

HOPE, POLITICS AND RISK: THE CASE OF A FAILED CHINESE DAM IN NIGERIA

Olorunfemi Felix¹, Tan-Mullins May², Mohan Giles³, Siciliano Giuseppina⁴ and Urban Frauke⁴

1. Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ojoo, Ibadan, Nigeria.
(felixba2000@yahoo.com)
2. School of International Studies, The University of Nottingham Ningbo China
3. The Open University London
4. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

OUTLINE

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- Nigerian politics and the Zamfara Dam Project
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INTRODUCTION

- The acute needs for improved water resources and energy management in Africa have renewed the interest in large dams
- According to Castellano et al (2015), sub-Saharan Africa is woefully short of electricity
- The recent attention on large dams reawakens longer standing interests from the early post-independence period when dams were seen as essential for modernisation and industrialisation

INTRODUCTION (CONT)

- The Chinese have emerged as major infrastructure providers in Africa through various forms of financing deals
- In this paper we focus on the Zamfara Dam in Northern Nigeria which was conceived in 2008 but failed to get beyond the consultation phase
- In order to learn from failure, this paper addresses the Chinese drivers of hydropower investment in Africa as well as the political dynamics of the recipient country, in this case Nigeria

INTRODUCTION (CONT)

- In doing so we focus on the capacities of the Nigerian state, understood in complex terms as federalised and multi-scalar.
- The case study reveals a process of elite brokerage which bypassed channels of accountability which resulted in very weak consultation with dam-affected communities.

Theoretical framework



- Most work on China as a rising power and its impacts on low and middle income countries has so far been rather speculative, economistic and Africa-centric. Environmental (and social) issues have often been omitted.
- The larger project provides an empirical grounding, address environmental and social issues and focus both on Asia and Africa.
- This is done by using two theoretical frameworks: the political ecology framework and the Asian Drivers framework.

Theoretical framework (Cont



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- The **political ecology framework** provides a basis for analysing the conflicts caused by the various forms of control over the access to natural resources such as water and energy.
- It addresses the unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of environmental change.
- This has impacts on social and economic inequalities.
- This in turn has political implications as power relations are affected and often altered.

