repaired and looked after, was sold to me. The way they did it was to subtract the value of your house from your pension – for me this meant they took K32million from my pension of K40 million… We thought that was over but then they said I should pay taxes – Which would mean I owed them money! They eventually backed down but I was left with just K3million for the rest of my life [approx. US$600], just K3million. I have five children, what am I supposed to do with that?’ (Interview with Reuben Mondoka 03.11.2010).

Simultaneous to the privatisation project was the liberalisation of Zambia’s trade conditions, which had particular implications for labour. The removal of the protectionist developmental state model left Zambian industries subject to the pressures of international competition. The textile industry was particularly susceptible to international markets. Reduced tariffs on textile products, coupled with the removal of all tariffs on second hand clothing, led to an influx of cheap imports from industrialised countries (Koyi 2006). Speaking in 1994, the Chairman of the Textile Producers of Zambia Ramesh K. Patel proclaimed,

‘…one would be mad to invest in a textile venture in Zambia at the moment. The local market is now as good as dead – and those of us who tried to survive on exports are now in deep trouble. We are losing K100-200 for each dollar earned due to the appreciation of the kwacha. The future is indeed very bleak unless things change now’ (The Weekly Post 22-28.10.1993).

Unable to compete with more efficient international competitors, the number of textile firms in the country fell from 140 in 1991 to just 8 in 2002 (Situmbeko & Zulu 2004). Consequently, formal employment in the industry reduced from over 25,000 in the 1980s, to below 10,000 by the year 2002 (Chikoti and Mutonga 2002: 1).
The major effect of the liberalisation programme on labour was the scale of retrenchments that accompanied not only the closure of firms, but the restructuring and rationalisation of companies now in private hands. Adverse effects on employment also arose from parastatal and civil service reform, high interest rates and reduced government spending; policies that tended to promote a reduction in the demand for workers (Labour Department 1994).

As Figure 7 illustrates Zambia experienced a notable decrease in formal employment between 1990 and 2000, with mining and manufacturing experiencing the most acute reductions. In 1990 there were 142,000 people employed in both industries. Five years later this had decreased to 108,000 and by 2000, was stood at 83,000. This represented a reduction of 41.5%. Overall employment had reduced by 12.3%, in spite of an average annual growth in the labour force of 3.8% (CSO 2007). The inevitable social effect of such large scale retrenchment was increasing poverty and deprivation. With no social safety net put in place to compensate for loss of income, workers were increasingly pushed into the informal sector.
In 1992 the formal sector contributed 16.5% of national employment. By 1999 this had fallen to 10.4% (See Figure 8). Given the unregulated nature of the informal sector in Zambia and the lack of unionisation here, workers are increasingly susceptible to poor conditions, treatment and poverty wages.

As the effects of adjustment were beginning to be felt, the labour movement’s view of privatisation and liberalisation transitioned from being one of cautious acceptance, to widespread opposition. While the IMF’s Southern Africa chief Dr. Gerry Johnson was lauding Zambia as a ‘showpiece of economic reform’(*Times of Zambia* 24.11.1993), the ZCTU attempted to influence the adjustment program directly by travelling to the World Bank in Washington to plead the Zambian workers’ case.

‘We went there [to the World Bank] to tell them the programmes were not working. It’s like a doctor can say the operation was a success, but unfortunately the patient died…You restructure for the benefit of the citizens, but only 20% are benefiting, the rest are poor…what have you done?’ (Interview with Fackson Shamenda 21.09.2010).
In response to the ZCTU’s endeavour, the Minister of Labour argued that trade unions should confine their activities to dealing with workers and lobbying government, being as they are only one of many interest groups (*Times of Zambia* 16.12.1993). Unions comparatively, saw their position as an unofficial opposition, viewing the economic measures as being in direct conflict with the welfare of their constituents, and therefore viable targets of their action. This marked a point of contention on what the State and trade unionists’ perceived as the role of the labour movement in a liberalised political system.

### 4.6 A Labour Movement in Decline?

At a time when workers were enduring weakened protections, loss of jobs and increasingly poor conditions, the end of monopoly trade unionism was presenting a particular challenge for the trade union movement. In spite of Chiluba’s consistent criticism of the legislation when it was first introduced, MMD’s refused to revoke the much resented 1990 Labour Act, which opened up the trade union system. The government instead opted to replace it with the 1993 Industrial and Labour Act, which not only cemented industrial pluralism by confirming the demise of the ‘one union, one industry’ policy, but stripped away the ZCTU’s role as the sole affiliation body. Though this was in line with International Labour Organisation (ILO) stipulations, in effect it reduced the power of collective bargaining, placed unions in a financially weak position, and ultimately fragmented the workers’ voice. Trade unionists viewed the Industrial and Labour Act as an attempt by the government to pit unionists and workers against each other, at a time when there was a heightened need for strong labour protection.

‘The political systems took advantage of the split labour voice. Chiluba particularly used it to his advantage. If one of the two federations were in support of whatever plans he had, that labour centre would speak and criticise the other labour centre. As a result there was a split in the workers. It is very easy for the

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59 Interviews with trade unionists, Lusaka and Kitwe, July-October, 2010

60 In the pursuit of investment, working conditions often declined with casualisation and poverty wages being common. For examples of declining labour conditions in the mining sector see: Fraser & Lungu, (2007)
political system to say if this federation can say yes, what is so special about you?’
(Interview with Martin Chembe 13.09.2010)

The government took an active role in encouraging emergent unions, reaching quick wage agreements with new bodies while hardening its stance with the original union. When then Minister of Health Michael Sata recognised the splinter union Zambia Health and Allied Workers Union (ZHAWU), he immediately announced a wage agreement that had been in contention with the original union body, the Civil Servants Union. Similar preferential conciliations occurred with bodies that had left the ZCTU. The Government resolved a wage dispute with the Zambian National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) soon after it disaffiliated from the Congress, while the Mine Workers Union of Zambia (MUZ) was quickly granted wage increments following its breakaway (The Post 01.05.1995). The change of labour law also impacted on union recognition. For the first time employers were not mandatorily required to recognise unions within the workplace (Fashoyin 2008). In his 1995 May Day speech, ZCTU Secretary General Alec Chirwa claimed the Government was intent on destabilising labour politics and questioned the intentions of some in the labour movement:

‘There are a few selfish elements in government who are plotting the multiplicity of unions in the country so that they may have the chance to dictate what the unions should or should not do or fight for...They would like to see chaos in industrial relations which have so far been stable. And most unfortunately, some of our trade union leaders are blinded by their own personal interests that they support such moves. These sell out union leaders have forgotten that it is the worker who is their master and it is the worker they owe allegiance to, and not politicians’ (The Post 01.05.1995).

The ZCTU was particularly weakened by trade union pluralism. Mandatory affiliation had undoubtedly helped strengthen the Congress, giving it not only financial assistance but providing it with an authority to speak on the behalf of a wide range of workers. In 1995, for the first time in Zambian history, a rival affiliation body was formed, the Federation of Free Trade Unions of Zambia (FFTUZ).
The ZCTU endured a notable decrease in membership during the era of economic and trade union liberalisation. As Figure 9 shows, from 1990 to 1996 the congress lost 127,967 members, representing a reduction of 35.7%. The most significant break came in 1994 when four unions, including the MUZ and ZUFIAW, pulled out of the ZCTU and moved to its rival affiliation body. Larmer (2005b) attributes this split to underlying tensions over a united labour policy on privatisation and the lack of a shared ideological base from which to scrutinise MMD’s economic policies.

While unemployment, casualisation and weakened labour protections undermined the strength of the labour movement, internal disputes and a lack of common direction have limited its capacity to influence government policy in the era of democratisation (Mulenga 2009). In the 2001 election many unions sought to encourage their members to vote against MMD, as a response to the national disappointment with the party’s economic policies. Fackson Shamenda and the ZCTU argued against this approach, contending that political independence was essential for the workers voice to remain strong (Times of Zambia 11.08.2000).

As he approached the end of his second term in office, Frederick Chiluba attempted to reverse the democratic reforms implemented by his party to enable him to stand for a third unconstitutional term. The attempt was successfully resisted by a coalition of civil society groups, and protests by both students and urban populations. The President did however help to engineer the selection of his successor, Levy Mwanawasa, who came to power in December 2001 with 29% of the Presidential vote. Though there were apprehensions that Mwanawasa would be a puppet for the former President, the incumbent set his own agenda, most notably initiating a criminal investigation into

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61 This was a much contested election in which Mwanawasa’s closest competitor received 26.76% of the vote (Burnell 2002: 1108). The election was broadly condemned by international observers as rigged. See for example: the European Union Election Observation Mission.
allegations of corruption surrounding Chiluba’s office\textsuperscript{62}. Speaking of privatisation, Mwanawasa’s comments reflected those of many in the labour movement and beyond:

‘[The IMF’s privatisation programme] has been of no significant benefit to the country... privatisation of crucial state enterprises has led to poverty, asset stripping and job losses’ (\textit{BBC} 11.03.2003)

Figure 10: Strikes and Redundancies (2003-2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strikes</th>
<th>Dismissals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7,719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour Department Reports 2003-2009

While the trade union movement had been weakened through loss of membership and informalisation, those employed continued to engage in spontaneous, collective, and at times violent, acts of resistance - albeit at a lesser scale than seen before. From 2003 to 2008 an average of 24 strikes occurred per year (See Figure 10). While the majority of these occurred in the mining sector (both copper and coal), the strategy was also employed by teachers, local government workers, and in one case, retail employees at a large supermarket (Labour Department Reports 2003-2008).

4.7 Conclusion

In the near four decades since independence, the Zambian economy and people have experienced many facets of globalisation. In the First and Second Republics the quasi-
socialist single party state nationalised industries and largely internalised the reproduction of labour on the Copperbelt. The trade union movement, with a history of independent political action, attempted to provide a much needed opposition to the UNIP regime. In spite of the State’s attempts at control, the labour movement became one of the strongest and most financially viable on the continent.

The vulnerability of Zambia’s global integration was evidenced in the dramatic economic decline that followed the 1973 oil crisis. Riddled with external debt, the State had little option but to approach IFI’s for assistance and introduced an early attempt at structural adjustment. Despite these measures having a negative effect, labour leaders and the population came to regard deeper, more thorough liberalisation as the answer to Zambia’s economic malaise. Popular discontent spearheaded the return to political pluralism in the 1990s. An ex trade unionist, Fredrick Chiluba, was swept into office in a wave of union led democratisation, yet came to introduce economic and labour policies that did little to benefit the workers he once advocated for. The swift introduction of more encompassing Structural Adjustment Programs devastated Zambia’s domestic industry, bringing high levels of unemployment and subsequent economic hardship. Redundancies reduced trade union membership, placing unions in a financially precarious position and diminishing the influence of the worker movement. Against the backdrop of globalisation and in the pursuit of foreign investment, the government set increasingly low standards for labour protection and weakened trade union and worker rights. Frederick Chiluba had presided over what was one of the most encompassing programmes of adjustment ever seen on the African continent (*Times of Zambia* 24.11.1993). Liberalising the Zambian economy and privatising state assets decimated domestic industry and had a devastating effect on employment and increased poverty. Zambia has the dubious honour of being the only country for which data was available, which had a lower Human Development Index (HDI) in 2001 than it did in 198063 (Situmbeko and Zulu 2004: 38).

The experiences of developmentalism and structural adjustment are important contributory factors in present labour agency, being as they shape workers’ reactions to

63 An important factor in this, which must not be overlooked, is the impact of HIV/AIDS.
and expectations of foreign investment. It is within this framework that workers' are setting benchmarks, interpreting conditions, and expressing their agency. The embedding of neoliberal prescriptions through SAPs in Zambia has had important implications for labour, such as a high level of redundancies pushing workers' into the informal sector and a deterioration in conditions of employment by strategies such as casualisation. Though the most recent statistics on work and employment in the country indicate a slight growth in formal sector employment of 1.8%, this falls far short of the national population growth of 3% (The Post 18.05.2011)

This chapter has shown that throughout each economic period and configuration of GPN, Zambian workers have been willing to engage in collective action, even when illegal or without the sanctioning of unions. Zambian labour politics is embroiled in national politics, particularly in urban regions which acutely felt the effects of structural adjustment. As such, business owners, of whichever origin, cannot do what they like without political repercussions.

Having established the historical precedents of globalisation and labour in Zambia, the following Chapter will identify and analyse Sino-Zambian interactions in the new era of 'south-south globalisation', and the influences these may have on labour. The focus here will be on the state's role in nationally scaled labour regulation – an often overlooked factor in labour geography analysis which has important implications for the terrain of labour agency.
The ascendency of neoliberalism has promoted a fierce debate between those favouring an interventionist state, and those who contend that the state which governs best, governs least. Characteristic of both approaches is the tendency to see the state as rooted within demarcated territories. However, such territorial delineations of power have been problematized by forces acting beyond national boundaries. The complex networks that characterise globalisation are not only reflective of new production processes, but also of new articulations of power and statehood. The state itself is imbricated wider structures, often making for internationalised capitalist states (Glassman 1999; Panitch 1994). When the nexus of globalisation and sovereignty is considered in this way, opportunities for a translocal analysis of statehood emerge (Appadurai 1995). Translocality is concerned with recognising ‘forms of politics situated not within the boundaries of a territorial space, but rather configured across and in between such spaces’ (Mandaville 1999: 672). It is strategy which emphasises the influences of transnational forces on specific locations (Appadurai 1995; 1996).

The Global Production Network perspective emphasises the transnational operation of production processes – integrating local workplaces into global structures. However, in their day-to-day operations, companies are still very much subject to processes and regulations that are nationally scaled. This is particularly true when considering issues of labour. The state is the most important regulator of labour activity in a capitalist society, maintaining a central role in the construction and governance of labour markets and regimes, and providing the necessary legislative framework for labour protections - such as provisions concerning freedom of association or minimum wages. The state is therefore a key influence on the ability of workers to better their lot. Yet despite this reality, labour geography has (so far) been slow to account for the role of the state in shaping the possibilities for the agency of workers’ (Oseland et al. 2012; Castree 2007; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011).
Bringing these two ideas together – the influence of translocal forces on statehood and the significance of ‘national scale’ regulation for labour agency – this chapter considers the effect of global processes on local labour markets and regulations. More specifically, it assesses how the relationships between Chinese business and Zambian state actors have influenced labour regimes and regulatory processes at the local level, and how this has shaped the possibilities for labour agency within the global production networks focused upon in this thesis. In this regard there are two scales of analysis: national-level bilateral interactions between the Chinese and Zambian state elites, and local regulatory interfaces between lower-level state officials and Chinese business owners and their Zambian employees. Of crucial importance here is a recognition that the structural power of Chinese capital, derived from the merger between state and corporate interests, adds a new dimension to state-state, and state-society, relations. The argument presented here is that power, sovereignty, and bi-politics in Zambia are being expressed through particular forms of state (under) regulation of labour.

While this analysis draws from theories on the internationalisation of the state under neoliberalism (Cox 1987, Glassman 1999; Panitch 1994), it also offers original observations on the influences of Chinese capital in particular. That is, that the interactions between Chinese businesses/political leaders and the central Zambian state have an influence on practices at all levels of state regulatory institutions. Perceived as close, interventionist, and mutually beneficial, these central state-capital relations frame the interfaces between regulator, business and labour at the local level - to the detriment of those who seek employment protections.

In building this argument the chapter has two main sections, each corresponding with the scalar level of analysis. In the first section, the focus is on bilateral state-to-state interactions; establishing what they are, and what makes them distinct. Understanding that Chinese foreign relations have been characterised by a plurality of approaches, rather than a single, dominant trend, provides a suitable framework for considering present Sino-Zambian relations and interactions (Large 2008: 47; See Hunt 1996; Adshed 1988). With this in mind, I begin by considering evolutions in Sino-Zambian relations, from Zambia’s independence, to the modern era of resource driven bilateralism. Then, I move
into the particular strategic modalities of Chinese investment, showing that hard power tactics are accompanied by soft power strategies, to enable Chinese capital to yield a notable structural power in the African context. Consider for example why many African governments continue to court Chinese capital despite the flurry of criticisms levelled at what is contended (accurately or otherwise) ‘Beijing’s amoralism’ (Taylor 2007: 139). It is argued here that neo-patrimonialism, an orientation toward external relationships, and a susceptibility to corruption are but some of the features of many African states which make the approaches of Chinese investors particularly appealing. Drawing from the empirical data, I show that Sino-Zambian bilateral relations have been characterised by hospitality diplomacy, Presidential agreements, and the willingness of the central state to intervene on the behalf of Chinese investors, even when politically contentious in the domestic environment.

In the second section I analyse how the Ministry of Labour and Social Services implicitly supports this operating relationship between Chinese business and the Zambian state through the under-regulation of labour markets. Having shown in the previous chapter that the Zambian labour movement has undergone processes of significant decline, the capacity and willingness of the state to regulate labour regimes becomes all the more important for working people. Drawing from a period of field research within a Labour Inspections Unit64, this chapter will show that a lack of investment, staff incapacity, and weak and inefficient enforcement are just some of the factors that have contributed to a poor regulatory climate more broadly. These in themselves are symptomatic of the processes of state internationalisation and reflect the embedding of neoliberalism in Zambia. However, the regulation of labour has particular weaknesses when it comes to Chinese businesses, for two reasons. First, lower-level regulatory officials perceive favouritism toward the Chinese in the conduct of Zambian political elites. This makes them feel that efforts to properly regulate Chinese businesses would be futile, and lessens their willingness to fulfil their functions. Second, many workers perceive these regulatory officials to have been co-opted by the Chinese in a similar manner to political elites, and thereby refuse to co-operate fully with regulatory efforts.

