

**ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA-CHINA RELATIONS**

**BY**

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**ART1801076**

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
AND DIPLOMACY.**

**SEPTEMBER, 2023**

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **Akhakienlen Mercy Edewede** and is adequate in scope, content and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an award of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree in International Studies and Diplomacy.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to Almighty God for His guidance and protection throughout my academic journey. I am also grateful to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Akhakienlen, for their unwavering support.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who helped to complete this report. My supervisor, Dr. Nwaokocha Odigwe, deserves special gratitude for all of his essential advice, creative suggestions, and unflinching support during the fabrication process and the preparation of this project.

I would like to acknowledge with much appreciation, the crucial role of the lecturers in the department of history and international studies of this great university, the head of the department, Dr. Albert Onobhayedo, the staff adviser, Dr Charles.O. Osarumwense. Prof. Eddy Erhagbe, Prof. O. B. Osadolor, Prof. E.A. Ifidon, Dr. Iweze, Prof. J. I. Osagie, Dr. Frank Ikponwonsa, Dr. E. Toby, and a host of others who are too many to name for shared knowledge in all of your classes. God will abundantly bless each and every one of you.

I am really thankful to my beloved parents and siblings: Victoria and Emmanuel, and my uncle, Mr. Victor Akhakienlen your support and guidance will be duly rewarded by God.

My thanks and appreciations also go to my colleagues, friends and seniors in developing the project and people who have willingly helped me out with their abilities. Mr Bami,

Mrs Felicity Okosodo, Mr Christian Onoja, Ayodeji, Scholastica, Chika, Olori, Edith,  
Mirabel. Thank you for all you do, God bless you.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### Introduction

Nigeria and China, two populous nations with rich histories, have developed a multifaceted and unique relationship over the years. Nigeria, located in West Africa, gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960, while China, situated in East Asia, underwent significant political and social transformations throughout the 20th century. Early commerce interactions, cultural exchanges, and joint resistance to imperialism and colonialism had roles in the development of their relationship.<sup>1</sup> Chinese explorers of maritime routes and contacts with local populations along the West African Coast helped establish China's foothold in West Africa centuries ago. These early exchanges involved the sharing of cultural influences, ideas, and commodities.<sup>2</sup> With its numerous resources and advantageous location, Nigeria significantly contributed to the facilitation of these economic links.

Nigeria started down a new path of international engagement after gaining independence. In 1971, Nigeria recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the legitimate government, replacing its previous recognition of Taiwan. Their diplomatic

connections took a new direction as a result of this choice, which also provided the groundwork for future improvements<sup>3</sup>. Nigeria and China had friendly but modest relations until 2000, the thirty years that followed Nigeria's official recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1971, diplomatic relations between the demographic giants of Africa and Asia produced little consequences economically. The governor Tafawa Balewa sent economic delegation to Beijing led by Minister of Finance, Festus Okotieboh. China's split from the Soviet Union ideologically in 1963 and began to support countries that are non-aligned. Nigeria and China went briefly in opposite directions during the Nigerian Civil War due to the fact that China went ahead to support the Biafra and fortunately, the Biafra state was not recognized by the Chinese government. In a bid to reconcile with countries that backed Biafra, the government of Yakubu Gowon after ending the Biafran War in 1970, recognized China in 1971. Gowon visited Beijing in 1974 and met with Mao Zedong. In 2002, there was a Joint Communiqué between the People's Republic of China and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The bilateral collaboration between Nigeria and China has significantly increased. It spans variety of fields, including commerce and investment, infrastructure improvement, energy, agriculture and cross-cultural interactions. Nigeria has emerged as a big market for Chinese goods and services, and China has grown to be one of Nigeria's

largest trading partners and a substantial source of foreign direct investments. Both countries have over the years strengthened their relations. Nigeria and China relations have evolved over time in response to changes in geopolitics, economic globalization and international relations dynamics. Understanding the historical background, significant turning points and underlying forces that have molded is essential to understanding how things stand today and what the future may hold for Nigeria-China relations. This research project intends to shed light on the complexity, obstacles, and possibilities that have characterized Nigeria-China relations across time through this study.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this research project is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the origins and development of Nigeria-China relations. While the specific objectives include;

1. To examine the historical background of Nigeria-China relations, including early trade interactions, cultural exchanges, and the influence of historical events on their relationship.
2. To identify and analyze the key milestones and significant shifts in Nigeria-China relations, from Nigeria's independence to the present day.

3. To examine the political dimensions of the Nigeria-China relationship, including diplomatic engagements, high-level visits, and multilateral cooperation.
4. To analyze the economic cooperation between Nigeria and China, focusing on trade patterns, investment flows, infrastructure projects, and energy collaboration.
5. To identify the challenges and opportunities in Nigeria-China relations, considering factors such as balancing relations with other global powers, socio-economic implications, and political considerations.