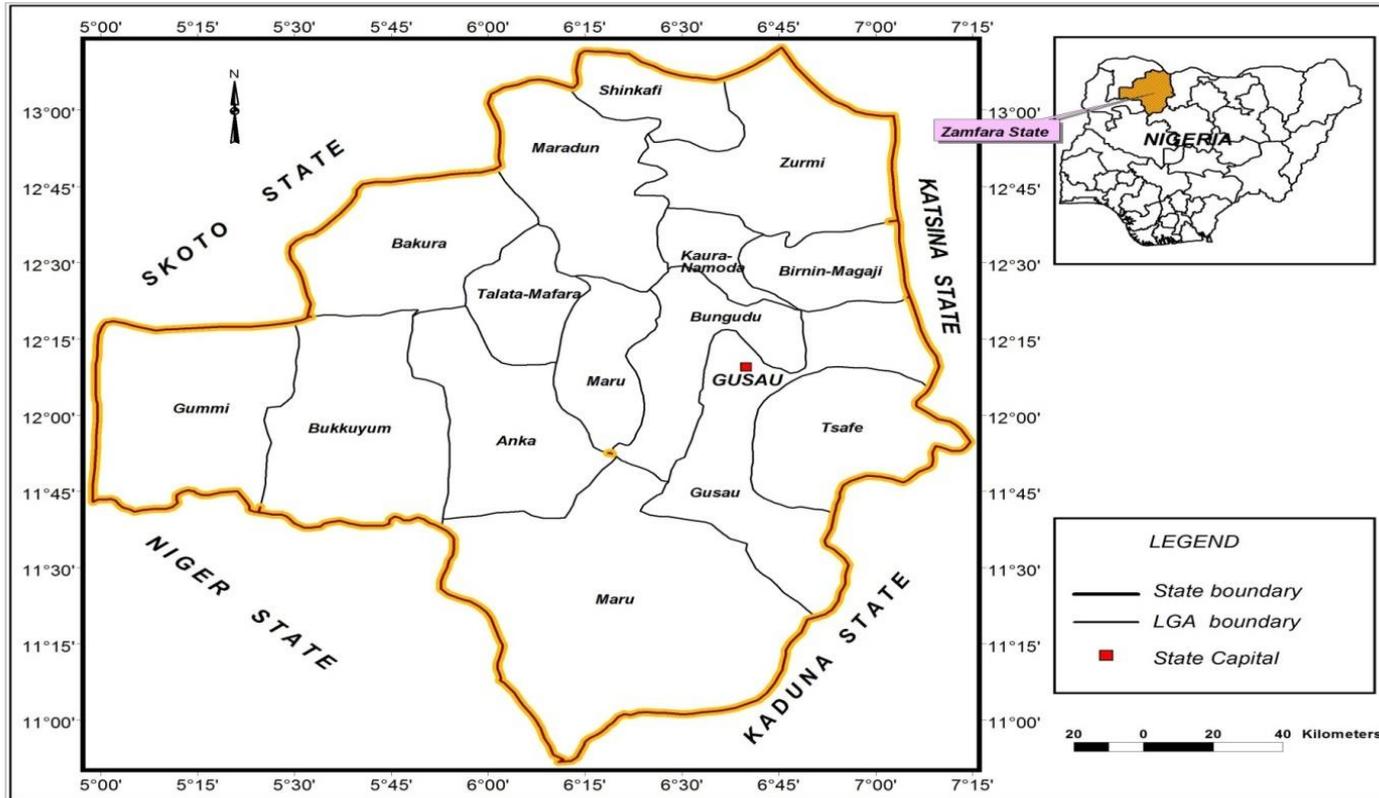
METHODOLOGY

- To analyze the actors involved in the hydropower sector in Nigeria and the Zamfara project a stakeholder mapping approach was used.
- We used the Net-Mapping Approach for the stakeholder analysis to determine key stakeholders, direct and indirect links to other stakeholders and power relations (Schiffer, 2007).
- The methodology includes detailed fieldwork at the proposed dam site in Nigeria and in China.

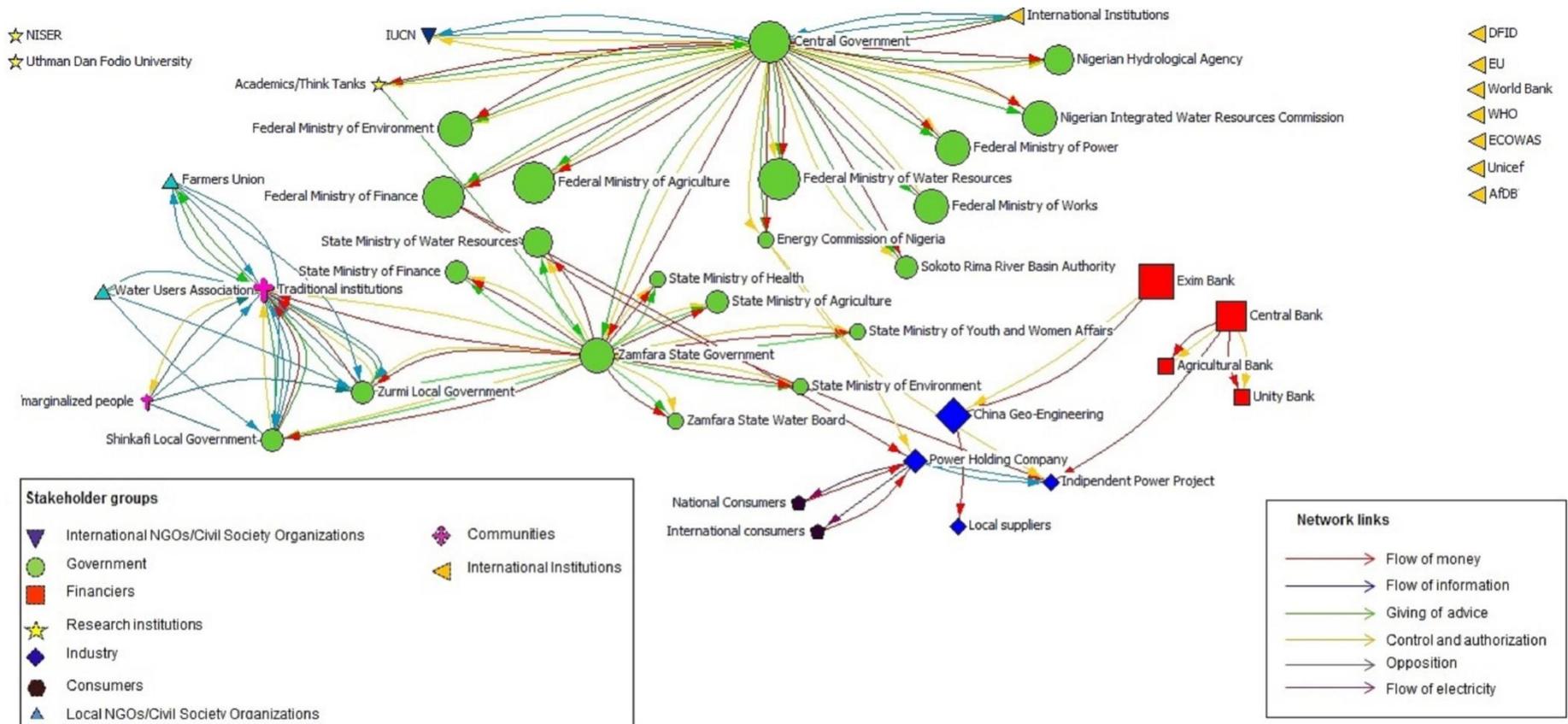
METHODOLOGY (CONT)