64 Opportunities to collect empirical data in this area are somewhat limited, owing primarily to challenges of access. The data which is discussed here does not represent a nation-wide exploration of regulatory politics for example. However, it does provide key insights into how China-Africa relations impact on regulatory processes at a local level.
5.1 Understanding evolutions in Sino-Zambian relations

Beijing’s relationship with the post-colonial developing world has been characterised by ‘a shifting pattern of engagement and difference’ (Van Ness 1998: 151), and in the case of Zambia, this description certainly holds true. It was on the first day of Zambian independence in 1964 that the two states formally established diplomatic ties. Emerging as it was from the Korean War, and keen to enhance its position with the United States and Taiwan, the Chinese government began to engage in direct state to state aid and diplomacy with emerging post-colonial African states (Tull 2006; Large 2008; Mawdsley 2008). In Zambia, as elsewhere on the continent, China was seen as a countervailing force to Western hegemony which had dominated the country for so long a period. Correspondence between Premier Chou En-Lai and President Kenneth Kaunda in July 1967 reveals a relationship steeped in discourses of anti-imperialism and resistance to capitalism. Kaunda writes,

‘It is most gratifying for me to know how close we are in thought over a number of international issues, matters affecting mankind as a whole. I am now even more convinced that there is a need to intensify the struggle against capitalism, imperialism and neo colonialism in order to uplift the masses of our people’ (MFA/29/01/182).

While the Chinese state did not make explicit attempts to encourage the Zambian political class to adopt policies of socialism, there was an acute awareness among Zambian government actors of the centrality of socialist rhetoric to Sino-Zambian state engagement. In a treatise on Chinese foreign policy the Zambian Ministry of Foreign Affairs comments,

‘the socialist camp has a special place in Chinese foreign policy and any aid from China is aimed at helping nations concerned to be economically independent on the basis of self-reliance...Some of us have observed that sometimes Zambia is called a socialist country by the Chinese diplomats who hope that we will develop a Chinese type system...Already the Chinese have noted that in Zambia foreigners are not interested in the well-being of the country but rather in its wealth which they want to pump out’ (MFA/29/182/01).
Similarities were also drawn between Kaunda’s philosophy of Humanism and Chinese socialism (*Times of Zambia* 28.04.1972). In a show of solidarity, Zambia joined other African nations in supporting China’s application for a permanent seat in the United Nations assembly. Emphasising the colonial histories of Western powers in East Asia and Africa, the Zambian Representative to the U.N. J. B. Mwemba proclaimed, ‘We believe...that the exclusion of the People’s Republic of China, a founding member, a nuclear super power, the state with the largest population in the world, and a peace loving state, is contrary to the principles embodied in the Charter of this organisation....Asia and Africa wish to be left alone to enjoy peace and stability’ (MFA/29/182/01).

In this immediate post-colonial period of engagement, aid and assistance was primarily channelled through an Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (signed in 1967) and included practical schemes such as the construction of roads, installation of radio transmitters (*Times of Zambia* 11.01.1972), and small number of agricultural aid projects (Hairong and Sautman 2010). All of these projects were presented as contributing toward a ‘self-reliant third world’ (Hairong and Sautman 2010: 310). In the 1970s Zambia became the largest recipient of Chinese aid in Africa in the era of Mao Zedong owing to the construction of the TAZARA railway (Hairong and Sautman 2010: 309). Linking Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia with Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, the 883km rail line was of particular geo-strategic importance for the African state, ending Zambia’s long dependency on colonial rail routes which passed through Rhodesia. Beijing committed to fund the $400 million project with a 30 year interest free loan, while Tanzania and Zambia for their part pledged to purchase Chinese goods to the value of K15 million a year (*Times of Zambia* 12.04.1972).

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65 Prior to Beijing’s commitment, Kaunda and Nyerere both approached Western donors and agencies for their support with the construction of the TAZARA, but neither they, nor the Soviet Union, were interested. Negative evaluations by development economists were cited as the central reasons for the lack of support. For details see Monson (2005).

66 This aspect of the TAZARA agreement was particularly contentious in the 1970s. Delegates from Zambia’s textile industries expressed concerns in media that Chinese products would undercut local manufacturing businesses. One noted ‘what will be the point of having the railway line if we have to kill off our local industries to pay for it?’ (*Times of Zambia* 12.04.1972; *Times of Zambia* 28.04.1972). Not dissimilar to the ‘China threat’ analysis today, questions were also raised during this immediate post-colonial period as to the contended ‘expansionist’ or ‘aggressive behaviour’ of the Chinese state (Large 2008: 49; See Adie 1964). In communications with the Minister of Power, Transport and Works in 1970, Zambian Ambassador P. Ng’oma cautioned, ‘It is my experience that the Chinese are very shrewd businessmen.... we must be very careful in our dealings with our friends here simply because they usually prefer to do things their own way and...to suit their convenience’ (MFA 29/182/01).
Over 30,000 Chinese labourers and technicians constructed the railway alongside more than 40,000 Zambians and Tanzanians (Monson 2005). Politicians on both sides lauded the ‘positive’ relationships between workers and emphasised the importance of skill share and training opportunities for Africans (Times of Zambia 24.04.1972). Again, emphasis was placed on solidarity, mutual benefit, and China as contributing toward Zambian self-reliance rather than neo-colonialism. Fwanyanga Mulikita, the Zambian Minister of Transport, declared on a site inspection that Zambians would learn many lessons from the Chinese organisation of the TAZARA project. He proclaimed that the TAZARA would be the ‘envy of other nations’, and commented that ‘it is heartening to note that the policy of the Chinese government is not to make the recipient country depend on China, but to help them embark step by step in the road to self-reliance and economic development’ (Times of Zambia 07.01.1972). His Chinese counterpart, Yang Chieh, returned that Zambia was a ‘shinning banner of the African people in opposing imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism’ (Ibid). While the railway project did not achieve its aims of transporting two million tons of cargo, nor service the intended numbers of passenger traffic (Monson 2005), it has become an important resource for traders, farmers and others who live along the railway corridor. Perhaps more significant than this, the construction of the TAZARA helped Beijing redraw political alliances and to this day continues to be referenced by the Zambian and Chinese elite as an example of the solidarities, ties, and ‘all weather friendship’ between the two nations (The Post 8.11.2006; Times of Zambia 4.11.2009; Times of Zambia 2.10.1993; Mohan and Power 2008).

Another example of large scale Chinese capital investment at this time was the Mulungushi textile factory constructed in Kabwe, the provincial capital of Central Province between 1977 and 1981. The factory originally operated as a Zambian run parastatal though had a long association with China owing to both the financial and technical support provided by the Chinese government (Brooks 2010: 114). As with TAZARA, emphasis was placed on Zambian independence and self-development, and in its initial years of operation, Mulungushi, the largest textile factory in Zambia, stood as

67 Largely attributed to machinery and equipment continually broke down, an adequate number of African technicians to service the rail line, and inefficiencies in the running of the service. For details see Monson 2005.
‘an icon of modern industrial development’ (Ibid). Despite some success in this early period, financial inefficacies and mismanagement were compounded by a national economic crisis that brought about the closure of the firm in 1996\(^8\) (Larmer 2005; Ferguson 1999). Owing to the significant numbers employed in the plant and its wider economic significance to the local region, it was an imperative for the Zambian government to effectively negotiate the re-development and opening of the factory. Just one year later, the Chinese and Zambian states came to an agreement which paved the way for the SOE Qingdao Textiles Cooperation to rehabilitate the site. At the time this investment was broadly welcomed by the local population, owing to the devastating effects of unemployment and social dislocation that accompanied economic decline in Kabwe (Brooks 2010). Mulungushi was now to be operated as the Zambia-China Mulungushi Textiles Joint Venture Ltd (ZCMT) and jointly owned by Qingdao (66 per cent) and the Zambian Ministry of Defence (34 per cent). Again, the enterprise was found to be unsustainable, attributed to internal disputes between workers and management, and, more crucially, to steep competition from international textile firms (See Koyi 2006).

By the mid-1970s, as the Chinese cultural revolution was coming to an end, Beijing’s foreign policy approach began to ‘lose its ideological inflection’\(^9\) (Mohan and Power 2008: 29) and engagement in Africa lost its imperative (Harding 1995). This was evident in a marked decrease in Chinese capital and investment directed toward the continent. Between 1976 and 1982 Beijing’s aid pledges to Africa decreased from US$100.9 million to US$13.8 million (Snow 1995: 306). Despite what has been deemed the ‘de facto withdrawal’ of Chinese actors from Africa, Sino-Zambian political and economic relations were maintained throughout the 1980s, albeit at a lower or less high profile level (Kragelund 2009). In addition to the development at Mulungushi, the Chinese government continued to construct roads in Zambia, and trade between the two countries remained stable throughout this period (See Taylor 1998; 2006).

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\(^8\) Prior to the closure of the firm, the later years of its operation were characterised by a marked decrease in output and a gradual downsizing of labour. Brooks’s (2010) ethnographic account of the labour conditions within the textile plant is one of the most valuable accounts of operations at Mulungushi.

\(^9\) This is also a reflection of China’s improving relations with Moscow and Washington and Beijing’s desire to focus on internal affairs (See Kragelund 2009)
A decade later Sino-Zambian relations demonstratively changed in form as the Chinese state and investors became influenced more by economic imperatives rather than ideological concerns. In particular, China had an increasing desire to secure mineral resources to fuel domestic industrialisation. This played out in the increased involvement of Chinese capital in the declining mining sector in Zambia; a wave of investment that was rendered possible by the neoliberal economic climate and the decision of Zambian state to privatise ZCCM⁷⁰.

In July 2001 the Chinese government sent a 17 person delegation to Zambia to investigate and assess future investment opportunities (*Times of Zambia* 13.07.2001). While the first investors in this second wave of Sino-Zambian engagement were those which had previous experience in Chinese development projects, soon others followed, including ZCMT, Non-Ferrous China Africa, and the private-owned company, China Hainan Zambia Ltd.

5.2 The strategic dimensions of Chinese investment

Despite a clear evolution in the underlying intent behind relations, there are three strategic dimensions to Sino-Zambian (African) engagement that have remained broadly consistent. Firstly, to African audiences China has, and continues, to portray itself as a developing nation, emphasising similarities between the two regions – China, ‘the biggest developing country and Africa, the continent with the largest number of developing countries’ (*People’s Daily* 11.10.2000). Large (2005: 48) notes that ‘the symbolic and more instrumental uses of a shared, interpreted past is one salient facet of China’s officially mobilised version of its historical connections with Africa today’. This is particularly relevant in the Zambian context, where the importance of historical ties and ‘all weather friendship’ have been persistently referred to by government officials on both sides (*Times of Zambia* 02.10.1993; 04.11.2009; 12.12.2006; *The Post* 08.11.2006). While this may ignore the realities of Beijing’s current economic and global power, it has been an important strategy in fostering strong ties with African partners. For instance,

⁷⁰ As shown in the previous Chapter this decision was taken under the influence and guidance of International Financial Institutions.
during the recent Forum for China Africa Cooperation in July 2012, South African President Jacob Zuma proclaimed ‘We are particularly pleased that in our relationship with China we are equals and that agreements entered into are for mutual gain...We are convinced that China’s intention is different to that of Europe, which to date continues to intend to influence African countries for their sole benefit’ (Reuters 19.07.2012).

5.2.1 Non-Interference

Second, China remains resolute on its outward facing rhetoric of ‘non-interference’, refuting the legitimacy of external involvement in the domestic affairs of states. The issue of Taiwan aside – which continues to be a precursor to economic engagement - China attaches few conditionalities to the receipt of financial aid or development assistance when compared with Western states and donors. In Zambia, the principle of non-interference was established early on in Sino-Zambian interactions and served as a distinguishing feature of Chinese relations. In 1967, at a banquet welcoming the Zambian government delegation, Chinese vice Premier Li Jien-nein proclaimed,

‘China highly treasures its friendships with African countries...We have always maintained that aid to other countries should be based on the principles of non-interference in each other’s internal affairs and equality and mutual benefit....This stand of ours forms a sharp contrast to the imperialist practice of aggression, plunder, control, and subversion against African countries’ (MFA 29/182/01).

Today this policy of non-interference is seen by some African governments as being in marked contrast to the intrusiveness of Western donors who link development aid to the policies of ‘good governance’, neoliberal economic reforms, and the promotion of human rights (See Crawford 2001; Svensson 1999). The overall thrust of much Western development policy is that economic development would be achieved in ‘market-friendly’

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71 An additional exception is the ‘Dalai Lama’ effect. A paper from Fuchs and Klann (2010) argues that that China ‘punishes’ countries that recognise the Dalai Lama at a high political level through a reduction in trade.

72 It also has much currency when transposed against the history of Western colonialism in Africa.
economies with ‘democratisation’ and supposed ‘good governance’ (See Doyle 1983; Hurd 1990; Mosley et al. 1991). The appeal of Chinese ‘non-interference’ was summed up by a spokesman of the Kenyan government who commented, ‘You never hear the Chinese saying that they will not finish a project because the government has not done enough to tackle corruption. If they are going to build a road, then it will be built’ (cited in USA Today 21.06.2005).

Though the policy of non-interference has had pragmatic benefits for both China and recipient African states, as the level of investment increases, Beijing is finding it less tenable. International criticism has been significant, with accusations that China is inhibiting political reform and contributing to a deterioration of human rights (Hess and Aidoo 2010: 375). In the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, actress and campaigner Mia Farrow labelled the event ‘the Genocide Olympics’ and called for China to ‘reassess its no-string-attached backing of abusive regimes across the globe’ including arms sales, aid and diplomatic support for the Sudanese government (Wall Street Journal 28.03.2007). Perceptions of collusion between Beijing and the Bashir regime have made Chinese workers targets of violence by militants. In October 2008, Sudanese rebels attacked a Chinese-owned mine field kidnapping 9 workers and later killing 5 (BBC News 19.10.2008). Hess and Aidoo (2010: 376) contend that the risks of supporting such unpopular regimes have led to a visible change in China’s interference policy: ‘While China’s rhetorical advocacy of non-interference has continued, in practice...Beijing has quietly reduced its unconditional support for pariah regimes, tried to influence their partners to conforming to international norms and contributed to international peacekeeping missions’. In this regard, China’s non-interference policy should be considered as ‘evolving rather than static’ (Ibid).

5.2.2 Hospitality diplomacy

Third, Sino-Zambian relations, similar to that elsewhere in Africa, have been characterised by high profile hospitality diplomacy and much publicised policy fora.

73 This is problematic given Western governments support for corrupt and repressive regimes in Africa, such as Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda.
These are often tied to announcements of increased financial support. Chinese President Jiang Zemin for instance visited six African countries in 1996, signing 23 economic and technical cooperative agreements with these states during this time. Similar tours have been undertaken by Premier Hu Jintao, who in February 2007 – during his third visit to Africa in as many years – announced a substantial schedule of debt relief and new investments (Mohan and Power 2008: 32). The Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) was established after the Beijing Sino-African ministerial conference in 2000 to foster dialogue between China and African attendees. From the Zambian perspective, President Rupiah Banda’s 12 day state visit to China in February 2010 stands out for both its duration and the publicity surrounding it. With a large entourage and a Zambian television crew in tow, the national state run network ZNBC dedicated nightly segments to Banda’s trip, recording his frequent visits to touristic sites (Field Notes 2010). Wynter Kabimba, the secretary general of the opposition PF, denounced this trip as a ‘tourist stint’ (Shinn and Eisenman 2012: 74). Such exchanges and visits to China are not the preserve of state actors alone. Zambian business leaders and trade unions representatives have also been willing to partake in such tours which are alleged to involve expensive gifting and opulent hospitality (Interview with Guy Scott 14.07.2010.). While state engagements are a common feature of international relations, the symbolism of the Zambian elite – and particularly trade union representatives - enjoying Chinese hospitality in the context of increasing social unease with Chinese investment has engendered a deep sense of discomfort among many Zambian citizens (Field Notes 2010).

Associated with this, Chinese actors, unlike those from the West, have shown a willingness to support the development of prestige or grandiose constructions in Africa. Buildings such as Presidential palaces or - in the case of Zambia, a football stadium funded by the Chinese government - have been found to have a particular appeal among some African leaders (The African Report 02.07.2010). The African Union’s new headquarters in Addis Abba, a towering US$200 million complex, was funded by the Chinese state. As at the building’s inauguration Beijing’s senior political advisor Jia

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74 Hsing (1996) notes that the practice of gift-giving is one of the primary ways Chinese industrialists and government officials cement their relationships. ‘What matters is not just the gift itself, but also the message revealed in the presentation of the gift’ (Hsing 1996: 2253).
Qinglin proclaimed, ‘The complex speaks volumes about our friendship to the African people, and testifies to our strong resolve to support African development’ (BBC News 28.01.2012).

5.2.3 State ownership

While historical ties, non-interference, and a willingness to engage in high-profile relations are certainly important features of China’s growing presence in Africa, they have limited explanatory power. Perhaps the most crucial, and unique, influence in Sino-African engagement is the structural power of Chinese capital derived from the merger between state and corporate interests. Beijing’s authoritarian approach to economic governance retains state control over key sectors of productive capital and many of the Chinese companies operating internationally are State Owned Enterprises (SOE). SOE’s have come to play an important role in the Beijing’s foreign policy objectives (Gill and Reilly 2007: 39), reflecting what Tull (2006: 46) denotes as an ‘interconnectedness of political, diplomatic and economic interests’.