### **Scope of Study**

The scope of this study on the origins and development of Nigeria-China relations encompasses various dimensions of the bilateral relationship. The research will primarily focus on the period from Nigeria's independence in 1960 to the present day. However, in order to provide a comprehensive analysis, the study may also delve into earlier historical interactions between the two regions. The study will examine the political, economic, and cultural aspects of Nigeria-China relations. It will explore diplomatic engagements, high-level visits, and multilateral cooperation as part of the political dimension. The economic dimension will cover trade patterns, investment flows, infrastructure projects, and energy collaboration. The cultural dimension will include educational partnerships, people-to-

people interactions, and the influence of cultural exchanges. While the primary focus will be on Nigeria-China relations, the study may also consider the regional and global context that has shaped their relationship. It may explore the influence of other major powers, such as the United States and other African countries, on Nigeria-China relations.

## **Methodology**

The research methodology for studying the origins and development of Nigeria-China relations will involve a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, incorporating primary and secondary data sources. A comprehensive review of academic literature, books, scholarly articles, and relevant publications will be conducted to establish a theoretical framework and gather insights into the historical context, key events, and factors influencing Nigeria-China relations. This will provide a solid foundation for the research. Primary data will be collected through interviews, surveys, and interactions with relevant stakeholders such as diplomats, policymakers, experts, and individuals with firsthand experience in Nigeria-China relations.

These primary sources will provide valuable insights, perspectives, and anecdotes that enhance the understanding of the subject matter. Secondary data will be collected from government reports, diplomatic documents, statistical databases, news articles, and

other credible sources. This data will be used to analyze trade patterns, investment flows, cultural exchanges, political engagements, and economic cooperation between Nigeria and China. The collected data, both primary and secondary, will be carefully analyzed using qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. Qualitative analysis will involve coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation of textual data, such as interview transcripts and diplomatic documents. Quantitative analysis will involve statistical methods to examine trends, patterns, and correlations in trade data, investment flows, and economic indicators.

## **Literature Review**

The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the existing scholarly work on the origins and development of Nigeria-China relations, shedding light on the historical context, key milestones, and factors influencing this bilateral partnership. Several scholars have highlighted the historical background of Nigeria-China relations, emphasizing the early trade interactions between the two regions. Nigeria and China relations have been the focus of extensive research, covering various dimensions such as economic, political, cultural exchanges. D. S. Smith, discussed the maritime explorations of Chinese traders along the West African coast, noting the exchange of goods and cultural influences that laid the foundation for future relations in "China and Africa to

1800: A Review and Comparative Analysis of African and Chinese Economic and Cultural Exchanges to 1800"<sup>4</sup> .Furthermore, X. Li, & D. H. Johnson emphasized the significant trade routes and commodities, such as textiles and porcelain that were exchanged between Nigeria and China during ancient time in "The ancient Chinese porcelain trade in the Nigerian Guinea Coast"<sup>5</sup>.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China has also been a key area of focus for scholars, D. M. Anderson, discussed Nigeria's recognition of the People's Republic of China as the legitimate government in 1971, replacing its previous recognition of Taiwan in his work titled "Nigeria's recognition of the People's Republic of China"<sup>6</sup> This decision according to him, marked a turning point in their relationship and paved the way for closer diplomatic ties. Moreover, in H. Wang, & L. Chen, article titled "Diplomatic visits between China and Nigeria (1960-2015): A historical analysis"<sup>7</sup>, they examined the early diplomatic exchanges and visits between Nigeria and China, highlighted the evolving nature of political relations between the two countries. The Cold War era has been a significant period in Nigeria-China relations. Many scholars have discussed the alignment between Nigeria and China during this time. D. H. Johnson presented an analysis on Nigeria's policy of non-alignment and its decision to forge closer ties with China. He also cited common interests and shared goals in

opposing colonialism and imperialism in "Nigerian Foreign Policy and China: Non-Alignment and Beyond"<sup>8</sup>. Similarly, X. Li, & D. S. Smith both emphasized the ideological dimensions that influenced Nigeria-China relations during the Cold War and the impacts of these alignments on bilateral cooperation in "Nigeria, China, and the Ideology of Non-Alignment: The Cold War and Beyond"<sup>9</sup>

Several studies have explored the economic dimensions of Nigeria-China relations. Highlighting the increasing volume of trade and the changing composition of goods exchanged. A. Adesoji, & A. M. Jinadu, emphasized the role of China as a major trading partner and the impact of this economic relationship on Nigeria's trade balance. Their work, "China-Nigeria Trade Relations: Implications for Nigeria's Balance of Trade"<sup>10</sup> examined the trade patterns between the two countries, Furthermore, A. Chen & O. Okafor, discussed the growth of Chinese investments in Nigeria, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing, and energy. They analyzed the motivations behind Chinese investments and their implications for Nigeria's economic development in "China's investment in Nigeria: Opportunities, Challenges, and Implications for Economic Development"<sup>11</sup>

In terms of political dimensions, researchers have examined the diplomatic engagements and multilateral cooperation between Nigeria and China. An analysis on the

political exchanges at the high-level visits between Nigerian and Chinese leaders was done by S. A. Adejumobi. His work, "Nigeria-China Relations: A Political Economy Perspective"<sup>12</sup> pointed out the agreements and memoranda of understanding that have strengthened bilateral cooperation. Additionally, Q. Heng & O. O. Oluwaniyi, in "Nigeria-China relations in regional and global organizations: A comparative study of the AU and the UN"<sup>13</sup> discussed the involvement of Nigeria and China in regional and international organizations, such as the African Union and the United Nations, and their collaboration on issues of mutual interest, including peacekeeping and sustainable development.

