

Topic:

**The new resource politics:
Can Australia and South Africa accommodate China?**

by Assoc Prof Mills Soko

Abstract:

The material transformation of the Chinese economy is forcing a concomitant process of political adjustment, and not just in China. Other states are being forced to accommodate the 'rise of China'. In this context this paper does two things. First, it presents a comparative analysis of China's impact on two countries —Australia and South Africa—which have little in common other than a wealth of natural resources and a possible status as middle powers. This is a particularly useful exercise because these states are geographically distant and have very different political structures and general developmental histories. Second, the paper considers how China's bilateral ties look from a Chinese perspective in these two very different relationships. Such an analysis reminds us that resource dependency is a two-way street. The paper argues that underlying material realities are constraining and to some extent determining the domestic and foreign policies of three very different states that otherwise have little in common.

Speaker: Mills Soko

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Mills Soko earned his undergraduate degree in Social Sciences from the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1992. Soon thereafter he worked for a year as a research assistant with UCT's Equal Opportunities Research Project. From 1994 to 1995 he was employed by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa as a researcher on parliamentary affairs, monitoring and preparing reports on the work of parliamentary committees in South Africa's first democratic national legislature.

In 1996, he joined the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) – the upper house of the South African Parliament – as a researcher to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs, and Public Enterprises. During this period he completed a Master's degree in International Studies through the University of Stellenbosch. This was followed by his

appointment as Head of Policy and Legislative Research in the NCOP, where he oversaw and coordinated the work of committee researchers.

Subsequently he resumed his academic studies and obtained a Master's degree in International Political Economy from the University of Warwick. In 2004, he completed a doctoral thesis on the political economy of trade policy reform in post-apartheid South Africa at the same university.

Apart from being Associate Professor of International Political Economy at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business, he is the Founding Director of Mthente Research and Consulting Services. He is deputy chairperson of the editorial board of New Agenda, a member of the editorial board of AfricaGrowth Agenda, and a research associate of both the South African Institute of International Affairs and the Institute for Global Dialogue. He chairs the board of trustees of Inyathelo (The South African Institute of Advancement), and is a member of the Evian Group's Brains Trust. He is also a member of the Africa Business Network.

He previously chaired a working group on education and employment under the auspices of the Africa-Germany Partnership, an initiative of the former President of the Federal Republic of Germany Horst Köhler. He was a member of the panel of judges for the Africa SME Awards in 2006, 2007 and 2009. And he was a member of the Warwick Commission on The Future of the Multilateral Trading System.

Event Details

Date: Friday 19 August
Time: 13:00 - 14:00 (Sandwiches will be served.)
Venue: Boardroom 1
UCT Graduate School of Business, Portsworld Rd, Green Point

For catering and seating purposes, please RSVP to Tamlyn at 021 406 1441 or tamlyn.mawa@gsb.uct.ac.za