The growth in Chinese SOE’s abroad can be traced to the 1970s free market reforms, when Beijing began to actively encourage the internationalisation of Chinese corporations through a combination of technical, financial, and advisory assistance (Broadman 2006). Policy instruments enacted to this end, and continuing to be used to this day, range from the decentralisation of decision making from central to local authority – which simplifies application and approval procedures for emergent corporations (Schüller and Turner 2005: 10) – to the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation’s substantial database resource on international investment environments. Arguably the most significant method of state support to Chinese companies is the provision of financial assistance. This is predominately channelled through the state-owned Exim Bank, which in 2005 alone distributed an excess of $15 billion to Chinese companies abroad (Moss and Rose 2006). The Bank of China can also provide much essential bond security to Chinese companies (Kragelund 2009: 656). Such is the extent of Beijing’s role in facilitating outward investment, government assistance was ranked as the second most important reason for Chinese firms going abroad (Broadman 2006: 305).
The implications of state ownership – or state support - are significant. For SOE’s, being protected by the Chinese state means they have only partial exposure to international markets (Haglund 2010: 3). For most companies, raising finance on capital markets demands compliance with certain regulatory pressures, for instance the Equator Principles which demand regular audits of a company’s social and environmental management systems, or, in the case of the stock market, compiling regular accounts to international standards (Haglund 2010: 3; See also Amalric 2005; Wright and Rwabizambuga 2006). There are also evident access gains that accompany support from Beijing. Haglund’s investigation into regulation in the Zambian mining sector found that Chinese investors often enter the Zambian market through ‘closed shop’ negotiations between Chinese officials and the Zambian presidency (Haglund 2010: 3). Day to day, Chinese companies are also able to tap into government resources and seek the assistance of embassy actors as required – the Chinese embassy in particular has had an important mediating role between Chinese companies and local communities during times of unease (Interview with Sun 08.10.2010; Financial Times 20.01.2011). At the same time, this association has left the Chinese embassy in Zambia open to criticism and petition that it has not done enough to ‘control errant investors’ (Interview with Michael Sata 28.10.2007). In the wake of the shooting of eleven workers at the Collum mine for instance, Zambian opposition MPs staged a protest outside the Chinese embassy rather than the office of the mine’s owner in Lusaka, Yangtze Jiang Enterprise Ltd (BBC News 18.10.2010).

Beijing’s dual mandate – as political actor and commercial manager - while beneficial in many regards, demands it navigate a complex axis of governance: on the one hand supporting the development of state capital interests abroad, while on the other maintaining cordial diplomatic ties. Contradictions between the policy and geo-strategic intentions of the Chinese state, and the day to day operations of Chinese managers on the ground, when they arise, can make this task problematic. Consider for instance the corporate goal of profit maximisation which has put many Chinese managers under increasing pressure to cut costs through reducing wages, working conditions and safety standards (Gill and Reilly 2007: 46). Invariably, this has contributed to tensions on the ground and is often at odds with the long term political and diplomatic interests of the Chinese state (Alden 2007). In light of this, there is a growing recognition that Beijing
must ensure that its broad range of investors contribute to, or at least do not harm, the state’s overall foreign policy goals in Africa.\footnote{To this end Beijing has a 'strong interest in setting policy objectives and monitoring firms' alignment with them' (Haglund 2009: 632)}

5.3 Current Sino-Zambian interactions

Interactions between the central Zambian state and Chinese capital have been characterised by the strategic dimensions mentioned previously. Namely, there is a tendency toward high profile diplomatic exchanges, hospitality diplomacy, and an outward facing rhetoric of mutual respect for ‘non-interference’ in domestic affairs. The processes of state internationalisation are said to lead to a concentration of power in those apparatuses with a closer connection to the international economy (Cox 1987). Similar to other African states\footnote{Van de Walle (2003) notes that of 45 African countries with multi-party politics in 2003, 40 had presidential as opposed to parliamentary constitutions. For a review of characterisations of African political see Allen (1995).}, the design of the Zambian political system has enabled a high centralisation of power in the office of the President. Haglund (2008: 561) contends that when combined with personal linkages in the private sector, this ‘engenders an interventionist political culture’.

A number of cases can be cited that affirm Haglund’s assertion and show that central actors from the Zambian state have been willing to intervene on behalf of Chinese investors, even when politically contentious in the domestic environment. In 2007 for instance, President Levy Mwanawasa authorised the re-establishment of the Beijing General Research Institute for Mining and Metallurgy (BGRIMM) explosives factory in Chambishi (Peter Sinkamba\footnote{Peter Sinkamba is the Director of Citizens for a Better Environment based in Kitwe.} quoted in Haglund 2008: 562). Two years earlier BGRIMM had experienced one of the worst industrial accidents in Zambian history, when 51 Zambian workers were killed in an explosion that was largely attributed to failings in safety standards. Despite significant opposition from stakeholders, who continued to query the health and safety conditions at the company, Mwanawasa sanctioned redevelopment. His predecessor Rupiah Banda similarly gave the go ahead for the Chinese development of the Ichimpe mine in Kalulushi, despite protestations from the
Environmental Commission of Zambia (ECZ) that required standards were not being met \((The Post 25.05.2011)\). Two incidences of government action, perhaps, stand out above all others. During a wage protest at the Collum Coal Mine in October 2011, 11 workers were shot and injured by two Chinese managers. Despite widespread popular displeasure, President Banda came out in strong support for Chinese investors, making a series of statements espousing the benefits Chinese capital had brought to the country \((The Post 22.10.2010)\). Similar proclamations of support were made by the President following the violent incident in Chambishi in 2006, and despite initial arrests, no one has been charged for the injury of six miners \((Wall Street Journal 5.04.2011)\).

Members of the opposition allege that such interventions afforded to Chinese investors are an outcome of the financial support they provide to the MMD government – making problematic the contention that China truly abides by a policy of ‘non-interference’. Patriotic Front leader Michael Sata commented,

‘The Chinese people are very corrupt and they pump lots of money into MMD. They know that if the MMD government left they would not have such a soft relationship with any other government...The MMD have no policy towards the Chinese; their policies are in their pockets. Now when you are keeping your policy in your pocket you have no policy at all. If your pocket is bulging it dictates which way you go’ \((Interview with Michael Sata 28.07.2010)\).

Such suspicions have been repeated elsewhere \((e.g. BBC News 19.09.2011; Shinn and Eisenman 2012: 74)\), though these have been refuted by the MMD \((Lusaka Times 13.01.2012)\). While there is a lack of empirical evidence to give weight to such allegations, it is clear that relations between Chinese business and the MMD government were more than cordial. In 2006, as Sata was in the midst of his China-critical electioneering, the Chinese Ambassador Li Baodong came out in strong diplomatic support for the ruling party, effectively abandoning the official commitment to non-interference by threatening that Beijing would ‘have nothing to do with Zambia if Sata
wins the elections (Rotberg 2008: 235). As it had done in previous elections, Beijing provided the government with radio transmitters to assist with the spread of the ruling party’s message to rural regions (Rotberg 2008). Recently, the incumbent PF Minister of Commerce Bob Sichinga alleged that during the 2011 election campaign, the MMD government illegally printed over K3 trillion in China for distribution during electioneering (The Post 8.02.2005). Such allegations give weight to suggestions that China’s ‘non-interference’ policy is more a pragmatic ideology than a strictly held-to dogma (Hess and Aidoo 2010).

Having established that the strategic dimensions of Chinese investment are particularly attractive to the recipient Zambian state, attention will now turn to how an institution of the Zambian government – the Ministry of Labour and Social Services - functionally supports this operating relationship between Chinese investors and the central state through the under-regulation of labour markets. I will begin by exploring the role of the Ministry more broadly, before analysing the factors which influence the operation of labour regulators’ duties. Though these features are somewhat indicative of the processes of state internationalisation and the impact of neoliberalism, there is an important and somewhat unique distinction when it comes to Chinese capital. That is, perceptions of close ties between the central Zambian state and Chinese actors among lower level officials, coupled with allegations of collusion and co-option of labour inspectors, have altered the nature of regulation at the local level of Chinese businesses.

5.4 The State of (under) regulation

The Ministry of Labour and Social Services (MLSS) is mandated to enact and implement the legal framework of employment protections and relations in Zambia. As such, it is the core regulatory body with powers of legal enforcement concerning the infringement

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78 Associated with this, was Sata’s willingness to court Taiwanese investors, See The Post 30.08.2006.
79 The regulation of labour regimes occurs through mechanisms and bodies that are organised at local, translocal, or extra local scales (Castree et al. 2004: 93-96). While the primary concern of this chapter is with state regulation, it is important to note that the state does not operate in isolation. The regulation of labour regimes ultimately depends on a complex interplay between various bodies and institutions that operate at many scales. The mark of distinction of state regulation, and what these other bodies and institutions lack, is the power of enforcement.
of labour rights. Divided into 5 distinct departments, the Ministry’s ‘vision’ is ‘to be a proactive institution that promotes an efficient and effective Labour Market System, guaranteeing improvement in the quantity and quality of employment for the Zambian labour force’ (MLSS 2011). Particular to the issues of labour regulation is the Department of Labour (DOL), which houses the Labour Inspections Unit (LIU). This is a division of the MLSS which is mandated to research and regulate a broad range of labour issues, ranging from industrial disputes, to child labour and informalisation, as well as carrying out necessary labour inspectors. The Ministry of Health, the Environmental Council of Zambia and the Mines Safety Department of the Ministry of Mines collaborate with the LIU as required.

The legislative framework for industrial protections in Zambia is the Industrial Relations Act (1971) and the Industrial and Labour Relations Act (1993). While the first piece of legislation, by design or default, functioned to strengthen the position of workers through the unification of the trade union system, the second served ‘to support the implementation of economic liberalisation’ (Fashoyin 2008). The 1993 Act was an important component of the state’s market orientated policy reforms which, as shown in the previous chapter, severely weakened the position of workers. There have since been a series of amendments which offer employees greater legislative protection. The Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Order (2006), for example, sets minimum wages, conditions, and benefits - including stipulations regarding paid sick leave, protective clothing and retirement benefits – though the state’s ability to enforce and guarantee these is problematic. Alongside this legislative body is the constitutional guarantee of freedom of association, which facilitates collective demonstrations.

5.4.1 The processes of regulation and inspection

During the period of observation eleven workers came to the Lusaka office to register a grievance with their conditions, one of whom was employed in a Chinese-owned company (Field Notes 2010). Workers’ concerns ranged from inadequate or withheld

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80 The five departments of the MLSS are: Social Security; Labour; Planning; Occupational Health and Safety; Human Resource and National Productivity and Development.
remuneration, verbal or physical abuse from employers, and unsafe working conditions. The treatment of these individuals followed a similar pattern. On almost all occasions, there was a high level of unease and discomfort on the part of the aggrieved workers (Field Notes 2010). With notes written on small scraps of paper or on the margins of newspapers, workers exhibited evident signs of nervousness such as shaking, foot tapping and stuttered conversation. Many spoke of travelling long distances and or having to take unpaid leave to speak to the labour inspectors, enduring the potentially acute livelihood implications this would have. Upon entering the office, workers were requested to sit facing the labour inspectors, who remained behind their desk and at an elevated level (Field Notes 2010). The conversation was initiated by the inspector, who proceeded to ‘flesh out’ workers’ responses with inputs and often leading questions. It became almost systematic and procedural for labour officers to refer workers’ complaints to other bodies, such as district labour departments, trade unions, or the human resource department within their organisation. Inspectors argued that it was essential for workers to exhaust all other avenues before proceeding with direct state action, being as ‘solving labour complaints is about dialogue’ (Interview with Labour Inspector 1, 2010), but for workers, this was seen as creating an additional barrier to addressing their complaints.

The perceived dichotomy between the complaints and the labour officers; one being a professional with a relatively well paid and secure job, and the other a semi or unskilled worker in a difficult situation, appeared to have an impact on some exchanges. Workers often spoke of being ‘intimidated’, ‘frightened’ and complained that ‘they [the MLSS officers] look down upon us’ (Interview with Kamwala 32, 2010). Inspectors in contrast often took a sympathetic, paternal (maternal) tone, using rhetoric such as ‘these poor, poor people’ (Interview with Labour Inspector 3, 2010). While some workers sought such terms, many suggested that this made the exchange ‘unprofessional’, making them feel belittled\(^\text{81}\). During inspections in Kamwala, the perceived ‘wealthy’ appearance of the female labour inspectors brought derisive comment from some workers:

‘Look at these women, look at that bag, that bag would cost my whole months wages...they don’t know, they’re not like us, these people from the Ministry...look at them, they’re rich to be here’ (Interview with Shop Worker, Kamwala 02.07.2010)

\(^{81}\) This was especially true when the complainant appeared older than the labour officer
The references to wealth, income and the economic inequality between the inspectors and the market workers reflected a sense of ‘them’ and ‘us’. Workers’ class identity became a barrier to regulation as they viewed labour inspectors as part of an elite which was too detached from workers’ realities to address their concerns.

5.4.2 Issues of finance and resources

In 2005 the MLSS was upgraded to ‘economic status’ allowing it to join the exclusive group of government departments that are able to influence macro-economic policy (ILO 2006). Both the Zambian government and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) claimed that this would ‘bring labour and employment issues to centre stage’, and enable the MLSS a greater share of the national budget to address relevant issues (ILO 2007). Yet, six years later, the effect of this ‘upgrading’ appears negligible, and budgetary restrictions are one of the key factors limiting the activities of the Ministry. In the 2010 budget, labour concerns were considered in the ‘economic matters’ block, which in total received 3217.8 billion kwacha, or 19% of the national budget (GoZ 2010). Of this, ‘General Economic, Commercial and Labour Affairs’ were given only 126.8 billion kwacha, or 3.9% of the financing available to this block (GoZ 2010). This is a decrease from an allocation of 169.1 billion kwacha the previous year (GoZ 2009). In 2009, the ILO’s Committee of Economic Affairs and Labour (CEAF) highlighted inadequate funding as the most significant factor constraining Ministry activities (ILO 2009), reflecting earlier concerns that ‘labour inspection services in many countries are not able to carry out their roles and functions. They are often understaffed, underequipped, under trained, and underpaid’ (ILO 2006: 4). ZCTU President Roy Mwaba argues ‘the funding to the labour ministry is nothing to talk about because the government does not attach any importance to it’ (The Post 20.08.2010). Similar sentiments were shared from interviewees from across the trade union spectrum, who considered the lack of investment in the MLSS symptomatic of the government’s weak approach to labour relations (Interview with Martin Chembe, Lusaka, 13.09.2010; Interview with Fackson Shamenda, Lusaka, 21.09.2010).
The conditions of the Ministry’s buildings and minimal facilities accorded to employees are perhaps the greatest visible indication of the department’s limited funding. Predominately built in the 1960s and 1970s, the Ministry’s centres in Lusaka and Kitwe both suffer from notable structural deterioration, from crumbling walls and broken windows, to unreliable electricity and water supplies (Field Notes 2010). Furniture and office equipment is basic, such as two or more employees sharing one desk and faulty typewriters being used instead of computers (Field Notes 2010). One of the main complaints among interviewed labour inspectors was the lack of telephones available for work purposes. A necessity for fulfilling their job role, many inspectors have been compelled to use their own mobile phones, absorbing a cost of the Ministry. The situation here is in marked contrast to Zambian Ministries/government centres which have a greater focus on the international economy, such as the Zambian Development Agency or the Bank of Zambia. The comparatively plush surroundings of these centres provide a stark visualisation of the disparities within an internationalised state.

Beyond these visible indications, restrictions on funding impact on the exercises of the labour inspections. Limited capital investment affects the geographical scope of the Ministry’s functions. Of the 72 administrative districts in Zambia, only 21 are covered by labour officials (Fashoyin 2008). This effectively means businesses outside the coverage areas are able to conduct their activities without the Ministry’s legally mandated oversight or surveillance. A senior labour inspector in Lusaka province commented that this leaves workers ‘at the mercy of their employers’ (Interview with Labour Inspector 1, Lusaka, 2010). In 2007, Labour Minister Ronald Mukuma protested that the department did not have enough labour factory inspectors to effectively fulfil its role, and that many workers in the agricultural sector were subsequently being neglected (The Post 05.04.2007).

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82 Lack of financial investment in the Ministry of Labour is perhaps an indication of the internationalisation of the Zambia state – ‘a process in which the state apparatus becomes increasingly orientated towards facilitating capital accumulation for the most internationalised investors, regardless of their nationality (Glassman 1999: 673; Panitch 1994). As a state becomes internationalised, those institutions which are ‘key points of adjustment of domestic to international economic policy’ come to the fore, while those of a more domestic focus are subordinated (Cox 1981: 146). In practice this means a greater concentration and centralisation of power around those apparatuses which are more internationally orientated, such as the Office of the President or the Ministry of Finance, and a subordination of more ‘domestic’ concerns (Panitch 1994).
From January to August 2010, the labour inspectors in Lusaka district were deprived of a government vehicle - essential for the exercise of their functions given the geographical scope of the Unit's coverage area and the restrictions of public transport (Field Notes 2010). It was claimed that the vehicle had gone for repairs but the Ministry, unable or unwilling, did not pay the outstanding balance, preventing the mechanics from releasing it back to the Unit. This inevitably led to a very limited number of inspections being carried out. A senior labour inspector revealed that she had not conducted any field inspections at all during this eight month period, despite this being a central component of her working tasks (Interview with Labour Inspector 1, 2010). The Kitwe labour department's car was also diverted for three months during the same time period, on this occasion for use in electioneering by the ruling MMD party (Interview with Labour Inspector 4, Kitwe, 2010). The effect of vehicle misdirection on labour regulation is notable, given both the geographical distances covered by the Lusaka and Copper Belt offices, and the importance field visits have for monitoring conditions. It is often impractical for a worker to register a complaint at an MLSS office in person, as this may necessitate taking leave and enduring costs such as transport.