Scholarly interest has also been shown in the topic of cultural contacts between China and Nigeria. In "The new scramble for Africa: An analysis of Nigeria-China relations".<sup>14</sup> In his examination of the educational partnerships and scholarships offered by the Chinese government to Nigerian students, B. Salawu explored the impact of these programs on educational development and people-to-people interactions. Furthermore, H. Yang, & O. O. Akinwumi, "Chinese Cultural Practices in Nigeria: Language Teaching, Films, and Media"<sup>15</sup>. investigated the influence of Chinese cultural practices, such as language teaching and the spread of Chinese films and media, on Nigerian society, emphasizing the cultural dynamics and challenges that arise from such exchanges. Dr. S.

Ifeanyi Odinye explored the development of Chinese language in Nigeria as a tool for national development and economic integration. His work “The Development of Chinese Language in Nigeria” aimed at examining the level of success recorded in teaching and learning of Chinese language in Nigeria.

Moreover, several scholars have discussed the challenges and opportunities in Nigeria-China relations. The potential benefits as well as concerns regarding debt sustainability and local content development was presented by F. C. Onuoha in “China's infrastructure projects in Nigeria: Implications and challenges”<sup>16</sup> where he also examined the implications of China's infrastructure projects in Nigeria. Additionally, C. Obi, & F. K. Owusu-Ansah, “China's engagement in Nigeria's extractive industries: Implications for governance, environmental sustainability, and social responsibility”<sup>17</sup> analyzed the impacts of China's engagement in Nigeria's extractive industries, particularly in the oil sector, highlighting issues related to governance, environmental sustainability, and social responsibility.

Despite the extensive research conducted on Nigeria-China relations, there are still some notable gaps that present opportunities for further investigation. First, there is a need for more research on the subnational dynamics of the relationship, particularly the involvement of state governments, local communities, and non-state actors in fostering

bilateral cooperation. This can provide a more nuanced understanding of the decentralized aspects of Nigeria-China relations. Second, in-depth analysis of cultural exchanges between Nigeria and China is lacking. Further research could explore the nature and impact of educational partnerships, language teaching programs, cultural diplomacy initiatives, and the experiences of individuals engaged in cultural interactions between the two countries. This can contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural dimensions and societal impacts of the bilateral relationship. Third, while economic aspects have been widely examined, more research is required to evaluate the long-term implications of Nigeria-China economic cooperation. This includes assessing the sustainability of Chinese investments, the effects on local industries and employment, and the broader socio-economic consequences of Nigeria's economic ties with China.

The relevance of this research lies in its contribution to various aspects. Firstly, it addresses gaps in the existing literature, such as the limited focus on subnational dynamics, the evaluation of long-term economic implications, and the comprehensive analysis of cultural exchanges. Secondly, the research findings will have practical implications for policymakers, businesses, and investors, providing insights for shaping strategies and policies related to Nigeria-China relations. Thirdly, the study promotes cross-cultural understanding and cultural diplomacy efforts, fostering mutual

understanding and strengthening the social fabric of the bilateral relationship. Finally, the research contributes to the academic discourse by adding new insights, perspectives, and analysis to the field of international relations, diplomacy, economics, and cultural studies.

## **Chapter Outline**

To ensure the aim and objectives are achieved, this project is divided into five chapters.

### **Chapter One: Background to the Study**

- Introduction
- Aim/Objectives
- Scope of Study
- Literature Review

### **Chapter Two: The Early Years: Foundations of Nigeria-China Relations**

- Explores historical background of Nigeria-China relations
- Covers pre-independence era to present day
- Examines early diplomatic engagements and post-Cold War shifts
- Insights into factors influencing Nigeria-China relationship development.

### **Chapter Three: Economic Dimensions and Political Engagement/Diplomatic Relations of Nigeria and China in the 21st Century**

- Focuses on economic and political aspects of Nigeria-China relations
- Examines trade and investment dynamics, highlighting key sectors
- Discusses political and diplomatic dimensions of the relationship
- Covers diplomatic exchanges, high-level visits, and mutual support in international forums

#### Chapter Four: **Challenges and Opportunities in Nigeria-China Relations**

- Analyzes challenges and opportunities in the Nigeria-China relationship
- Examines economic challenges, including trade imbalances and market access issues
- Explores impact of competition on Nigerian industries
- Discusses political challenges, such as geopolitical considerations and sovereignty concerns

#### Chapter Five: **Conclusion**

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## CHAPTER TWO

## **THE EARLY YEARS: FOUNDATIONS OF NIGERIA-CHINA RELATIONS**

Nigeria-China relations have a long history that dates back to the early years of Nigeria's independence. This chapter explores the foundations of this relationship, highlighting key events and factors that contributed to the development of bilateral ties between the two countries. From diplomatic engagements to economic cooperation, this chapter provides an overview of the early years of Nigeria-China relations.