- For the Zamfara dam, we conducted 149 surveys with local communities directly affected by the proposed dam through resettlements, 8 focus group discussion (FGDs) with the same affected communities (of which about 50% with women and 40% with men, each FGD was composed of about 5-10 people).
- This involved people from in nine villages around the proposed dam site in August and September 2014.
- The communities in which the fieldwork was conducted are located in the Zamfara State and included: Duhu, Gotawa, Kaface, Kuturu, Mokosa, Rimni, Tsakauna, Tungar Bazace, Tungar Labbo Buzu.

Map of Zamfara State



Stakeholder Map of Zamfara Dam Project



Note: the size of the nodes in the network (each node corresponds to an actor) indicates the different power of the identified actors in terms of influence on hydropower decision and development in Nigeria.

NIGERIAN POLITICS AND THE ZAMFARA DAM PROJECT

- One of the main reasons for the failed dam we found was that the negotiation process for the construction of the Zamfara dam was not opened to the federal regulatory body for dam construction in Nigeria
- The Federal Ministry of Water Resources - FMWR) as stipulated by the existing legislation.
- This is a law that has been flouted over the years by states. .
- The Zamfara dam has not been an exception. It did not appear anywhere on the records of the ministry.

NIGERIAN POLITICS AND THE ZAMFARA DAM PROJECT

- Another reason is the lack of proper negotiation and adequate consultation as regards the Zamfara state project.
- According to Okoye and Achakpa (2007), the World Commission on Dams WCD found that there has been a generalized failure globally to include and recognize affected people and empower them to participate in decision making.
- This lack of wider negotiation and scrutiny was evident in terms of community consultations. Many of the villagers claimed that they were not involved in the consultation process.
- Our findings revealed that the community members knew nothing about the dam until the state government officials and the representative of CGC came to visit the proposed dam site and informed them of the plan to relocate the affected communities as a result of the dam construction.

NIGERIAN POLITICS AND THE ZAMFARA DAM PROJECT

- The findings from the various community surveys indicated that the communities fully accepted the idea of the project.
- They were hoping that the dam project will bring development benefits to these communities.
- Some communities however expressed reservation about the idea of resettlement.
- No further consultations have taken place beyond the initial ones in 2007 and 2008.
- They were not informed of the reason why the project did not take off eventually. So there has been a lot of agitation on the part of the communities on the status of the project.

Gotowa: The host community



Proposed dam site







CONCLUSION

- Like many other African countries, Nigeria has embraced China as an economic partner.
- Though, Chinese firms have brought into the Nigerian construction industry intense competition on project finance and speed of delivery.
- Nevertheless, joint ventures based on deep appreciation and understanding of each other's culture and influences on business operations are essential, as strategic partnerships between Chinese firms and Nigerian government at different levels cannot be ignored.
- It is suggested that motivation for and implementation of development projects of this nature should transcend political whims and caprices of politicians and ensuring more transparency and broad consultation.

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Thank you for your kind attention