5.4.3 Staff Capacity

While staff shortages limit the range of functions carried out, weaknesses in staff capacity are said to restrict the Ministry's effectiveness in operation. Former head of the Zambia Chamber of Small and Medium Business Associations (ZCSMBA) Maxwell Sichula suggested that the failure of the MLSS to monitor employer compliance is much to do with a lack of ability among staff (The Post 31.08.2010). MLSS employees themselves indicated a lack of training and ineffective management as barriers to their professional development (Field Notes 2010). Though Government institutions are required to produce three year training plans to enhance the capacity of officers, an interviewed labour inspector claimed training opportunities were 'very limited' and tend only to be offered to those at senior levels (Labour Inspector 1 int.). An interviewee commented that many new recruits, whom they claimed were hired on a nepotistic basis, were 'lazy' and

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83 The issue of government vehicles being used for party political purposes was highlighted more recently by veteran politician Dr. Mbita Chitala, following reports that the Labour Minister Austin Liato was distributing MMD fabric in government registered cars (The Post 30.07.2011).
‘did nothing’ (Field Notes 2010). Another averred that his lack of training and inadequate support from management lead him to feel intimidated when dealing with large companies (Field Notes 2010). These comments echo sentiments made by Dr Guy Scott, Deputy Leader of the Patriotic Front, who, when discussing the capacity of tax enforcers, stated, ‘...a lot of these government workers are young and inexperienced, and do not have the ability to stand up to companies that invest millions in trying to avoid tax’ (Interview with Guy Scott 14.07.2010).

In 2006 the Unit underwent a series of reforms which sought to centralise its monitoring and oversight role by refocusing attention on inspections, and away from administrative duties which had come to dominate labour inspectors tasks. To this end, an integrated labour inspection form was introduced, which served as a checklist on key aspects of labour regulation, such as working hours, remuneration and age of employees. Though the form sought to simplify the processes of inspection, it was not accompanied by any supplementary training (Interview with Labour Inspector 1, 2010), and labour inspectors continue to request guidelines and assistance in how to use the form effectively (Interviews with Labour Inspectors 1, 2 and 3, 2010.) - reflecting the need for more effective training within the Ministry more broadly. Completed forms are submitted to the office of the assistant Labour Commissioner, who makes recommendations to the Labour Commissioner for instruction. By way of professionalising the division, the 2006 reforms also upgraded labour inspectors and officers to the ‘professional’ level and introduced a university degree as a minimum entry qualification. However, concerns continue to be raised about the ability of the department to attract talented candidates due to the wage levels: ‘The government do not want to pay qualified Zambians reasonable wages. They go elsewhere’ (Interview with Labour Inspector 1, 2010).

The central state’s failure to address these substantial capacity deficits is systematic of the subordinate position domestic focused ministries are accorded during the processes of state internationalisation (Cox 1987). Beyond these effects, however, what are the specific encounters between Chinese capital and the MLSS, and what do they reveal

84 The ILO estimates that on average 75% of a labour inspector’s time is spent on reconciliation and disputes.
about the nature of sovereignty and regulation in Zambia in the context of increasing south-south globalisation?

5.5 Interfaces between Chinese capital and labour regulators

In dealing with Chinese business owners, labour inspectors had two predominant complaints. First: an inability of some to communicate in English, the working language of the Zambian state.

'When we go to them with something they go, “no English, no English” they pretend that they can’t speak English, even though we know they can... When they don’t know who we are they speak English to us fine, but when we say we are from Labour they go “no English, no English”' (Interview with Labour Inspector 2, 2010).

Respondents indicated that this was more prominent an issue when dealing with small independent retailers or restaurateurs, who unlike large mining companies for example, have a limited experience of international markets. Inspectors spoke of their ‘frustration’ and annoyance, commenting that language ability hampers not only the initial discussion but also any follow up procedures; so much so that at times cases are not returned to or dropped altogether (Field Notes 2010). In an attempt to address language difficulties, the Chinese Embassy and Economic Councillor’s Office, and the ZDA provide Chinese businesses with mandarin translations of relevant legislation (Interview with Robert Banda 27.09.2010). While this goes some way toward enhancing a manager’s awareness of the legal requirements, it does not solve the problems encountered by labour inspectors, which are very much rooted in verbal communication.

The inspectors’ second complaint was insufficient record keeping:

'They [Chinese managers] do not keep records as required by law...conditions of service, wage book, that such thing...they don’t submit what we ask and even
when they do it is nothing, a scrap of paper’ (Interview with Labour Inspector 2, 2010).

To illustrate their point, the labour officers showed me an example of financial records submitted by a Chinese firm. The business, a catering unit, was being investigated for a breach of labour regulations and as part of the process, the Department required basic company accounting data. What was submitted was a small piece of cardboard, similar to something torn from the side of storage box. Written on it were three numbers, with no explanation as to what they referred to, and a small amount of Chinese writing (Field Notes 2010). While in this case labour officers are relating an experience of dealing with small entrepreneurs, there have been concerns raised elsewhere that large Chinese companies are not complying with international reporting standards (Haglund 2008). Haglund (2008: 558), for example, has shown that of the five multinational mining companies in Zambia, it is only the Chinese owned NFCA that had not received auditor qualifications.

5.5.1 The resonance of central state interactions

Underlying the above interfaces are perceptions among the interviewees that their ability to regulate Chinese workplaces is limited due to the ‘close’ relations between the central Zambian state and Chinese business. Commented one inspector,

‘There is a lack of political will to control the Chinese investors. It is not the same with others [investors of other origin], with the Chinese the government, the President, step in.....We are often powerless...there is a lot of politics involved with the Chinese investment (Interview with Labour Inspector 1, 2010).

While the interviewees did not indicate that they were ever instructed or coerced by their superiors into under regulating Chinese companies, their own perceptions of the ties between Chinese capital and the Zambian state functioned as a barrier to effective regulation. Commented one inspector, ‘Honestly, there is very little we can do. There is

85 The company’s auditor Deloitte and Touche cited a lack of information as making them ‘unable to determine whether proper accounting records have been maintained’.
no point – when we go to them [Chinese companies] with something they say “your President is friends with the Chinese....he does this, this, this” Do you think they listen to us then?’ (Labour Inspector 3, 2010). Others adopted a similarly resigned tone, with articulations such as ‘we can do nothing’ and ‘we have no power’ (Labour Inspector 1 and 4, 2010).

Associated with this is the difficulty in securing a prosecution for an offending workplace and the perception that Presidential interventionism limits their abilities:

‘We are limited. It is very difficult to get a prosecution – enforcement of the law is weak in Zambia. At labour our priority is dialogue – the road to prosecution is too long – but when the Government [central state] intervene and show support for Chinese investors, that makes it more difficult....The dialogue with Chinese business is difficult when they are the friends of the government (Interview with Labour Inspector 2, 2010).

Citing examples previously mentioned, particularly when the President has shown a willingness to support investors despite actions of violence against Zambian citizens, the labour inspectors contend this influences and frames their interactions with workers:

‘What happened in Chambishi was terrible. And you see, nothing has happened since – no prosecutions. They know who fired the shots, but what has happened?...[If] it a South African or British mine, it would be different....It makes it difficult for us, as labour regulators and Zambians, we do not want to see our citizens suffering...If the government cannot step in when people are shot how can it step in for labour disputes?’ (Interview with Labour Inspector 1, 2010).

‘When the people see that [Presidential intervention] they think we are all the same – that if the President does one thing we think the same. But it is not true. We do not benefit from the Chinese like others might....It makes it difficult for the inspectors on the ground...labour see [President] Banda with the Chinese and think[s] we are friends with the Chinese...[that] we are all the same’ (Interview with Labour Inspector 2, 2010).
5.5.2 Allegations of corruption

Exasperating relations between workers and labour officers are accusations of corruption\(^{86}\) that abound in the state’s interactions with Chinese-owned businesses at both extra local and local levels. Interviewed officers in the Ministry of Labour revealed they are often offered payments to ‘make problems go away’ and though reluctant to expand further, they conceded it a ‘common’ and ‘regular’ occurrence (Labour Inspector 1, 2010). While it is inappropriate to extrapolate the experiences of interviewed state officers to represent a wider systematic state corruption concerning Chinese investors, it is clear that from the perspectives of workers and trade unionists, corruption is rife. Interviews with workers in Lusaka and Chambishi, which will be explored further in the next chapter, indicate the general perception that problematic Chinese businesses are co-opting labour inspectors to the determinant of processes of regulation. Field observations with Labour inspectors in the Chinese owned shops in Kamwala market indicated a strongly hostility toward them among workers. Inspectors were often verbally abused; accused of being ‘corrupt’, ‘useless’ and ‘in the pockets of the Chinese’ (Field Notes 2010). On two occasions the LIU team was ushered out of premises in a tense atmosphere by workers claiming, ‘they do nothing for us’ (Field Notes 2010).

5.6 Conclusion

In many regards the entry of Chinese investors into Zambia is a continuation of the processes of inward investment that have come before. Yet it is the extent to which the Zambian state is willing to attract and assist Chinese capital, despite the controversy this causes in the domestic political environment that is the mark of distinction. This chapter has cited a number of examples where the President has intervened on the behalf of Chinese investors, in the face of popular displeasure. The strategic modalities of Chinese investors have proved particularly attractive to the recipient Zambian state, which itself is characterised by centralisation, interventionism, and a high concentration of power around the offices of the President. This chapter has shown that some Chinese capital, particularly that within the mineral extractive sector, derives a distinct structural power in

\(^{86}\) Corruption here relates to the use of public office to achieve private goals (See Clapham 1985).
inter-state relations due to the role played by the Chinese central state. Beijing’s authoritarian model of governance maintains an element of control over much productive capital, leading to an evident correlation between corporate and state interests. State financing and China’s domestic political environment are additional advantages, enabling Chinese capital to bypass some of the corporate-social requirements other international investors are subject to (See Haglund 2009).

For labour, these highly publicised bilateral interactions and state interventions exacerbate an already poor labour regulatory environment, through impacting on the processes of labour regulation at the local level. While there are day-to-day challenges in dealing with Chinese business-owners (particularly concerning communication difficulties and what labour inspectors contend as business’s inadequate record keeping), this chapter has shown that two factors predominately frame regulatory interfaces between Chinese capital and Zambian regulators. The empirical data has identified that labour inspectors feel limited and constrained in the execution of their regulatory functions owing to perceptions of favouritism and close-ties in the conduct of Zambian political elites toward Chinese investors. At the same time, many workers’ perceive regulatory officials as themselves being corrupted or co-opted by Chinese investors, in a similar manner to political elites, and thereby refuse to co-operate fully with regulatory efforts. The implications of this analysis for labour agency are significant. Perceptions of Zambia-China relations have limited the scope of labour agency since this key regulatory institution of the Zambian state, which might otherwise strengthen the hand of labour against their employers, has been weakened. The support workers can call on from the government is lessened and, in return, many workers willingness to engage with state actors, or perceive the Department of Labour as a viable avenue through which grievances can be addressed, has been reduced.

Having outlined the nature of state regulation in Zambia, and, in particular, the translocal influences on local regulatory processes, the following chapter will examine the forms of labour agency which arise from these, and other, conditions in the case study sites.
6. Labouring within a GPN: Conditions, Controls, and Agency in Sino-Zambian Workplaces

This chapter explores the ‘micro-geographies’ of labour agency in workplaces that represent two distinct areas of production networks: extraction and retail. The argument presented here is that both vertical and horizontal factors have an influence on the strategic terrain of workers and the strategies of labour agency. While some considerations of labour agency tend to focus on more placed-based, horizontal factors, this analysis calls for a dual consideration of vertical influences. Horizontal influences on labour agency here include the regulatory role of the Zambian state, the local labour control regimes constructed, and the perspectives and histories of labour themselves. The vertical factor is the distinct nature of ownership at each workplace – namely, a high level of state ownership of capital in the extraction sector and greater independent autonomy in retail. In Chambishi, labour is acutely aware of the value of the commodity they produce and the political importance it has for the country. Framed by the history of ZCCM, workers here have a comparatively high expectation of the role of an employer. By timing reworking strategies, and riding on the tide of ‘resource nationalism’ (Lee 2009), labour has been able to achieve some concessions from capital. In comparison, employees in Kamwala are in a sector without the same political burden as mining and, to the same extent, are unable to establish how much surplus value is created and extracted by their employers, nor tap into wider political discourse. This drives them to opt for resilience strategies which help them cope with the day to day realities of their employment, rather than fundamentally change the terms of their conditions (See Katz 2004).

In establishing this argument there are two sections. In the first section I consider the labour control regimes found in each location. This includes an analysis of benefits and remuneration, health and safety, casualisation, as well as Sino-Zambian workplace interactions and strategies of control that extend beyond the workplace. Here I note the issues workers have particular grievances with and highlight the importance of the historical material landscapes in how respondents frame and perceive their labour conditions. In the second section I analyse the strategies and forms of labour agency adopted in each location – identifying the factors which influence the strategies of
workers and assessing whether or not they have been successful in achieving their aims.
To distinguish between different forms of labour agency, I utilise Katz’s (2004) typology of resistance, reworking, and resilience.

The empirical data drawn from here includes interviews with 107 respondents in Chambishi and 73 respondents in Kamwala. While every effort was made to balance this comparative study, there are on occasion, times when a greater focus is placed on one workplace over the other – for example when considering health and safety conditions, Chambishi has more potential depth of discussion than Kamwala due to the nature of work conducted here.

6.1 Labour control regimes

The type of labour control regime workers are embedded within has obvious implications for the types of agency they engage in, as conditions inform what workers seek to achieve, and subsequently how they go about doing it. In being located at different positions in the global production network, Kamwala and Chambishi face very different requirements in their production processes. In Kamwala, workers are primarily recruited through familial relationships and social networks. All of the respondents interviewed for this study were introduced to the employer by a family member or friend who was an employee. Not only does this tactic prevent the employer having to invest time in recruitment, it serves as a strategy of labour control - if the new employee is disobedient or does not meet the standard required, the guarantor is also punished (Interview with anon 34 and 36, Kamwala). The education level attained by respondents here varied; while the majority had finished their secondary school education, a few (4) were college graduates (Field Notes 2010). These individuals ascribed their inability to find a job outside of the market to the lack of opportunities for young people, the alleged existence of nepotism in the civil society, and their particular lack of connections (Interview with anon Kamwala 42, 2010).
Recruitment in Chambishi occurs through a combination of personal connections and more formal channels of employment. As in Kamwala, many of the respondents here were able to get their positions through the recommendation of someone already employed. Lower skilled, manual respondents who did not have such connections were, in the main, selected from noted points on the arterial routes where unemployed men congregate in case an employer needs casual labour (Interview with anon Chambishi 86, 2010). The higher skilled class of worker, such as mechanics, technicians, or accountants, followed a more formal process by responding to an advertisement in the local press (Interviews with anon Chambishi 62 and 47, 2010). Some respondents had relocated from other towns in the region, while others were long term residents of the Chambishi-Kalulushi district who were made redundant in the first round of ZCCM privatisation (See interviews with anon Chambishi 3, 7, and 63, 2010).

6.1.1 Workplace control and Sino-Zambian interactions

In the main, employees in Kamwala work five and a half days per week (half day Saturday), representing an average of 56 hours in the workplace. Employees are required to work on Sundays once every 4-8 weeks for a stocktake, though some objected to this on religious grounds, claiming that as Christians it was not appropriate to work on a Sunday (Interviews with anon Kamwala 32 and 1, 2010). In Chambishi, respondents work six, sometimes seven days per week, with an average working day being 8 hours in length. Most are employed on a shift pattern which is alternated between day and night shifts every two weeks. All bar two respondents indicated that they preferred the day shift, with reasons given ranging from being able to socialise with friends after work, to being unable to adjust to night-time schedule (Interviews with Chambishi anon 4 and 29, 2010).

In both case study areas respondents indicated that management attempted to extend their labour time through a combination of pervasive strategies. One such approach used by companies in Chambishi was the delayed arrival of company buses which transport workers to and from the adjacent Townships (Interviews with Chambishi anon 13 2010). The provision of bus transport has long been a tradition on the Copper Belt and a practice
adopted by both ZCCM and the colonial mine houses that came before (Berger 1974). In addition to being beneficial for workers - who are prevented from walking long distances - the practice allows management a degree of control over labour time that is helpful in maintaining flexible labour power. A worker at the Chambishi Copper Smelter commented ‘We work until the job is done. The buses don’t come until the managers call them and so we can be there for a long time...Sometimes you are working an extra thirty minutes, sometimes it is two hours’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 13, 2010). Workers’ reliance on this method of transportation means they often yield to such requests. In Kamwala this strategy is not appropriate as employees live in different residential locations around the city and there is adequate public transportation. Instead managers here continually remind employees of their substitutability and the ease with which they can be replaced as a means to extend labour time (Interviews with anon Kamwala 5, 2010). A general worker in the market commented, ‘the manager will say “you don’t want to work, then you go...there are other people here that want to work”...you end up working longer, what choice do you have?’ (Ibid; See also interviews with Kamwala anon 51). A small number of respondents in both places indicated they were offered overtime pay to incentivise their cooperation, though these were in the minority (See for example interviews with anon Chambishi 6 and 11, 2010; and interviews with anon Kamwala 9 and 10, 2010).

There is a much stronger sense of workplace control in Chambishi than there is in Kamwala, owing to the former’s lack of a constant managerial presence. Respondents in the market indicated that their employer arrived in the morning to open the premises then left, only to return in the evening to close shop. This, they contended, similar to interviewees in the Department of Labour, was a result of the managers’ fear of being ‘caught’ not having the correct documents by government officials (See Interview with anon Kamwala 6, 2010; Interview with anon Labour 1, 2010). While the validity of this claim is unclear, it is accurate that Chinese managers are not in attendance at the shops. In the 6 weeks I spent in the market place interviewing, and at other times besides, I only saw two Chinese managers – both of whom were only there for a short period, dropping off merchandise before leaving again (Field Notes 2010). Despite this lack of direct

87 Indeed some of the company buses used in Chambishi and elsewhere on the Copper Belt still bear the ZCCM logo.
supervision, there is still a very clear sense of what the employer allows and prohibits. Respondents reported having to stand up the entire duration of their shift -‘if you sit, you lose your job (Interview with anon Kamwala 7 anon, 2010) - and of being prohibited from leaving the shop to go to the toilet or get water (Interview with anon Kamwala 9 and 10, 2010). As will be discussed later, this lack of direct supervision has important implications for the forms of agency workers in Kamwala engage in.