### **The Evolution of Trade and Diplomatic Ties: Pre-independence to 1971**

China's initial engagement with Africa can be traced back to the early 15th century, when Chinese traders and explorers made landfall along the African coast. This early interaction was facilitated by the renowned navigator Zheng He during the Ming Dynasty of China. Zheng He, who lived from 1371 to 1435, commanded one of the largest fleets of the time and embarked on expeditions that covered more than 30 countries and regions in Asia and Africa. In his African expedition, Zheng He led around 200 ships and a crew of approximately 27,800 individuals, establishing a foundation for China's early connections with the African continent.<sup>1</sup> All these took place almost a hundred years before Europe discovered and colonised Africa. Sino – African relations therefore, date back to centuries. In the case of Nigeria, Ogunsanwo writes that Nigeria's

first informal contact with China was through Egypt. According to him, the first contact between China and Nigeria was after the establishment of the Chinese Embassy in Cairo (1956), when the embassy's trade officer, Chan Hian Kang, made contact with Nigeria, Tunisia, and Libya visited Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1957.<sup>2</sup> The first official contacts between Nigeria and China took place in the late 1960s. According to Owoeye, which happened when China was invited to Nigeria's independence celebrations. The Chinese delegation delivered congratulatory messages from Zhou Enlai and the late Vice Premier Chen Yi. Chinese leaders praised the "great victory won by the Nigerian people in the fight against colonialism."<sup>3</sup>

The delegation then visited parts of the country before returning to China. Owoeye writes that Nigeria responded to this gesture when, after being admitted to the United Nations (UN) later that year, it supported China's membership in the world body. It did so by voting against US anti-China proceedings on October 8, 1960.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of previous developments, it was clear that then Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa's government had no interest to open diplomatic relations with China or any other Eastern Bloc country. The reason for this is not so far-fetched. Owoeye writes that upon independence, Nigeria's political leaders were not only pro-Western but vehemently anti-Communist.<sup>5</sup> The result of this particular arrangement was that Nigeria's attitude toward

communist China followed what then appeared to be a clear pattern for most of its relations with the socialist states. Meaning - diplomatic isolation was sometimes accompanied by scathing attacks against the "subversive" communist ideology at home. Furthermore, the Balewa regime gained political power from the colonialists on the golden plateau. Consequently, Balewa held no grudge against the British or their Western allies.

Moreover, Balewa and his team shared a similar worldview to the former colonial rulers due to their education and social nature. China's attitude as a vanguard of the proletarian state against the bourgeois imperialist state therefore made no impression on the Lagos conservative regime. It is important to note here that a factor that shaped the values and worldview of Nigeria's ruling elite at the time was the violent anti-communist offensive of the colonial authorities in the 1950s. For example, according to Osaba, an order was issued in Lagos on June 28, 1955, signed by Acting Deputy Secretary of the Council of Ministers A.M. Muir, banning a total of 33 books, pamphlets, etc. Publications that may contain communist propaganda content. In July 1957, the last Colonial Minister proudly announced in the House of Commons:

The exclusion of aggressive communists from civil service and public service is the Government's policy, endorsed by the House, and

this policy is voluntarily promoted by many commercial entities...and the policy that pursues this is that it is sometimes necessary, at the discretion of the Governor-General, to withhold passports and travel documents from those wishing to travel to countries beyond the Iron Curtain for no apparent reason.<sup>6</sup>

For some Nigerians, including young people who wanted to study in a socialist country, these restrictive regulations severely restricted their freedom of movement. Then, when Balewa became prime minister in 1957, his government's anti-communist stance was even more aggressive than that of his predecessors.<sup>7</sup> On March 3, 1958, when the Prime Minister had the passport of Mrs. Funmmilayo Ransom Kuti confiscated in the Federal House of Commons for her communist ties, the government's anti-communist policy launched by the Secretary-General in July was revoked. He said repeatedly. "I and my colleagues are determined to take all possible steps to prevent the infiltration of communism and communist ideas into Nigeria while we are responsible for the welfare of the Nigerian federal government and its people," Nigeria.<sup>8</sup> Despite the above, Owoeye argues that pro-Chinese sentiment has always existed in Nigeria. Radical intellectuals, trade unionists and journalists formed the core of the group. He said, contacts between Nigerian and Chinese trade union leaders are known to have begun even before independence.<sup>9</sup>

Nigerian trade union leaders have secretly visited China since the 1950s to solicit and receive financial and material assistance. Indeed, representatives from Nigeria were among those accepted by the All-China Trade Union Confederation in Beijing in 1958.<sup>10</sup> By 1963, pro-Chinese factions in the country were united under the banner of the Nigeria-China Friendship Association. The association began with a violent anti-American attitude, criticizing Balewa's brave tendencies<sup>11</sup>. It should be noted that although China had taken steps to expand its contacts with Nigeria, these contacts were sporadic and loose due to the lack of formal relations. Moreover, neither (China's) trade nor development aid was very attractive to Nigeria. For example, in September 1964, China sent a goodwill mission to Lagos. During the visit, China's Vice Minister of Commerce, Mr. Lu Tu Chang, offered Nigeria China's assistance and in the form of technical assistance. He also promised to respect the country's territorial integrity and independence.<sup>12</sup> Following the news from China, Foreign Ministry State Minister Alhaji Nuhu Bamali said the goodwill mission was a milestone in the yet-to-be-formalized Nigerian-China relations. He later assured China that Nigeria was seriously considering establishing diplomatic ties with China.<sup>13</sup>

Regarding China's offer of aid, Alhaji Bamali said that Nigeria would welcome any economic aid from any country in the world, provided it was unconditional aid.<sup>14</sup> It

was in this atmosphere that the January 15, 1966 military coup took place, but the Chinese welcomed a "reactionary" coup, perhaps in the hope that the new leader would be less pro-Western than the Balewa regime. Whether China's optimism is right or wrong, the point is that this change did not bring China the diplomatic recognition it so desperately needed. With formal recognition still pending, the Nigerian Civil War broke out on July 6, 1967. During the civil war, China was suspected of working with Tanzania to support Biafra's secession efforts. This perception is reinforced by Tanzania's perception of Biafra, and because of close ties between Tanzania and China, and the impetus that China will use the civil war to put pressure on Nigeria on the grounds that there is no relationship between the two countries was done. However, with the normalization of relations between the two countries in 1971, these uncomfortable details were erased or set aside.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Era of Formal Ties, 1971 – Till Date**

Nigeria, which had always expressed its intention to establish formal diplomatic relations with China, finally did so on February 10, 1971. First, China opened an embassy in Lagos on April 6, 1971, but Nigeria retaliated in October of the same year. Nigeria showed its diplomatic support for China by voting in favor of the Albanian Resolution, which finally regained China's seat on the UN Security Council on 25 October 1971.<sup>16</sup>

Since then, bilateral relations between the two countries have developed smoothly and steadily. Diplomatic relations between China and Nigeria have been marked by mutual visits by the leaders of both sides. Chinese leaders who have visited Nigeria are as follows: Minister of Foreign Affairs Fang Yi (November 1972), Vice Premier Lin Geng Biao (October, 1978), Vice Premier Huang Hua (November 1981), Vice Premier Tian Jiyun (November 1984), Vice Premier Wu Xueqian (March 1990), Vice Premier and Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen (January 1995), State councillor and secretary general of the state council Luo Gan (September 1996), Premier Li Peng (May 1997), Special Envoy of President Jiang Zeming, State councillor Ismail Amat (May 1999), Foreign minister Jang Jiaxuan (January, 2000), President Jiang Zemin (April 2002), Vice chairman of the standing committee of the people's congress, Hand Qide (December, 2003) and President Hu Jintao (April 2006).<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, Nigerian leaders who have visited China are as follows: Minister of External Affairs, Okoi Arikpo (April 1973), Head of State, Gen. Yakubu Gowon (September 1974), Chief of staff, supreme Headquarters, Brigadier Shehu Yar'Adua (April 1979), Vice President Dr. Alex Ekwueme (March, 1983), Chief of Army staff Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (September, 1984), Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr. Ibrahim Gambari (May, 1985), Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Sani Abacha (October, 1989),

Chief of Defense Staff, General Abdulsalami Abubakar (July, 1997), President Olusegun Obasanjo (April 1999 and August 2001), President of Senate, Anyim Pius Anyim (December 2001), Vice President Atiku Abubakar (July 2002), and Deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, Chibundu Nwuche (July 2002).<sup>18</sup>

From the above, it can be seen that since 1971, every Nigerian leadership has determined it appropriate to send a delegation to consult with the Chinese leadership. This development probably demonstrates the importance of continued personal contact when dealing with Chinese people. Similarly, China has used “face-to-face” contact diplomacy to manage its relations with Nigeria. Therefore, it can be argued that these direct contacts are important to China-Nigeria relations as they have strengthened friendly relations by providing opportunities for mutual understanding between the two countries. China's policy on Nigeria is based on a number of useful and mutually acceptable criteria, according to China's official website. As the government pointed out, strengthening solidarity and cooperation with African countries has always been an important part of China's independent foreign policy and peace.

Unswervingly inheriting the tradition of China-Nigeria friendship, China will establish a new type of strategic partnership with Nigeria, characterized by political equality, mutual trust and economic cooperation, based on the fundamental interests of

both Chinese and African peoples. Ezirim said it would be established and developed a win- win cooperation and cultural exchanges. Ezirim therefore outlined the general principles and goals of China's Nigeria policy as follows: First, China adheres to the five principles of peaceful coexistence (good faith, friendship, equality, mutual benefit and common development), respects Nigeria's choice of independent development path, and supports Nigeria's efforts to strengthen through solidarity. In addition, China supports Nigeria's efforts in economic development and nation-building, cooperates in various ways in economic and social development, and promotes common prosperity between China and Nigeria. China will likewise strengthen cooperation with Nigeria in the United Nations and other multilateral systems, support each other's legitimate demands and reasonable proposals, and urge the international community to pay more attention to Nigeria's peace and development issues. We will continue to demand it from society. Similarly, China and Nigeria will learn from and leverage each other's experience and cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture and health. Finally, China will support Nigeria's capacity building efforts and work with Nigeria to explore sustainable development paths.<sup>19</sup>

According to Onuoha, the basis of China – Nigeria relationship can best be summarized in a speech at the Organisation of African Unity, by the former Chinese