In Chambishi, workplace control is significantly more direct. Workers are searched upon entering the site and required to sign-in or stamp a time card. Breaks during the working day are strongly regulated and vary in both quantity and duration from respondent to respondent. In the main, workers’ indicated that they received a 15 minute break early into the shift and a longer 30 minute break later (See for example interviews with anon Chambishi 56 and 87). Some claimed to work continuously without rest or toilet breaks until the end of the working day (Interviews with anon Chambishi 56, 57, 49 and 7), while others disparaged these claims as an exaggeration (Interviews with anon Chambishi 87 and 13). Labour in Chambishi work in close proximity with Chinese workers (both at managerial and non-managerial levels) and interactions between these actors are said to vary. While some workers speak in positive terms of their Chinese colleagues - ‘the Chinese workers are okay, they work hard and person-to-person we work well’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 7, 2010) – the majority articulate a clearly negative view. Seventy-eight per cent of those interviewed in Chambishi described their relationship with Chinese workers/managers as bad or very bad – this is compared to 34% in Kamwala. In particular, respondents raised concerns about the manner in which Chinese workers spoke to Zambians (deemed insulting), what they perceived as managers deference to the opinion of low-ranking Chinese workers over more senior Zambians (Interview with anon Chambishi 14, 2010), and accusations that Chinese managers were violent. Twelve interviewees alleged that they had been beaten by their Chinese colleagues, with comments such as ‘you get beat for making a mistake on duty’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 22, 2010), and, ‘the Chinese do not treat us like human beings: shouting, insults, beatings’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 54, 2010).

Underlying interactions both here and in Kamwala are language barriers between Chinese and Zambian actors. Some of the Chinese managers reportedly speak little English, and
for those that do, the heavily-accented Zambian English can be difficult to understand (Interview with Sun 8.10.2010; See also Lee 2009). As with the experience of labour inspectors (Chapter 5), this inability, or indeed unwillingness, to speak English makes communications problematic between management and labour. In Chambishi in particular this presents notable challenges for health and safety regulation. A technical worker from the Chambishi mine commented ‘We have many communication problems – the Chinese are very poor at English….this makes working difficult. We tell them something and they don’t understand. They try and give us instructions in Chinese but that is useless’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 15, 2010). Similar to the interviewed Labour Inspectors, many trade unionists and workers called into question claims that Chinese managers do not understand English. A NUMAW branch operative asserted ‘He [Chinese manager] says “no English” when we come to negotiate, but we can see him make notes in English on the documents’ 88 (Interview with NUMAW anon Chambishi, 2010).

Perhaps more profound than language difficulties is what Lee (2009: 654) denotes the disparity between what Chinese managers contend are working ethics and what Zambian workers’ see as exploitative practices. The pejorative phrasing used to describe working practices in both Kamwala and Chambishi was peppered with words such ‘exploitation’, ‘abuse’, and ‘slavery’ (See interviews with anon Chambishi 23, 36, 71, and anon Kamwala 10, 8, 21). One interviewed worker likened the Chinese treatment of labour to that of a machinist using tools, while another used the analogy of vehicles: ‘The Chinese, they drive us like cars…they treat us like cars not people’ (Interviews with Chambishi anon 1 and 5, 2010). Among some of the Zambian elite, this ‘work ethic’ was described in more positive terms. Robert Banda the MFEZ manager from Zambia Development Agency commented,

‘the Chinese work ethics are different from ours in the sense that the Zambians would want as many holidays as possible…the Chinese are hard-working people – you should give it to them – that is misconstrued that they are applying slavery methods to ensure that the Zambians do work, but the Chinese are quite serious in

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88 Similar sentiments were shared by a trade union representative in Lee (2009: 654).
what they do, they want hard work’ (Interview with Robert Banda, Lusaka, 27.09.2010; See also interview with Jessica Chombo, Lusaka, 03.06.2010).

Modern conflicts, in a sense, echo discourses forwarded during the colonial era of African idleness and indolence (See Cooper in Dirks 1992; Atkins 1988), yet are distinct in having underlying post-socialist currents (Lee 2009). While Chinese workers often attribute their country’s economic growth to the abandonment of the ‘iron rice bowl mentality’ and largely reject the socialist model as a form of production, there is a tendency among some Africans to centralise political and labour rights and reminisce of the standards of nationalisation, where the reproduction of labour was largely internalised and housing and educational benefits were provided to workers (See interviews with anon, Chambishi 3, 6, 8, 15, 17; Also Lee 2009).

6.1.2 Benefits and Remuneration

The majority of respondents in both Kamwala in Chambishi cited their pay packages as the number one compliant they had about their working conditions. The average wage of respondents in Chambishi was K899,824 or US$175 per month. The lowest interviewee received a wage of K230,000 per month (US$42) and the highest K2.3 million (US$428). Workers on fixed or permanent contracts receive additional benefits which include a housing allowance (of a maximum K200,000) and health care stipends for themselves and one dependant. All interviewees in Chambishi were given a lunch consisting of two small bread rolls and milk. In Kamwala, interviewed workers received an average of K336,382 per month (US$62) with lowest pay being K150,000 (US$30.7) and the highest K538,000 (US$110) for a long-term cashier. Some (36%) of interviewees indicated their employer provided a small amount of money for the cashier to purchase lunch for everyone. However, they did not receive transport, housing or medical allowances.

In order to understand these figures it is important to provide some contextualisation to situate levels of payment within the wider Zambian picture. First, it is apt to consider trends in national employment. The informal economy is by far the greatest contributor to

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89 The description of these allowances as ‘benefits’ was queried by some respondents, who viewed them a basic part of their remuneration package. Such reading is arguably a legacy of the pre-privatisation era during which mining companies internalised the reproduction of labour.
employment in Zambia. In 2005, 88% of employed people were in informal sector employment, compared to only 12% finding work in the formal sector (CSO 2007: 45). Here, agriculture (incorporating both subsistence and cash crops) is the dominant industry, providing 80% of informal jobs (CSO 2007: 47). Paid informal employees work an average of 52 hours per week and receive remuneration ranging from K153, 937 (US$30) per month for men, and K62, 048 (US$12) for women (CSO 2007: 53).

Figure 11: Monthly Wage Comparisons (US$)

Source: CSO 2007; Field dataset (2010)

Figure 11 above visualises the comparison between wages in Chambishi and Kamwala with those in other sectors of Zambian employment. Clearly, there is a disparity between managerial and professional levels of remuneration and those in the case studies areas. However, when compared with Clerical, Sales and Agriculture jobs, wages in both Kamwala and Chambishi rank more favourably.
The National Minimum Wage is an additional barometer to assess levels of remuneration. At the time of data collection (2010), the Zambian Minimum Wage was K419,000 per month (US$81.7) for all industries, excluding domestic service. When cast in this light the levels of payment in Chambishi immediately appear favourable, with the average among respondents being more than double the minimum legislated by the State. Indeed, this comparison was often referred to by managerial level respondents as an indication that levels of payment in Chambishi were ‘not as bad as workers claim’ (Interview with Robert Banda, Lusaka 27.09.2010). Furthering, Robert Banda commented,

‘There has been mixed reaction from people saying the Chinese do not look after the workers well, but when we go in there and see what kind of pay they get it’s usually above the Minimum Wage, and that is fine, that is within law...that is what the Government deem citizens need’ (Ibid).

Eighty-two per cent of respondents in Kamwala were paid less than the Minimum Wage. Though a small number of workers here were able to recall the national legislative requirements concerning payment (4 workers in a group), the vast majority did not have an awareness of their industrial rights.

As a measure of the economic requirements of Zambians, the Minimum Wage is itself weak. A basket-based assessment conducted by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Research (JCTR) in 2011 casts aspersions on the ability of the Minimum Wage to provide for economic needs – here defined as food, housing, educational and other basic requirements (for details see JCTR Jan 2011). For a family of 6 living in an urban Zambian environment it was found that a monthly sum of K3,019,100 (US$589) was the minimum needed to provide for such demands (JCTR Jan. 2011).

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90 This is enabled due to the power regulatory climate described in Chapter 5.
Taking these three aspects together, Figure 12 above shows the stark disparity between the average respondent wage in Chambishi and Kamwala, the National Minimum Wage, and the JCTR’s projections of basic needs. To counter monthly financial deficits, many workers in both locations supplement their pay with informal income generating activities, such as selling home-grown fruit and vegetables or home-brew (See interviews with anon Chambishi 36, 29, 74, and anon Kamwala 22, 26, 27). This is seen to be a common approach throughout Zambia where neoliberal reforms (leading to both redundancies and reductions in wages) have heightened urban dwellers reliance on the informal sector more broadly (Hansen and Vaa 2004).

Despite the positive associations between wages in Chambishi and both the national minimum wage and national sectoral comparisons, workers here did not assess their wages along these barometers. Rather, they made use of two other factors: the conditions of employment in other mining houses on the Copper Belt, and the value of the commodity they were producing. Taking these in order, Chinese companies have the reputation of providing the poorest remuneration packages in the sector, and Fraser and
Lungu’s 2007 analysis certainly confirms this perception (See Figure 13 below). In their study, they found average payments to unionised employees in the Chinese-owned Chambishi copper mine were found to range from K1 million to K2 million (US$250-500) per month. This is compared to K1.45 million to K2.2 million (US$280-425) at the South African owned Monpani mine and K1.6 million to K3.1 million (US$310-600) at the British owned Chambishi Metals plc. (Fraser and Lungu 2007).

Figure 13: Monthly salary of the highest and lowest paid MUZ unionised workers in the Zambian copper mines (1st January 2006)

![Chart showing monthly salary comparison between Chambishi, Monpani, Konkola, Luanshya, Chilbulum, and Chambishi Mining for highest and lowest paid workers.]

Source: Fraser and Lungu, 2007: 75

Due to the publicity surrounding copper prices, Zambian miners have a particular awareness of the value of the commodity they produce\(^1\) (See Lee 2009: 659). This was a predominant feature of discussions with respondents in Chambishi - many of whom cited statistics in local media on the price of copper and the gap between corporate profits and workers’ salaries (See for example interviews with anon Chambishi 15 and 16, 2010). Also of note here were respondents mention of tax rates and the perception that Chinese

\(^1\) From November 2001 to April 2006, the price of copper rose from US$1,400 per tonne to $7,000.
companies were 'stealing' Zambian resources (Interview with anon Chambishi 78, 2010). An electrician commented, 'the Chinese are getting rich off the backs of the Zambian workers...when their profits grow they still pay us small amounts’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 79, 2010). Such sentiment has also been picked up by politicians. In an interviewed with the Zambian Post, United Democratic Alliance (UDA) Chairman Joe Kalusa commented, ‘Copper is doing well but how much are the miners benefiting from it. They are not awarded according to what they put in’ (The Post 10.05.2006).

While respondents in Chambishi forcefully articulated their objections to their pay level with reference to other mining houses and the value of copper, in Kamwala workers’ had much more limited sources of comparison. Some compared their pay-rates with other people employed in the market. In the main, most established their views based on their cost of living, i.e. the inability of their pay package alone to meet their basic needs. Workers reported accruing debts, cutting back on basic commodities, and finding it difficult to send their children to school. One commented, ‘these salaries are not sustaining our lives’ (Interview with anon Kamwala 22, 2010). Those who took a more positive view of Chinese investment compared their situation to the unemployed people in their communities. A general worker conceded, ‘at least this small pay is better than no pay...some of the people back in the compound are doing nothing. This is better – to get out, to make some small money’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 15, 2010). Despite this concession, pay rates remained the number one compliant among respondents in Kamwala, cited as the most important by 76% of workers, in conversation

6.1.3 Casualisation

Status of employment – whether workers were hired on a contract or casual basis – was a central grievance among respondents in both locations. Casualisation is deemed one of the more salient results of privatisation on the Copper Belt and while this practice is not exclusive to Chinese-owned companies, evidence suggests it is more common here than elsewhere (Fraser and Lungu 2007). In interviews with the five main mine house employers in the Copper Belt in 2006, Fraser and Lungu (2007) approximated that the composition of the workforce was as follows: 21,000 workers on pensionable contracts, a
further 16,000 employed indirectly via contracting firms, and at least 1,900 employed on fixed term contracts or as seasonal workers (Fraser and Lungu 2007: 22). Companies inside the ZCCZ were found to be some of the worst offenders of casualisation, with Non-Ferrous China-Africa employing only 52 workers of 2,000 on permanent contracts (Ibid: 22). In 2010, 15MCC, a construction firm contracted to the copper smelter, employed half of their 300 strong Zambian workforce on renewable contracts of one to two years, while the remaining were casual (Interview with Sun, Chambishi, 08.10.2010). According to the company’s Human Resource Manager Mr. Sun the 150 non-contracted workers were waiting on ‘health clearance’. No indication was given of when this would be completed or how long the process would take (Ibid.), and in conversation those who were employed on these terms were not aware of the process taking place (Field Notes 2010).

Of the interviewed workers in the Chambishi zone, 63% had contracts, while 37% did not. Of the 63% contracted, 88% were on fixed term contracts of one to two years, while the remaining 12% were permanent. In Kamwala, 88% of interviewed workers did not have a contract, rather they agreed terms and conditions verbally on the first day of their employment. Respondents’ sentiments on casualisation in both locations reflected the reality of insecure employment, centring on concerns that they could be fired at any moment, without the opportunity for redress of grievances, and that they had no formal statement of their terms and conditions (See for example interviews with anon Chambishi 7, 17, and 32, 2010).

One possible factor enabling companies to adopt such practices in Zambia is the lack of legislative clarity regarding the legal status of workers (Sentiments echoed in interviews with Gerry Finnegan and Guy Scott). At present there are three categories of employment in Zambia: casual, temporary (on verbal contracts), and fixed duration/permanent (on written contracts). Given that such groupings incorporate a huge variety of employees, including part-time staff and those paid by the hour, there may be room for confusion in the hiring process. Concerns have also been raised among the business community that labour laws place ‘excessive demands’ on the employer to pay terminal benefits (ZIPPA July-October 2009:4). Companies and individuals claim they
are unable to hire on workers contracts longer than 6 months as this demands pension contributions (*The Post* 21.11.2006), yet on inspection such fears prove misconceived. It is only a small percentage of employees that are eligible for pension contributions, namely those who have been contracted to work for longer than 10 years before the age of 55, or those who have served 25 years with a single employer (*The Post* 21.11.2006).

6.1.4 Working Environment: Issues of health and safety

Alongside concerns regarding casualisation and remuneration, health and safety standards (and the weakness thereof) stand out as the most widely articulated grievances by workers in Chambishi. Perhaps no other incident has sparked more urban discontent with Chinese investors, than the 2005 explosion at the Chambishi dynamite factory in which up to 51 Zambian workers were killed (*BBC News* 21.04.2005). In the aftermath, China’s Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Lu Guozeng demanded an improvement in safety standards abroad, proclaiming, ‘We have ordered all Chinese investors operating in Africa to follow all necessary safety standards and ensure that all rules and regulations are followed’ (*The Post* 08.09.2005). Since then, concerns continue to be raised about the conditions at Chinese firms within the Chambishi zone. Many of those who work underground or in confined spaces were critical of the air quality and ventilation, claiming that it is so poor, they have been affected by long term respiratory conditions: ‘Underground is terrible. There are no fans and when the dust gets into your chest you have problems. I’ve been to the clinic twice, I have medicine but it does nothing to help’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 66, 2010; See also anon Chambishi 69, 31, and 32). Some of the more experienced workers compared the situation with their past working environments, contending that the Chinese owned mines adopt a very lax approach when it comes to air quality. A veteran skilled worker complained, ‘In Mopani, Chilubuma, the others [other mining houses/companies on the Copper Belt] it is much better. They have proper ventilation – holes, vents, fans – but here there is nothing’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 36, 2010). Respondents regularly queried the quality of the machinery they use. A common complaint being that the instructions and safety precautions that are written on the machinery is in Chinese. Others contended that they are not given the necessary tools to do their job effectively and often have to improvise with what they have. NUMAW Secretary General Goodwell Kaluba commented ‘many workers are
using equipment which is not very good, sometimes having to use initiative, improvising equipment, which is also not acceptable’ (Interview with Goodwell Kaluba, 27.10.2010). Related to this were concerns over the issuing of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). Kaluba furthered,

‘Often times you find people work without any protective equipment or protective material to put on which is also very, very dangerous....In some cases they [the companies] seem to be listening and providing, but not in every place and everywhere. You will find maybe they want to provide during the day, but when they think that no one will see they want to subject people to work without protection’ (Ibid.).

Among those interviewed in the Chambishi zone, 26% claimed they did not receive any PPE, while the remainder where highly critical of the quantity and quality of items they did received. A skilled worker complained:

‘We get PPE, but we get it too late. After 6 months we get boots and overalls, then we have to wait two years and we get hard hat and belt...it’s a long time if you work underground. It’s not safe’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 42, 2010).

Another commented: ‘We get a hard hat after two years but we need it before. Most people aren’t employed on two year contracts, what do we do then? We work with no protection, it is not safe’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 56, 2010). The official policy of 15MCC, for instance, is to provide a hard hat, two pairs of boots and two work shirts for employees on two year contracts, while those on probation and or other terms (less than two year contracts) are issued only a hard hat (Interview with Sun, Chambishi, 08.10.2010). Asserting that all safety precautions were followed, Mr. Sun explained this graduated schedule of distribution by claiming that some employees have stolen equipment: ‘We have to see what the worker is like before we give equipment...it is very expensive, we don’t want the workers to steal it’ (Ibid.)92.

92 One of the more striking criticisms of Chinese mining companies’ safety records in Zambia concerned not the economic zone, but rather the Collum Mine in Zambia’s Southern Province. The region’s Minister Alice Simango openly wept on Zambian National Television (ZNBC) following an impromptu visit to the mine. The Minister claimed, ‘workers are kept like pigs and subjected to a dangerous environment. They are kicked and beaten as though they are not human beings’ (Times of Zambia 25.05.2006).
While the retail sector does not ignite the same potential for health and safety concerns - certainly when placed in comparison with extractive industries - respondents in Kamwala did articulate particular grievances with their working environments. Indeed, over a third (34%) of those interviewed described their health and safety conditions as bad or very bad. Workers predominately articulated concerns regarding their own personal safety, and complained of the disruptive behaviour of ‘drunk’ people around the market. Commented a female cashier, ‘The people that come in drunk, they are the bad ones...they pick up clothes, they steal them, and they try and steal money. When the other ones are here [indicating towards her male colleagues] it is okay as they can chase them, but when they are not here, it is not good. I get very scared’ (Interview with anon 32, Kamwala 28.07.2010). Similar sentiments were shared by both male and female workers (See interviews with anon 4, 7, 23, 24). The second complaint respondents articulated was the lack of a toilet or water tap in the workplace (See for example interviews with anon 9 and 12). Given that the average working day is 8 hours in length here, both these features created significant discomfort among some employees.

Having established the labour control regimes adopted in these workplaces. I will now explore the confrontations that emerge when workers try to shape the landscape to fit their economic and political goals. The following section will discuss the types of labour agency found in each workplace and the factors which influence such action.

6.2 GPNs, labour agency, and divergent outcomes

There is a strong commonality in what respondents sought to change about their labour conditions (centring on pay, job security, and to a lesser extent their treatment by Chinese managers). However, the types of labour agency found in each location are significantly different. I argue that this is not only a reflection of the local socio-spatial conditions that each workplace is embedded within, but also influenced by workers’ position within a Chinese-structured GPN. Specifically, that labour agency (and the outcome thereof) is influenced by the differing nature of ownership in each location: a high level of state involvement and ownership of capital in the extractive sector, compared with more autonomous independent entrepreneurs in retail. Before exploring the types of agency
labour utilised by workers, I first want to consider the construction of collective identities in each case study area, and the role of trade unions and state regulators therein - these have important implications for shaping the strategic terrain of labour and in themselves represent avenues to address grievances.

6.2.1 ‘The unions do not represent us’

The difficulty in constructing a common collective identity in informal workplaces has been well documented (See for example Lindell 2010), and in Kamwala the situation is not an exception. Labouring in small independent shop units typically with six or seven people, workers’ reported strong relations with colleagues but variable associations with others employed in workplaces across the market (See for example interview with anon Kamwala 53, 2010). While there are friendships and often family relationships between people in Kamwala, respondents in the Chinese workplaces articulated that they did not sense a common unity among workers more broadly (See for example interview with anon Kamwala, 16, 17 and 32). This comment from a cashier is reflective of the wider sentiments that were articulated: ‘We’re not a family here in Kamwala. Inside the shop we are friends but we don’t talk much to other people...Some workers have friends in different shops but we are all different, we are not the same in Kamwala....It is not one Kamwala family’ (Interview with anon Kamwala 33). Within the marketplace there is considerable economic and social differentiation between workers, and a great variety of employment – individual sellers of salula on the corridors of the market for instance may have different challenges, opportunities and perspectives than those employed in formal shop units (See Lindell 2010: 210). There is not the same residual capacity for collective worker organisation here as there is in the Copper Belt. Workers do not have a common place of residence (as employees live in various Townships across urban Lusaka), which places limitations on their associations beyond the workplace. This is fundamentally different from the situation in Chambishi. Here, workers predominately live in the Chambishi Township and respondents’ indicated that they discussed labour conditions, politics, and strategies outside of their workplace (Field Notes 2010). Further, the office of the Mineworkers Union of Zambia is located amongst workers’ houses (Field Notes 2010). Whereas a single sector is imbricated in all aspects of life in Chambishi (as the vast majority of employed people living here derive their income directly or indirectly
from mining) the same cannot be said for the diverse residences of those in Kamwala. The communities here do not have the same vested interests in the retail sector.

Missing here too are viable forms of unionisation to help foster a common collective identity, or indeed history of labour politics. The argument that trade unions should extend their mandate into informal spaces of work has gained considerable currency of late, with bodies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) becoming key advocates of the rights of informal workers. Of the 73 interviewed respondents in Kamwala only 2% (one worker) denoted they were a member of a trade union. This union was the Domestic Workers' Union and the individual had been a member before taking up work in Kamwala and continued with his subscriptions. Of the remaining respondents, 56% indicated that they would be encouraged to join a union should one start to organise in the market, but noted the cost of subscriptions as a barrier to membership.

Conversely, the Zambian Copper Belt has a strong history of trade unionism and labour politics (as shown in Chapter 4). Chinese companies in Chambishi, like British, South African and other mining houses before them, initially actively tried to prevent the unionisation of workers when they first arrived. In NFCA's draft Environmental Impact Assessment report for example, that company claimed that one of the conditions of temporary contracts was that workers do not engage in union activity (Fraser and Lungu 2007: 52). Given the high levels of casualisation at this time (with only 52 of over 2,000 workers having contracts) this effectively prohibited any forms of worker organisation. For Charles Muchimba, head of international relations at the Mine Workers Union of Zambia (MUZ), the intent of investors was clear: 'They did not want us there...the Chinese were fearful of unions. They do not have a history of unionisation in China and they wanted [this] to be the same here' (Interview with Charles Muchimba, 27.10.2010). Though government and union representatives engaged in protracted attempts to counter this trend, it was not until the 2005 explosion, and the widespread discontent this engendered, that there was any tangible movement from Chinese managers. Commented

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93 There are countervailing arguments against informal unionisation, most notably concerns surrounding the 'insurmountable' differences and challenges facing workers employed here, and variable relationships with employers being diffuse and direct (See for example Andrae and Beckman 2010).
Agnes N’Gwande, MUZ official and PF councillor in Chambishi, ‘There was definitely a change after the explosion. People were so angry and the Chinese had to let us (MUZ) in...Now workers can call on the unions when they need and we can meet management for negotiations’ (Interview with N’Gwande 07.10.2010). By 2009, it was estimated that 80% of employees in NFCA belonged to trade unions (The China Monitor, September 2009: 4). Among those interviewed in the Chambishi ZCCZ more broadly, 62% were unionised, 34% were not, and 4% declined to answer the question. The contractual status of workers was not a great variable on unionisation here. Though 64% of workers who were in unions had contracts, 61% of the non-unionised were also contracted employees.

Figure 14: Composition of trade union membership among unionised respondents in Chambishi

There are three union bodies currently operating in the economic zone, with reports of a 4th in the process of being set up (Interview with Goodwell Kaluba, 27.10.2010). As shown in Figure 14, the National Union of Miners and Allied Workers (NUMAW) is clearly the dominant union among those interviewed, with 86% of those surveyed members of the organisation. Comparatively, MUZ represents 13% of respondents, while African Unity acts on the behalf of 1%. NUMAW is a relatively new trade union, emerging in 2003 in response to what its management perceive as failings in MUZ:
‘The Mineworkers Union was not addressing workers’ concerns or representing workers adequately. We felt that we needed to create some competition in the mining sector regarding the labour movement so that there would be a check on union standards’ (Interview with Goodwell Kaluba 27.10.2010).

With an initial membership of 2,855 NUMAW has grown to represent over 11,000 employees in the extractive industry. It is particularly dominant in the Chinese-owned mines, being the only union in the Chambishi Copper Smelter and Sino-Metals (Ibid). The plurality of unions was consistently mentioned by Chambishi interviewees as a contributory factor in perceptions of union weakness. Commented one skilled labourer, ‘the split in the trade union movement is a big problem...we have 3 union bodies in one industry. It is not good, it divides our workforce’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 1, 2010). A long-term employee averred, ‘it would be better if there was one union. Now, this one says one thing, this one says another...the managers can take advantage’ (Interview with Chambishi anon 2, 2010). Though claiming to work cooperatively now, trade unionists themselves conceded that the multiplicity of unions has presented challenges, particularly regarding negotiation. A MUZ union representative in Chambishi recalled, ‘the Chinese will come in and tell us one thing, then go to NUMAW and tell them another....If we’re not happy they’ll say “NUMAW’s happy, what is your problem?”’ (Interview with anon MUZ, 13.11.2010). Martin Chembe of the ZCTU contended that playing trade unions against one another was a common strategy of some multinationals operating in Zambia in industries where there are high levels of unionisation (Interview with Martin Chembe 13.09.2010).

At the individual level, trade union organisers report frequent intimidation by some Chinese managers. A NUMAW organiser at the Chambishi copper mine spoke of 8 union representatives being dismissed after taking workers’ complaints to management (Interview with anon Chambishi 90, 2010). The union’s Secretary General complained, “It’s true, they [union reps.] are intimidated...when information reaches us [that union reps have been intimidated] and we go to investigate, their supervisors will be able to hit them with a lot of charges which they have never committed...trying
to get their dismissal. It's all intimidation, trying to get rid of those who speak out" (Interview with Goodwell Kaluba, 27.10.2010).

Respondents, however, argue that unions are prone to corruption, and that it is co-option rather than intimidation that frames union-manager relations. Allegations, such as these from an interviewee in Chambishi, purport that unionists can be bought off: ‘the unions are not supporting us, they are corrupt. They Chinese give them cash ...how can they represent our interests when they are in the pockets of the Chinese?’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 1, 2010). Another worker commented, ‘Why bother with these unions – they do nothing for us – they’re friends with the Chinese, they fill their pockets’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 85, 2010). While a further complained ‘New union representatives come in strong, but after 6 months things usually go bad. The union becomes corrupt and they do what the Chinese want’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 14, 2010). In a survey of interviewed workers, 63% categorised union representation as bad or very bad. In addition to concerns surrounding corruption and co-option, respondents complained unions were ‘poor value for money’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 5, 2010), showed ‘weak leadership’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 8, 2010), and ‘have no power or say’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 94, 2010). Schisms between workers’ and union officials have a long pedigree in working class politics on the Copper Belt. Studies from Burawoy in the late 1960s and Larmer in the early 2000s show that disunity among unions and disagreements between workers’ and unionists have been a consistent theme.

6.2.2 Interactions between State and labour

In both locations the role of the Zambian government in regulating labour regimes and foreign investment came under a particular criticism. Eighty-seven per cent of respondents in Kamwala and 83% in Chambishi described central and local state’s regulation of Chinese businesses as bad or very bad. Comments included, ‘The way the Chinese treat us and the way the Government treat us is the same. The Government listen to the Chinese people’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 9, 2010) and, ‘No positive response ever comes from the government, instead the government obeys the Chinese work ethics’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 11, 2010). A machine operator in
Chambishi with over 15 years’ experience in the mining sectors averred, ‘We have complained for so long, and when we complain nothing is done. Government has failed to contain the Chinese....Government benefits from the Chinese’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 17, 2010). Allegations of corruption are central to how interviewed workers’ in both Kamwala and Chambishi view Zambian State-Chinese business interactions – mirroring the perceptions of union officials that were presented in Chapter 5. An often repeated phrase was variations on ‘the government is in the Chinese pockets’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 10, 2010). A participant in Kamwala commented, ‘The Zambian government are funded by the Chinese, good or bad they act on their behalf. There is too much corruption’ (Interview with anon Kamwala 15, 2010). Coming under particular criticism was the then Zambian President Rupiah Banda, whose relations with Chinese business actors were deemed especially close: ‘Rupiah goes to China, on holiday, he gets all the benefits...Rupiah means nothing to us, he is for the Chinese’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 11, 2010) and ‘Rupiah is corrupt, how can he defend Chinese business when they treat us badly...It is not right’ (Interview with Chambishi anon 72, 2010). Directing his complaints toward the President, a carpenter in Chambishi commented, ‘The problem is with the President. He should send someone to monitor here, the labour inspectors are just a formality. The Government and Chinese are friends, especially the President - he and the Chinese were born of one mother’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 95, 2010). In both locations, the majority of respondents articulated their preference for the Patriotic Front in general and Michael Sata in particular (see for example Interview with anon Chambishi 3, 7, 9, 2010).

Local regulatory agents were broadly viewed in a negative light by respondents, with concerns being raised about the frequency of their visits (‘very little’ in Chambishi and ‘not at all’ in Kamwala) and their alleged collusion with Chinese business owners: ‘If workers complain to a government official, instead of following the complaint up the government official is given money by the Chinese. If we had a different government things might change but now it is very bad’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 21, 2010). Another respondent in Kamwala articulated, ‘The Ministry of Labour is very corrupt. They like defending Chinese, whites – foreigners. The Chinese pay off the labour inspectors and the Government favours investors over Zambians’ (Interview with anon Kamwala 12, 2010). Such views sat alongside concerns of labour inspector inaction when
complaints are made: ‘The government does not react to any complaints. Even in the extreme cases of workers that die on duty, nothing is done’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 15, 2010); ‘If we complain nothing happens. The boss says “it is better to pay those people from labour, not you”...We are even doubting there is a government in this country’ (Interview with anon Kamwala 34, 2010). Of the limited number of people who registered a complaint with government regulators (11 in Chambishi and 1 in Kamwala), all were unhappy with the process and outcome. Reflecting the sentiments of many of those interviewed, a technician in Chambishi commented ‘Nothing happens unless you make a protest’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 91, 2010).

6.2.3 ‘Bringing fear to the Chinese’: Labour agency in Chambishi

Given the views articulated above, it is perhaps not surprising that neither trade unions nor government bodies were viewed as viable avenues to change labour conditions by respondents in both locations. In Chambishi, grass roots labour militancy has been a feature of workers’ agency. These actions are predominately, but not exclusively, undertaken collectively and at times incorporate actors beyond the immediate workplace, such as family members and friends of employees (perhaps reflecting the imbrication and importance of mining employment for the wider Chambishi community). In the main, actions of agency here reflect strategies of ‘reworking’ (Katz 2004), in that they attempt to achieve concessions within the current system of employment rather than fundamentally change it. Respondents spoke of four strikes and protests that had occurred in Chambishi (July 2004, July 2006, January 2008 and March 2008), all of which were instigated by workers and without the sanctioning of unions. In this section I discuss two such incidents - one where workers received concessions from capital, the other where they did not - and show how these have been influenced by the workers’ position within the GPN.

Perhaps the most notorious incident of agency in Chambishi occurred in July 2006, when workers’ grievances with unpaid wages spiralled into a spontaneous, violent, demonstration. Chambishi Copper Smelter ( CCS) was engaged in negotiations with unions representatives when a ‘pay roll error’ (Lee 2009: 660) deducted rather than
increased employees' wages on their pay slips. When night shift workers received their slips they refused to enter the workplace and congregated at the company’s gates; a pattern that was followed by those arriving for later shifts at 7am and 2pm. Many of the participants became extremely agitated and, carrying stones, threatened to attack the mine shaft. Eventually, they were calmed down by union representatives, who made commitments to raise all workers concerns with management the following day (Interview with Chambishi anon 52, 2010). As a loud cheer erupted from the workers in response to the unions’ assurances, the head of security at the copper smelter interpreted the noise as that of a threatening mob and reacted with violence. A MUZ organiser on the ground recalled: ‘security thought workers were going to beat the managers. They fired tear gas….workers had stones in their hands and threw them at the security. The problems then started’ (Interview with Chambishi anon 52, 2010).

Some of the protestors began to attack the copper smelter, setting fire to a vehicle filled with copper and destroying documents in the company’s administrative offices. A government official who came to mediate the dispute was assaulted, exposing concerns regarding the state’s neutrality in the process (Negi, 2008: 56). The protest then moved to the Chambishi Township, where workers amassed at the ‘China House’ compound, frightening the Chinese workers and their families that lived within (Lee 2009). Six shots were fired into the crowd of protesters, seriously injuring two workers. While union representatives and workers who were there claim that is was the Chinese managers committed the shootings, the copper smelter’s management assert it was the police (Mail and Guardian 26.07.2006). The case has never been resolved and no arrests or prosecutions were made, fuelling a sense of injustice among interviewed respondents that the state is protecting Chinese investors at the expense of Zambian workers (See for example interview with Chambishi anon 52, 53 and 54, 2010). Twenty four hours after the event, employees returned to work.

The timing of this incident was important, occurring as it did during a wave of ‘resource nationalism’, inflamed by the anti-Sino rhetoric used by PF Presidential candidate Michael Sata. Standing in the Copper Belt just some months previous, Sata famously called Chinese investors ‘infestors’ and proclaimed ‘they ill-treat our people and that is
unacceptable. We are not going to condone exploitative investors. This country belongs to Zambians’ (Sata quoted in Lee 2009: 664). While this rhetoric did not propel Sata to office, it did secure him the majority votes in urban areas of Lusaka and the Copper Belt – regions which have felt the greatest effects of Chinese investment, and prompted a broader dialogue on the role of Chinese investment in the central African state. The Provincial Chairman of the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), another opposition political party in Zambia, ‘begged’ the MMD government consider the workers plight. He proclaimed ‘Despite copper prices soaring on the international market, workers in the mine have not benefited from copper sale…they are not rewarded according to what they put in. We are simply begging the MMD to look into the plight of the workers (The Post 10.05.2006). Around this time, the Provincial Minister of the Southern Province, Alice Simango was highly critical of the labour conditions she observed in the Chinese-owned Collum coal mine, prompting a response from the mines owners: ‘As a company, we are very sorry to the Zambian people and we promise to change the conditions of workers at the mine within days’ (The Post 02.06.2006). Sata’s rhetoric and the actions of Chambishi’s workers also prompted a response from President Levy Mwanawasa, who made commitments to arrest and persecute any companies in the Copper Belt that broke labour laws (The Post 04.10.2006), and proclaimed, ‘I want to see ownership of Zambians in large scale mining operations’ (The Post 21.08.2006). Due to the nature of capital ownership at this extraction stage of Chinese GPNs, industrial incidences can become diplomatic incidences.