President, Jiang Zemin, when he announced that: “China is willing to consolidate and develop a long – term stable cooperation relationship with African countries in the 21st century, under the five principles of peaceful coexistence (principle of sincerity, friendship, equality, mutual benefit and common development)”.<sup>20</sup> He expressed the Chinese people’s sincere and decisive attitude towards deepening their friendship with the African people, and stated that the Chinese government will continue its economic and trade cooperation with Africa on the principles of equality and mutual benefit, diversified forms, efficiency and common development. Regarding the nature or dimension of cooperation between the two countries, Chinese Minister Shi Guangsheng identified four major areas of cooperation at the "Forum for China-Africa Cooperation" established in 2000. These areas are to promote trade, investment, economic and technical cooperation while improving the scope and level of cooperation. Strengthen communication and cooperation in information technology and e-commerce. Strengthen dialogue and consultation mechanisms between Chinese and African governments to address problems arising from cooperation, improve communication, leverage each other's experience and make progress together. Strengthen coordination and cooperation in international and regional economic organizations, strive for economic prosperity and development in China and Africa, and protect the interests of developing countries.<sup>21</sup>

Whatever Nigeria's relationship with China looks like today, it revolves around these core areas.

In conclusion, the early years of Nigeria-China relations laid a solid foundation for the close and multifaceted bilateral relationship that exists today. The establishment of diplomatic relations, shared ideological affinities, economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, political solidarity, and military collaboration have all contributed to the growth and strengthening of relations between the two nations. These foundational aspects have set the stage for the further exploration of the evolving dynamics of Nigeria-China relations in subsequent chapters.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF NIGERIA AND CHINA IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

This chapter delves into the multifaceted relationship between Nigeria and China in the 21st century, with a specific focus on the economic dimensions and political engagement/diplomatic relations between the two nations. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the economic and political ties have evolved and influenced the bilateral partnership.

## **Economic Dimensions of Nigeria-China Relations**

Economic relations between Nigeria and China date back to 1971 when the two countries signed the Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and since then trade relations between the two countries have grown in the last decade from the limited and intermittent contact to an increasingly complex and expensive business engagement.<sup>1</sup> The volume of trade between Nigeria and China grew at low levels until rapid growth turned China in 1993 from a net exporter of crude oil to the second-largest importer of crude oil in the world.<sup>2</sup> The trade volume between the two countries grew by nearly 300 percent since 2004 and reached the peak of \$7.2 billion in

2008.<sup>3</sup> The trade volume between the two countries in 2009 reached \$ 7.3 billion and \$7.7 billion in 2010 respectively.<sup>4</sup> With that level of trade, Nigeria is now the second biggest China trade partner in Africa, after South Africa. A surge in Nigeria imports of Chinese goods relative to Nigeria exports to China has resulted in a trade deficit with China and this is expected to grow significantly due to increased trade relations until Nigeria can offer its industrial producers home-grown alternatives of the same quality at competitive prices.

Nigeria's exports to China include food, animals, crude materials, oils, chemical products and manufactured products.<sup>5</sup> In 2000, four broad commodities were exported totaling US\$307.3 million, with the main export commodity being mineral fuel and lubricants which represented US\$273.7 million followed by crude materials which totaled US\$33.3 million, others such as vegetable oil, wax, fats totaled US\$0.1 million, while food and animals totaled US\$0.2 million.<sup>6</sup> While Nigeria's exports to China increased from US\$307.3 million in 2000 to US\$526.9 million in 2005, China's share in Nigeria.<sup>7</sup> Also, Nigeria's total imports from China increased from US\$5.3 billion in 2000 to US\$17.7 billion in 2005.<sup>8</sup> In 2005, imports of machinery and transport equipment which totaled US\$1229.7 million ranked first followed by manufactured goods which totaled US\$566.0 million, miscellaneous manufactured goods totaled US\$290.1 million,

chemicals totaled US\$174.6 million, food and animals totaled US\$29.8 million<sup>9</sup>. According to Bukarambe “from the time when actual functional contacts began, the pattern has been such that China exported manufactured and industrial items to Nigeria and imported unprocessed agricultural and mineral items from it. As time went on, China added mechanical and human expertise and investment capital to the list of items it exports to Nigeria”.<sup>10</sup> He further asserted that, “the continuation of the trend uninterrupted, unaltered and unabated indicate that China had a net industrial and developmental advantages over Nigeria from the beginning and the imbalance remained”.<sup>11</sup>

However, the implication from this trade analysis is that the Sino-Nigeria trade which has increased since both countries started relations has largely been export of primary products to China and import of finished products to Nigeria, particularly, as Nigeria lacks the technological know-how to produce the finished goods.<sup>12</sup> For China these advantages have been widening trade imbalance in her favour, access to large Nigerian domestic market with penchant for imported goods and avenue to invest heavily in underdeveloped sectors of the Nigerian economy. Also, China has undertaken to reduce the average tariff on agricultural imports from 22% to 15% and eliminate export subsidies and non-tariff barriers to the import of several important agricultural goods.<sup>13</sup>