Shortly after the protest in Chambishi, and coming under significant political pressure, the state owned-CCS signed a Collective Agreement that committed the company to a pay increase of 23% and required them to provide contracts to many of those who were employed on a casual basis (Lee 2009: 661). Those who participated drew a direct correlation between the concessions they were able to achieve, the rhetoric of Michael Sata, and the political climate in Zambia at this time: ‘Sata came out and spoke about the problems with Chinese investors…we’ve been having problems here for a long time but only after Sata [spoke out] did we get benefits’ (Interview with anon Chambishi 73, 2010). Another participant reiterated this point: ‘It was different [from other strikes], the

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94 Sata’s ‘resource nationalism’ has certain parallels with that articulated by other leaders in mineral rich developing countries, for example Iran, Bolivia or Venezuela.
politics. PF put attention on Chambishi and the problems with the Chinese. It is the Chinese government here...there is too much power’ (Interview with Chambishi 76, 2010). While a further commented, ‘Sata is a hero. He helped to improve our conditions and made people think about what the Chinese government is doing here in Zambia’ (Interview with Chambishi anon 78, 2010).

Similar spontaneity, though a different outcome, was shown in January 2008, when a strike was initiated by workers at the Chambishi Copper Smelter without union approval. Up to 500 workers downed tools and blockaded the plant, demanding a 40% pay increase and greater holiday and transport allowances. Workers stopped officials from the Kitwe Labour Department from entering the plant accusing them of receiving bribes from the smelter’s management (Interview with Zulu, 2010). Police in riot gear were deployed to the plant in an attempt to quell the unrest, though the situation did not turn violent. The strike ultimately ended when union officials persuaded workers they would address their concerns and entered into negotiations with the smelter’s management.

Two months later, after a perceived period of inaction by union officials, workers at the CSS again initiated unofficial strike action. On this occasion, the action did turn violent, with protesters rioting, attacking a Chinese supervisor, and damaging property. Again riot police were called in, and the action was quashed the same day it began. Five hundred workers who were alleged to have been involved in the strike were summarily dismissed and seven union officials arrested. In the week that followed 400 of the 500 dismissed workers were reinstated following interviews with management which intended to identify the strike’s ‘ringleaders’ (Mine Watch 10.03.2008; BBC News 04.03.2008). Without the wider political climate of the 2006 election however, the State came out in strong support for CCS’s approach and workers’ were unable to win the same sort of concessions that were achieved previously The MMD Provincial Minister threw the weight of the government behind the Chinese investors, stating that as ‘Zambia is a country in a hurry to develop, such lawlessness would not be tolerated’ (Quoted in Negi 2008: 56). This example shows that strategies of overt collective action do not always have the potential effect change in Chambishi. Rather their success comes when they are able to tie into wider political discourse.
Acts of labour agency are not exclusively the terrain of such large scale collection endeavours, though certainly these are the majority. Eighty-six per cent of respondents indicated they would rather engage in collective over individual agency. While ‘security in numbers’ was certainly a contributory factor to this choice, respondents also spoke of the history of unions on the Copper Belt and shared identity of workers as ‘miners supporting each other’ (See for example interview with anon Chambishi 56, 2010).

In the localised interactions between capital and labour in Chambishi some alternative means of individual discontent have been expressed. Three typical approaches were revealed by respondents. First, in the face of patterns of labour control which were described in pejorative terms of ‘abuse’, some workers reacted by verbally insulting Chinese managers and employees in Bemba, the local language. This action was carried out individually or in small groups of no more than three, and more often than not met with little retribution as targeted managers were unable to understand what was being said. Second, workers have been known to sabotage equipment in the workplace. A machine operator in Chambishi commented, ‘We’ve broken things, when it was very bad, we broke some machines....to show we’re not happy’. Met with strong retribution, this is not a common approach and almost exclusively occurs at times when the industrial scene is particularly contentious, such as in 2006. Third, some respondents indicated that they stole from their employers. This was seen as a way of supplementing what they contend are unliveable wages (Interviews 2010). Theft ranged from small items such as hammers and clothing, to more significant objects such as pieces of copper (Interviews 2010). Again, given the strong measures of workplace control (such as personal searches) and the extent of retribution such action would receive, this was not a preferable option.

6.2.4 ‘There is not much we can do’: Labour agency in Kamwala

Unable to appeal to political sentiment, without the acute awareness of the value of their commodity, and lacking a common collective identity, respondents in Kamwala have adopted an altogether different approach to labour agency. Workers here favour resilience strategies – small scale actions which make their working conditions more bearable, but which do not fundamentally change their conditions nor challenge the system within which they labour. There are three ways in which workers act. Firstly, some respondents
indicated that they challenged the labour control regime by leaving the shopping workplace during working hours—this was an accessible strategy owing to the absence of the Chinese manager during the working day. Though each workplace investigated had a supervisor (who also fulfilled a dual role as the cashier), respondents who adopted this strategy were able to secure his or her compliance through persuasion or purchasing them a cold drink. Associated with this, workers challenged managers’ control by failing to comply with certain policies such as sitting down when prohibited, opting to work slow, or delaying completing tasks.

Secondly, a small number of respondents (23) indicated that they stole from their workplace as a means of supplementing their incomes. Theft was predominately of small items (such as baby clothes and accessories) rather than larger textiles, which were deemed to be too easy for management to notice if missing. Though this action was sometimes conducted individually, the close proximity of workers’ in the shop meant that colleagues were usually aware if another worker was engaging in theft (See for example interviews with Kamwala anon 56 and 57, 2010). The decision to adopt this type of agency was quite a risky endeavour as, if caught, workers would immediately be fired. It is also dependent on employees not ‘telling on’ each other, and sometimes placed the shop supervisor in a difficult position—conflicted in protecting their colleague or being loyal to the employer. On occasions where the employer did find out and wanted to know who committed the theft, respondents indicated that threats to fire the entire shop lead them to reveal the actor.

Thirdly, and perhaps most interestingly, many of the interviewed workers spoke of engaging in a collective money laundering process. With the acknowledgment, though not always direction, of the cashier, respondents changed the price of items in the shop—increasing it a small amount, but not enough to put off consumers. When the item was purchased, this extra money was withheld from the till and distributed among workers in the shop—who on receipt of such funds remain silent to the manager. A cashier explained, ‘The prices [on the clothes] are not the right prices...we increase, [a] small amount, on what the boss tells us. That extra money we share...Our wages are too small, we do this to survive’ (Interview with Kamwala anon 43, 2010). In the main respondents
deemed this a successful strategy as it enabled them to supplement their incomes with less individual responsibility, greater security (as compared to the direct theft of items) and, they contended, less chance of discovery.

Though these acts of agency in Kamwala do not fundamentally changed the system nor the relationship between employee and employer, from the perspective of workers’ who engage in them, they are a success (See for example interview with Kamwala anon 71).

6.3 Conclusion: Labour agency within GPNs

In Kamwala and Chambishi, an institutional matrix of factors influence and shape how workers interpret their labour regimes and express their labour agency. While these factors are predominately horizontal in nature (embedded in particular local specifics) the vertical influence, namely the position of a workplace within a production network, has an important role to play. This is owing to the changing nature of ownership as you progress from extraction to retail in Chinese-structured GPNs. The analysis has shown that labour in these workplaces interpret, experience, and strategically react to systems of production in different ways. While there is a certain commonality in respondents’ areas of complaint, focusing on their remuneration and job security, the way in which they react to and attempt to co-create their labour regimes differs. The factors which influence the actions of workers include their relationships with trade unions, perceptions of state-capital collusion, local cultures and histories (including the different expectations from capital in the workplace), as well as the labour control regimes they experience and the nature of capital ownership at each end of the GPN.

With a strong history of industrial action, a common collective identity (to an extent), and expectations of the role of an employer framed by the experience of ZCCM, workers in Chambishi are actively engaging in non-union sanctioned reworking strategies of resistance. These are mediated by an awareness of the value of the commodity they produce and an acute recognition of the political importance of the mining sector. By
riding on the wave of resource nationalism in 2006, workers have been able to achieve certain concessions from their employers. Later attempts in 2008 proved less fruitful, demonstrating the variable success of this strategy. In contrast, the relative dislocation of the Kamwala retail space from wider political structures allows Chinese entrepreneurs to enter without the same political burden. It is clear that working conditions for many employed here are precarious. However, in marked contrast to those in Chambishi, experiences of urban unemployment, fear of job security, and the lack of a common collective identity, leads them to adopt individual and collective acts of resilience, rather than attempting to change the terms of their conditions. Despite the different strategies adopted, in both locations, organising locally has served as an effective, though limited, strategy for confronting Chinese capital.
7. Conclusion

In order to draw together the ideas presented in the previous six chapters, it is perhaps first useful to revisit the central research question which ultimately framed this project, and to reflect on the strategy that was involved. At the outset I sought to understand the labour regimes and forms of labour agency found in Sino-Zambian workplaces, and the factors that influence their adoption. In seeking to address this question I adopted a combined labour geography and broad Global Production Network framework. This, I deemed the most useful conceptual guide for two reasons. Firstly, the labour geography perspective seeks a ‘labour-centric’ approach to understandings of capitalism - one which places the experiences and participations of labour at the heart of the analysis. At its start point, is a recognition that workers are active agents of change in systems of production. Secondly, a GPN perspective encourages a consideration of ‘non-firm actors’ as constituent influences on processes of production – it recognises that production systems are embedded within wider structures which can have an influence on operations and outcomes. The distinct nature of Chinese production networks in Africa is that there is a high level of state ownership and involvement in mineral extraction, with greater autonomy for private entrepreneurs as you move along the production network. Considering a workplace’s position within a production system, then, adds this additional dimension to understandings of labour agency in Zambia.

The methodological strategy adopted was a multi-method case study approach which focused on two workplaces, each occupying different ends of Chinese structured GPNs in Zambia: extraction and retail. The emphasis was on interviews, which were conducted alongside a survey, observations, and archival research.

7.1 Synthesising results

The argument that has been presented in this thesis is that it is an institutional matrix of factors which influence and shape labour agency in Sino-Zambian workplaces.
Specifically, that it is the intersections and relationships between the Zambian state, Chinese business (state/capital) and Zambian labour that shape the actions of workers and their outcomes. Within the GPN framework, these factors can be considered both horizontal and vertical influences on labour agency. The horizontal factors relate to local specifics such as labour control regimes, local histories, and relations between workers, the state, and trade unions, while the vertical consideration is the distinct nature of ownership in these workplaces within the production network.

In Chapter Four, I explored the historical experiences of Zambian labour, analysing how labour regimes and agency have been constituted across the different economic periods of the Zambian state. This functioned to both provide some contextualisation to current investments and agency, and to assess the situation and resonance of worker organisations in the country. Tracing these evolutions in Zambian labour history contributes much to current explorations of labour agency. Firstly, a vital starting point for this thesis was in recognising the centrality of Zambian labour politics to national politics, and the important role workers have played in national political developments in the past. At independence, President Kaunda recognised the power of labour organisations and attempted to contain and co-opt unions into the single party structures through a series of policies. This included prohibiting more than one union per industry and legally mandating union membership and subscriptions. Paradoxically, however, these measures helped to build one of the strongest and most financially viable labour movements on the African continent. The agency of labour has impacted on pivotal moments in Zambian history, for example the strikes in the early 1990s that contributed to the downfall of the UNIP regime, or as an active agent in the establishment of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy.

Secondly, this chapter showed that the introduction of neoliberal economic reforms in the early 1990s was broadly welcomed by labour, civil society and business communities alike. There was much hope among unions that a liberalised economic system would improve conditions and standards of living for the average worker. Expectations were high, particularly on the Copper Belt, that investors would facilitate national economic development. However, such hopes did not come into fruition. The introduction of
successive structural adjustment programmes decimated Zambian domestic industry and incoming investors rolled back on employment benefits rather than improve them. Urban unemployment soared, pushing more and more citizens into the unregulated informal sector\(^\text{95}\). These are important influences on current labour agency as they contribute to the benchmarks within which workers interpret their conditions and express their agency.

Thirdly, this chapter established that the trade union movement, which was once politically and financially powerful, has been significantly harmed by neoliberal reforms. With a high level of unemployment, union membership, and subsequently financial subscriptions, have been reduced. The opening of the trade union system has increased the number of unions in each industry, dividing the workers' voice. These factors have combined to undermine the strength of the labour movement, which today remains disunited and under-resourced.

With this historical contextualisation in place, Chapter Five analysed the Zambian state's role in regulating labour regimes (and influencing labour agency) in the context of increasing Sino-Zambian interactions. The state is an important influence on the construction of labour regimes and markets through nationally scaled regulatory processes. Despite this, labour geography has been slow to account for the role of national governments in shaping the prospects and potential for labour agency. Considering the state becomes all the more significant in the case of Sino-Zambian workplaces owing to the high level of state involvement and ownership at some stages in Chinese-structured GPNs.

In this chapter the analysis was at two scales: bilateral interactions between the central Zambian state and Chinese capital, and localised interactions and regulation by labour inspectors. In the first section I established that the strategic dimensions of Chinese capital in Africa are characterised by non-interference, hospitality diplomacy, and a willingness to fund 'prestige' investment projects. Such an approach has proved

\[^{95}\text{The most recent research on employment in Zambia shows that only 10\% of employed peoples find their income in the formal sector (See CSO 2007: 2).}\]
particularly attractive to the recipient Zambian state, which, by institutional design, has a high centralisation of power in the office of the President. There have been numerous occasions where the Zambian central state has been willing to intervene on the behalf of Chinese capital, even when highly contentious in the domestic political environment. Perhaps the most pertinent example of this for the analysis of labour agency is the support that was shown to Chinese capital in the immediate aftermath of two violent incidences where striking workers’ were shot by Chinese managers.

In the second section I drew from bilateral interactions and explored the regulation of labour at the local level. While the data is not a nation-wide exploration of local regulatory politics, it does provide an important snap shot of regulation at this point and place in time. Having established the legislative provisions for labour protections I delved into the particularities of labour inspection. Here I highlighted issues of financing, resources, and staff capacity as being immediate impediments to the exercise of the Unit’s functions. While these features are somewhat reflective of state internationalisation and the impact of neoliberalism, there is an important and somewhat unique distinction when it comes to Chinese capital. That is, perceptions of close ties between the central Zambia state and Chinese actors have lessened the willingness of lower-level regulatory agents to fulfil their duties, being as they perceive such actions as futile. At the same time, workers contend that these regulatory agents have been co-opted in a similar manner to political elites and are unwilling to engage with any regulatory efforts they should make. The key findings for this analysis on labour agency, then, are twofold. Firstly, it is established there that labour regulation in Zambia is influenced by forces that operate beyond the local level. Interactions between Chinese capital and labour regulators are informed by interactions between capital and the central state. Secondly, there has been a lack of political will to invest in labour regulation more broadly. Regulatory agents of the government lack the resources and capacity to fulfil their role, making local regulatory processes weak, inefficient, and unable to offer concrete protections for workers.

With this strong grounding in state regulation, Chapter Six analysed the particularities of labour regimes and agency in the two case study areas. While it is difficult to ascertain whether these workplaces exist within the same production network, it is accurate that
they represent two distinct positions within production networks more broadly – one being focused on mineral extraction, the other on the sale of manufactured products. Drawing from the previous two chapters, the analysis here explored the socio-spatial influences on labour agency at the local level considering both horizontal and vertical factors within the GPN.

In the first section of this chapter I analysed labour control regimes in each workplace—an inescapable influence on labour agency, being as this forms the day-to-day realities of working life. I investigated aspects such as workplace control and Sino-Zambian interactions, benefits and remuneration, casualisation, and health and safety. The historical material landscape of each workplace clearly comes into play here, framing workers’ interpretations of their labour conditions. In terms of wages for instance, respondents in Chambishi received on average incomes that exceeded the majority of other sectors in Zambia and indeed the national minimum wage. Rather using these as reference points for comparison, workers instead spoke nostalgically of the era of state-ownership, when the reproduction of labour was broadly internationalised. The industrial awareness of respondents in Chambishi was also an important mark of distinction from those in Kamwala. Workers in the mines had an acute awareness of the value of the commodity they produce which they ascertained from media reports. In Kamwala respondents could not determine the value of their labour power to the same extent and choose to compare their working conditions with people employed in other Kamwala shops and their unemployed neighbours.

While reference points might differ, in both areas benefits and remuneration and job security emerged as the central concerns of employees, followed by Sino-Zambian workplace interactions and workplace safety. The forms of labour agency in both locations were seen as an active response to these anxieties. In the second section, I identified labour agency in each of these spaces and analysed the factors which influenced the strategic terrain of workers’ actions. I argued that forms of agency adopted are not only a reflection of the wider socio-spatial conditions that each workplace is embedded within, but also the self-recognition of workers’ position within the GPN and the political importance (or otherwise) of the labour they are engaged in. In addition to
the culture of each workplace influencing interpretations, there were two important factors at play here. Firstly: the resonance of unionisation and workers relationship with trade union actors. In Chambishi, the history and presence of trade unions has helped to foster a common collective identity among workers that is missing among those employed in Kamwala. However, accusations of corruption and concerns surrounding the outcomes of trade union actions means that workers are willing to engage in non-union sanctioned forms of agency. Secondly: interactions between state actors and labour in both locations are informed by accusations of corruption and collusion with Chinese business. This leads workers to move away from labour regulators as a viable avenue to air grievances.

Though there is some similarity in the nature of workers’ complaints and their perceptions of trade unions and government, the types of agency adopted in both locations are notably different, reflecting horizontal and vertical influences. In Chambishi, workers’ actions have been informed by the historical imperatives of grass roots labour militancy, their perceptions of state-capital alignment, and are predominately, but not exclusively, collective in nature. Characteristic of agency here are large-scale strikes and protests which often turn violent. These have been variably successful. By timing reworking strategies of agency to coincide with the period of resource nationalism in 2006, workers have been able to achieve some concessions from capital. In Kamwala, workers act both individually and collectively, though on a much smaller scale than in Chambishi, i.e. with a small number of colleagues in their immediate workplace rather than across workplaces. Strategies here are characteristic of resilience approaches which help workers deal with the day-to-day realities of their working environments rather than fundamentally change their conditions. Examples include stealing merchandise from the shop, skimming money off profits by raising the price of products, or working slow and taking extended breaks.

While respondents in Chambishi are able to feed into wider political events, the relative dislocation of Kamwala allows Chinese investors to enter without the same political burden. This is an implication of the nature of ownership in the two different spaces of employment – ends of GPNs. In Chinese mining GPNs there is a heavy state involvement
and ownership in the mineral extraction sector. This is reflective of the geostrategic intentions of the Chinese state in Africa. Operations here attract much media attention and political commentary, which workers can feed into to receive some concessions from capital. Comparatively, Kamwala resides at the bottom of a GPN, where the ownership of capital is private and individual, and where investors act with greater autonomy. This means there is not the same attention paid to labour regimes and conditions here, and workers cannot tap into mainstream political consciousness to the same extent.

7.2 Implications and Recommendations

There are a number of important implications that can be drawn from these results. Firstly, the labour regimes analysed in this thesis are not significantly different from other workplaces in Zambia. In some regards they compare unfavourably. For instance, the health and safety conditions in Chambishi and tendency toward casualisation here are considered the worst among mining houses on the Copper Belt (See Fraser and Lungu 2007), while the level of payment in Kamwala falls far below the national minimum wage and comparisons with other retail employees. It has often been argued that Chinese investors are offering African governments an alternative to the Western neoliberal model of development. Meles Zenawi, for instance, the former Ethiopian Prime Minister, has expressed his contempt for neoliberalism whilst proclaiming his admiration for ‘generous’ and ‘dependable’ China (The Economist 21.10.2010). He and his deputy have argued that ‘the free market’ has ‘cost Africa decades in development’ and that by ‘siding with China’ this will not happen again (Ibid.). The results discussed here indicate that Chinese investors are not offering an alternative to neoliberalism when it comes to labour regimes in Zambia. Rather, they are taking advantage of it. Investors have been able to exploit and benefit from the broad embedding of neoliberalism in Zambia - which paved the way for reduced standards of employment, mass redundancies, and casualisation. Investors are further grounding neoliberal ideals in particular locales through labour regimes they are constructing. This has important implications for how we consider China-Africa relations and makes problematic assertions that China truly presents Africa with an alternative to neoliberalism.
In September 2012, UNCTAD (2012) released its annual Trade and Development Report. This argued for a reorientation of wage and labour market policies to tackle inequality and improve on economic inefficiency. Highlighting the flaws of neoliberal labour systems, the report proclaimed, ‘the paradigm of labour-market flexibility has not only failed to reduce unemployment, but tends to exacerbate it’ (Ibid). The authors called for measures to address the weak bargaining of workers, including creating additional public employment opportunities, establishing legal minimum wages, and introducing progressive taxation, as well as supporting labour organisation in the unregulated informal sector (Ibid: 24). Chinese investment in Zambia has much potential to contribute to development, given its scale and the level of employment being created. However, in light of the UNCTAD report, the labour regimes that are being constructed in these Sino-Zambian spaces are not conducive of this goal. It is the responsibility of the Zambian state to effectively regulate and manage investment in a way that benefits its citizens. As we have seen recently at the Lonmin mine in South Africa, where there is a disjuncture between the interests of elites and workers, coupled with disunited trade union system and a perceived lack of government support, the situation can become combustible - politically destabilising and destabilising for industries (Mail and Guardian 14.08.2012).

The theoretical and methodological implications of these findings are twofold. Firstly, this thesis reiterates the need – established in the labour geography literature - to consider the socio-spatial structures within which workplaces’ are embedded to obtain a full account of labour agency. Regarding agency as purely an outcome of the labour control regime encountered by workers would provide a somewhat hollow and limited analysis. Secondly, this thesis identifies the conceptual gains that can be obtained from considering the GPN as a constitutive influence on the strategic terrain of workers and the types of labour agency they adopt. While this is particularly significant in the case of Chinese structured GPNs, there is also much room to utilise this model in other production networks.
7.2.1 Recommendations for the Zambian government and trade unions

At the outset, it was not intended that this thesis would contribute policy recommendations to state (or other) actors. However, given the detailed engagement with both state regulatory agents and trade unionists, I do consider it appropriate to offer some tentative action points to how both these agents could work to improve the situation of workers. Chapter Four clearly demonstrated the capacity, financial and cultural constraints that limited the regulatory action of labour inspectors. While the latter of these is perhaps more difficult to challenge, the former can be addressed to an extent (if political will allows). There is a need for increased, targeted, investment in the Labour Inspections Unit, for example increasing the number of vehicles for available for inspection and the office equipment available for employees. This must be accompanied by more effective staff training programmes and management processes, with clear indications of the number of inspections workers are to carry out, a time frame within which they should be completed, and regular monitoring that targets are being achieved. Also, the state should consider granting labour inspectors the power to allocate fines to errant employers – a strategy that is already permitted by the Zambian Revenue Authority – as a means to counter the long-winded and often delayed processes of securing a prosecution. More broadly, it terms of the state’s legislative framework thought should be given to revising the Employment Act and Industrial Relations Act in an attempt to end the tendency toward casualisation, demand higher protections for workers, and ensure the recognition of collective bargaining and trade unions. Given Zambia’s political economy, the latter might be a difficult task.

Perhaps the greatest concern for trade unions that emerged in the empirical data relates to reputational issues. These are formed in the personal, localised interactions between workers’ and union actors, and so demand a case-by-case approach to achieve improvement. More broadly however, there are some suggestions as to how unions could improve their operations. Firstly, much comment was made of the intimidation of union organisers in Chambishi and concerns that unionists would be fired for communicating workers’ grievances. To address this, union leaders must work with business and government actors to seek greater protections of unionists in the workplace. Secondly, there must be more effective channels of communication for members post-registering a
complaint with union leaders. Many respondents commented on the perceived inaction of unionists and concerns that nothing was done with registered grievances. Whether complaints can be successfully solved or not, if workers were aware of the channels and processes through which their comments were processed their concerns would be somewhat alleviated. Relatedly, unions could work to improve industrial education through seminars and programmes, particularly targeting workplaces which do not have a strong history of industrial relations and workers who have a limited understanding of their industrial rights. There is also much scope for unions to enter the under-considered informal sector, where vast sums of people are unemployed without representation.

7.3 New directions for research

There is much scope to expand this research project, with particular opportunities for a continent wide comparative analysis. First the theoretical framework and methodological approach adopted here could be utilised in the analysis of labour agency in workplaces across Africa. An interesting exploration for instance could be in the socio-spatial influences on labour agency in Botswana, a country which does not have the same political history of trade unions as Zambia or South Africa. There is also much scope for furthering the field of China-Africa studies by applying a similar research strategy to different workplaces, such as manufacturing centres, agriculture, or construction. Similarly, a comparative analysis could be conducted with labour in counties with different functional integration into Chinese GPNs, for example a country of notable mineral wealth (such as Zambia) compared with a manufacturing centre such as Mauritius. Returning to Zambia under new Presidential leadership could also provide an interesting comparison, being as a number of those interviewed for this project are now in the Zambian cabinet (Michael Sata – President; Guy Scott – Vice President; Fackson Shamenda – Minister of Labour and Social Services).

Moving beyond the field of China-Africa studies, the framework adopted here could be utilised to provide a richer account of the actions of workers in a variety of workplaces. Within the field of labour studies, there is potential for exploring the formation of transnational allegiances between workers’ within a GPN. For example have there been
any attempts at solidarity between workers’ in mineral extraction and manufacturing, and what are the factors that influence such exchanges (non-exchanges). Also, there is some scope to consider the experiences of unionisation, collective alliances, and labour agency within the informal sector. In Zambia, there is a limited experience of collective organising in the informal sector. Perhaps the most pertinent example is the Cross-Border Traders Association (CBTA) that links traders along both sides of the Zambia-Zimbabwe border. There is much room to explore new organisational forms and influences in the informal sector, such as the CBTA which spans national boundaries. The recent expressions of labour agency by mining communities in South Africa would provide rich ground for investigation. The model that was utilised here could be easily applied to the analysis of these conflicts.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

In late September 2011, nearly one year after the empirical data for this thesis was collected, Michael Sata, leader of the Patriotic Front was elected President of Zambia. Sata, it must be remembered, was once a vehement critic of Chinese business in opposition, who famously proclaimed investors as ‘infestors’ and arguing that Zambia had been ‘mortgaged’ to China. For the majority of workers interviewed in 2010, both in Kamwala and Chambishi, Sata was a hero – the political figure that would stand up for their interests when others wouldn’t and someone they could trust to improve their working situations. In the run up to the 2011 vote Sata’s focus was markedly different from that which had come before, downplaying the anti-Chinese proclamations he had become famous for. Attention at this time was on the failings of the MMD government in general, rather the practices of foreign investors in particular. Where Chinese actors were mentioned, it was in relation to non-confirmable allegations that Chinese business was helping to fund the MMD election campaign (BBC News 16.09.2011). When I interviewed Michael Sata in 2010 he disputed that he or his party were against Chinese investment - rather that they had concerns over any forms of investment that did not demonstratively ‘benefit the Zambian people’ (Interview with Michael Sata 28.07.2010). Given Sata’s previous proclamations, and that fact that the Patriotic Front was a relatively unknown quantity at this time, there were underlying concerns (particularly among the
major mining houses) that a PF government would increase taxes in the sector and deter future foreign investment (Financial Times 26.09.2012).

Just a matter of days after his inauguration, Sata welcomed his first official to the Zambian State House. Perhaps indicative of his tempered approach to Chinese capital and in recognition of the economic importance of investment from China, the newly elected President welcomed the Chinese Ambassador Zhou Yuxiao. Sata proclaimed ‘We welcome your investment, but as we welcome your investment, your investment should benefit Zambians and not the Chinese’ (Ibid.). In the immediate aftermath of the election, riding on the wave of political change and displaying the political awareness that was identified in this thesis, workers at the Chambishi mine went on strike asking for their salaries to be doubled (Financial Times 24.10.2011). After nearly two weeks of deadlock and significant losses in production, the mine’s management announced that all 1,000 striking employees were to be fired. However, unlike previously, where the MMD leadership should support for Chinese capital, immediately the PF government intervened. The Minister of Labour met with the mine’s management and secured the reinstatement of all workers, with a significant salary increment (The Post 11.10.2011). Whether such action has challenged the perceptions of State-Chinese capital collusion explored in this thesis at the local level remains to be seen. What is does indicate, is that the PF is willing to confront Chinese actors in a manner that was not seen before.

In July 2012, President Sata announced that the national minimum wage in Zambia would be increased by an unprecedented 67% with back dated effect. The Zambia Association of Manufacturers has said that the new wages would have far-ranging consequences including downsizing and the introduction of capital intensive production (Zambia Weekly 30.07.2012). Two months later, Sino-Zambian relations in the mining sector were again placed under international spotlight, when a Chinese manager was killed by his employees during a dispute at the Collum mine over wages. Emphasising the two nations ‘all-weather friendship’, the Chinese Embassy in Lusaka called upon ‘employees and employers to seek to address their grievances and differences through dialogues and consultations within established legal channels, rather than through violence and destruction which does not serve the interests of anybody’ (Zambia Watchdog
08.08.2012). Fackson Shamenda, now Minister of Labour, described the perpetrators as ‘a bunch of criminals who took advantage of the disturbance’ (Financial Times 06.08.2012).

While workers in Chambishi and other mining spaces in Zambia continue to attract international media attention due to their overt expressions of agency, those who labour in Kamwala (and similar Sino-Zambian retail spaces) remain comparatively obscured. Chinese involvement in the African retail sector, when mentioned, continues to focus on the economic impact of low-cost Chinese products for domestic markets, rather than issues of labour regimes and agency. Within the last year, the Tanzanian government has ordered all Chinese vendors to leave the Kariakoo market in the capital, Dar es Salaam, commenting that Chinese businessmen were allowed into the country as investors but not as ‘vendors and shoe-shiners’ (BBC News 7.01.2011). Similarly, in July, the government of Malawi introduced a law which banned foreign traders from operating outside of the country’s main urban areas - a response to protests against the impact of Chinese immigrants on small businesses (Financial Times 08.08.2012). Though somewhat divorced from Beijing’s Africa-strategy, small-scale Chinese entrepreneurs in Africa have, and continue to present diplomatic challenges for Chinese officials.

As investment increases, the spotlight will continue to be placed on Chinese involvement in Africa. This is, in part, due to the actions of workers. Those who labour within Chinese workplaces draw attention to and actively transform the labour regimes they encounter through the actions they adopt. It is here, in the agency of workers that the future of Sino-African relations will be played out.
## Appendix I: List of ‘Elite’ Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position at time of interview</th>
<th>Current position (if changed)</th>
<th>Interview location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fackson Shamenda</td>
<td>Former President of the ZCTU, ICTU</td>
<td>Minister of Labour</td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>21.09.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Sata</td>
<td>M.P, Leader of the Patriotic Front</td>
<td>President of Zambia</td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>28.10.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Guy Scott</td>
<td>M.P, Deputy leader of the Patriotic Front</td>
<td>Vice-President of Zambia</td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>14.07.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Chombo</td>
<td>Investment Promotions Manager, ZDA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>03.06.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Banda</td>
<td>MFEZ Manager, ZDA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>27.09.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Chembe</td>
<td>Director of Public Relations and International Affairs, ZCTU</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>13.09.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Muchimba</td>
<td>Director of Research, Mine Workers Union of Zambia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kitwe</td>
<td>07.10.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday Mulenga</td>
<td>Academic, University of Zambia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>29.11.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerry Finnegan</td>
<td>Director of Lusaka Office; Representative for Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, ILO</td>
<td>Retired, development consultant</td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>13.04.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwell Kaluba</td>
<td>Secretary General of the National Union of Miners and Allied Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kitwe</td>
<td>27.10.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnes N’Gwande</td>
<td>MUZ organiser and PF Councillor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chambishi</td>
<td>07.10.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Sun</td>
<td>Human Resources Manager, 15MCC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chambishi</td>
<td>08.10.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilma Nchito</td>
<td>Academic, University of Zambia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>30.11.2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This questionnaire is being undertaken as part of PhD research into labour conditions in Chinese owned businesses in Zambia. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The information collected in this questionnaire will be kept entirely confidential. Thank you for your participation.

1. What is your job title? .................................................................
2. How long have you been in your current job? ........................
3. How long have you worked in mining? ..........................
4. What time do you usually start work? ..................
5. What time do you usually finish work? ..................
6. How many days per week do you work? ..................
7. Do you have a written contract? Yes □ No □ If yes, how long is the contract for? ..................
8. Do you get paid overtime? Yes □ No □ Please give details: ..........................
9. What is your monthly salary? .................................

10. Do you receive any of the following benefits? Please give details of the amount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food/Lunch Allowance □</th>
<th>Housing allowance □</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Allowance □</td>
<td>Protective Clothing □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please give details of any other benefits that you may receive:  .................................................................

11. Do you always get paid in full? Yes □ No □
If no, please give details: ........................................................................................................
Do you always get paid on time?
   Yes □  No □
If no, please give details: ..................................................................................................................

12. Have you received any training for this job?
   Yes □  No □

   If yes, please give details:
   .................................................................................................................................

13. Are you a member of a trade union?
   Yes □  No □

   If yes, which trade union? .............................................................................................

14. Do you think the trade union representation is:
   Very good □  Good □  Average □  Bad □  Very Bad □

15. What are the main benefits of trade unions?
   .................................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................

16. What are the main disadvantages of trade unions?
   .................................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................

17. Have you made an official complaint about your working conditions?
   Yes □  No □
If yes, did you make this complaint as:

- An individual □
- A group □

Who did you make this complaint to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Trade Union</th>
<th>Government labour inspector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
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</table>

Other □
Please specify .........................

18. What happened with your complaint?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

19. Were you satisfied with the outcome of your complaint?

- Yes □
- No □

Please give details:
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

20. Have you ever gone on strike?

- Yes □
- No □

Please give details:
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
21. How effective do you think striking is in helping workers improve their conditions?
   Very effective □   Effective □   Don't know □   Not effective □   Not at all effective □

22. How would you describe the treatment of workers in your business?
   Very good □   Good □   Average □   Bad □   Very Bad □

23. Comments on your treatment at work:
   ..................................................................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................................................

24. How would you describe your working environment?
   Very good □   Good □   Average □   Bad □   Very Bad □

25. Comments on your working environment:
   ..................................................................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................................................

26. Do you think Chinese managers treat workers,
   Very good □   Good □   Average □   Bad □   Very Bad □

   Additional comments:
   ..................................................................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................................................

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27. The Zambian government is managing and regulating Chinese businesses effectively:
   Strongly Agree □  Agree □  Don’t Know □  Disagree □  Strongly Disagree □
   Additional comments:

28. The Zambian government works to protect workers’ rights:
   Strongly Agree □  Agree □  Don’t Know □  Disagree □  Strongly Disagree □
   Additional comments:

29. What age are you?  
   18-25 □  26-33 □  34-44 □  45 + □

30. Are you?  
   Male □  Female □

   Thank you for your participation
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Photographs