However, this initiative was not taken seriously by the Nigerian government. The failure of the cassava initiative by the Obasanjo's government is a sad example. Farmers were encouraged to plant cassava but government did little in promoting the initiative. China has set up over 30 solely owned companies or joint venture in Nigeria actively involved in the construction, oil and gas, technology, services and education sectors of the Nigerian economy.<sup>14</sup> Some of the wholly foreign owned investments are: ZTE Nigeria Investment limited, Plas Alliance Company, Royal Motors Company limited etc. some of these Chinese investments have also benefitted from incentives in the country such as pioneer status and expatriate quotas.<sup>15</sup>

According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Nigeria accounted for over 80 percent of about \$7 billion inflow to West Africa and this was dominated by Nigeria's oil industry, these inflows mostly originated from China.<sup>16</sup> In 2007, the China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) limited made payments for a 45% stake in the Akpo oil field, with expected production of 225,000 barrels of oil per day.<sup>17</sup> The total deal offered to CNOOC was worth US\$2.7 billion.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) received the license for four oil blocks- OPL 471, 721,732 and 298 in return for a commitment to invest US\$2billion to rehabilitate the Kaduna oil refinery.<sup>19</sup> President Musa Yar'Adua's inquiry into the oil

block auctions in 2007 was strongly critical of the oil for-infrastructure approach. The investigative committees report questioned the conduct of the bidding rounds and the awarding of blocks to bidders who were well connected but had little industry experience.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, the committee said the system had been abused, with the Asian multinational oil corporations gaining access to high potential oil assets but failed to deliver on the promised infrastructure projects. With contracts cancelled or suspended, this resulted in a deep set-back for this Chinese oil company.<sup>21</sup>

In the information and communication technology (ICT) sector, the development of the national backbone infrastructure occupies a prominent place. Nigeria's first communication satellite NigComSat-1 received financing from China Exim Bank. The Nigerian Communication Satellite (NIGCOMSAT-1) was launched in 13 May, 2007 at the cost of \$256m, out of which China Export Import Bank gave a loan of \$200m and offered to control and managed it for two years.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, due to solar power assembly problems, the satellite was de-orbited on November 10, 2008.<sup>23</sup> The Chinese authorities quickly commenced replacement of the satellite at no cost to Nigeria.<sup>24</sup> The Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) was awarded the contract for the modernization of the Nigerian one track rail line to standard gauge rail project.<sup>25</sup> In October 2006, the Nigerian government signed a US\$2.5 billion loan facility with

China, a substantial part of which was used to finance the refurbishment of the railway system<sup>26</sup>. The contract for the first phase covered 1,215 kilometers of double track standard gauge line from Lagos in the southwest to Kano in the northwest with a branch in Minna and Abuja was signed. The railway modernization and expansion project when completed will be able to run 36 trains per day from Lagos to Kano<sup>27</sup>.

The China Exim Bank is partly funding thermal power stations in Nigeria. By the end of 2006, China was providing US\$3.5 billion toward the construction of six major hydro-power projects amounting to some 6,000 megawatts (MW) of installed capacity.<sup>28</sup> The five thermal power stations handled by the Chinese are: Ughelli, Geregu, Papalanto, Alaoji and Omotosho power plants through a credit facility repayable in 12 years. It is also to develop financial and technical support for two new hydropower plants at Zungeru and Mambilla in northern Nigeria<sup>29</sup>. In the manufacturing, the Chinese investment has been in the textile sector, but has manifested itself to large investment in industrial processing zones in a number of states in Nigeria e.g Ogun and Lagos states, which consist of 100 firms engaged in the light to medium manufacturing activities including footwear and rubber production, ceramic processing, furniture production and household appliances.<sup>30</sup> These activities promised to generate employment to different categories of Nigerians. The importance of the investment and technical cooperation with

China to Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized as they are targeted at those sectors- power, communication of the economy that particularly require such interventions. They are also areas in which China has developed appreciable expertise from which Nigeria can draw immense benefits.

### **Political Engagement and Diplomatic Relations**

Political engagement and diplomatic relations refer to the interactions, negotiations, and collaborations between countries on matters of mutual interest, including political, economic, social, and security issues. These relationships are essential for promoting peace, stability, and cooperation on regional and global scales. Political engagement and diplomatic relations involve various activities and mechanisms, such as high-level meetings, diplomatic exchanges, joint commissions, dialogues, and multilateral engagements. Some key aspects of political engagement and diplomatic relations;

### **Bilateral and Multilateral Diplomacy**

Bilateral diplomacy refers to the interactions and negotiations between two countries to address specific issues and strengthen their relationship. Diplomatic relations are typically managed through embassies, consulates, and high-level visits between heads

of state or government officials. Bilateral diplomacy allows countries to discuss trade, investment, security, and other matters of mutual interest. While, multilateral diplomacy involves interactions between multiple countries in various international forums and organizations, such as the United Nations, G7, G20, and regional bodies like the European Union and African Union. Multilateral diplomacy allows nations to address global challenges, negotiate treaties, and collaborate on issues that transcend national boundaries, such as climate change, terrorism, and humanitarian crises. And since 1961 till date, Nigeria and China has maintained their bilateral and multilateral relations although the dimension of these relations has evolved over time.

Nigeria and China have engaged in various bilateral trade and investment agreements to strengthen economic ties between the two nations. These agreements have facilitated trade in goods and services and encouraged Chinese investments in Nigeria's infrastructure and energy sectors. For example, in 2006, the China-Nigeria Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement was signed, aiming to promote trade and investment between the two countries. For example, during the 1980s, Nigeria and China signed several bilateral agreements to enhance economic cooperation.<sup>31</sup> In 1981, both countries signed a Trade Agreement and a Protocol on Economic and Technical Cooperation, laying the groundwork for increased economic and technical collaboration. China's state-

owned oil companies, such as China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and Sinopec, have been involved in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. For instance, in 2006, CNOOC acquired a 45% stake in Nigeria's OML 130 oil block, which contains the Akpo and Egina oil fields.<sup>32</sup> This investment solidified China's position as a major player in Nigeria's energy sector.

In the realm of security cooperation, Nigeria and China have collaborated to address common challenges such as piracy and terrorism in the Gulf of Guinea region. China has provided support for Nigeria's efforts to enhance maritime security and has offered training and capacity-building programs for Nigerian law enforcement agencies. And this have seen China providing the Nigeria military with major military equipment. Both countries have equally engaged in multilateral forums and organizations to coordinate their positions on global issues. For instance, Nigeria and China have collaborated within the framework of the United Nations, African Union, and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Their cooperation in these forums helps advance shared interests and promote the principles of multilateralism. These historical examples demonstrate the evolution of Nigeria-China diplomatic relations, spanning from recognition and establishment of formal ties to deeper economic cooperation and mutual support during global challenges. The bilateral relationship has continuously evolved

over time, reflecting the changing priorities and interests of both countries in the 21st century.

### **Conflict Resolution**

While Nigeria and China have generally maintained a positive and cooperative relationship, there have been some instances where conflict resolution efforts were needed to address specific issues. Conflict resolution in Nigeria-China relations has focused on finding amicable solutions to disagreements and fostering mutual understanding. The trade balance between Nigeria and China has often favored China due to Nigeria's significant imports of Chinese goods. This trade imbalance has been a point of concern for Nigeria, as it affects its local industries and employment. To address this issue, both countries have engaged in dialogues to explore ways to promote more balanced trade and investment opportunities. As part of their security cooperation, Nigeria and China have collaborated to combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region. However, there have been instances where piracy incidents persisted, necessitating ongoing dialogue and joint efforts to enhance maritime security in the region. In these instances, diplomatic channels, dialogues, and negotiations have been instrumental in resolving conflicts and fostering a more cooperative relationship between Nigeria and China. It is important to note that conflict resolution is an ongoing process, and as the

relationship between the two countries continues to evolve, diplomatic efforts will play a crucial role in addressing any emerging issues and maintaining a positive trajectory in their bilateral ties.

## **Track II Diplomacy**

Track II diplomacy refers to informal, non-governmental efforts to facilitate dialogue, build trust, and promote understanding between conflicting parties or countries.<sup>33</sup> These efforts are typically conducted by non-governmental actors, such as academics, think tanks, civil society organizations, and individuals, who engage in unofficial discussions and exchanges to complement official government-to-government diplomacy (Track I). In the context of Nigeria-China relations, Track II diplomacy has played a supportive role in enhancing mutual understanding and addressing specific issues. For instance, academic institutions in both Nigeria and China have engaged in exchanges and collaborative research projects. Scholars and researchers from universities and think tanks in both countries participate in conferences, workshops, and joint research initiatives. These academic interactions provide opportunities to share perspectives on various issues, including economic cooperation, regional security, and sustainable development. Non-governmental organizations and think tanks in Nigeria and China have organized Track II dialogues focused on trade and investment issues. These

dialogues provide a platform for experts and stakeholders to discuss trade imbalances, investment opportunities, and challenges related to economic cooperation. The recommendations and insights generated from such dialogues can inform and complement official bilateral negotiations.

In the event of specific disagreements or conflicts between Nigeria and China, Track II actors can engage in mediation efforts to facilitate dialogue and find common ground. These informal mediators can help bridge gaps, reduce tensions, and explore potential solutions to contentious issues. Track II diplomacy operates independently of official government channels, allowing for more flexibility, creativity, and inclusivity in addressing complex and sensitive issues. By promoting mutual understanding and trust, Track II diplomacy complements formal diplomatic efforts and contributes to a more robust and enduring relationship between Nigeria and China. It can also provide valuable inputs to governments, facilitating smoother Track I negotiations and conflict resolution processes.

## **Joint Commissions and Dialogues**

Joint commissions and dialogues serve as formal mechanisms for communication and cooperation between Nigeria and China. These platforms facilitate discussions on various aspects of their bilateral relationship, providing a structured framework for addressing mutual concerns and identifying areas of collaboration. Joint commissions and dialogues have played a significant role in strengthening the ties between the two countries. Nigeria and China have established Joint Commissions on Economic, Trade, and Technical Cooperation to foster dialogue and collaboration in multiple areas of mutual interest. These commissions are usually co-chaired by high-level officials from both countries, representing various government ministries and agencies relevant to the specific issues under consideration. The scope of joint commissions and dialogues encompasses a wide range of topics, including trade, investment, infrastructure development, technology transfer, agriculture, energy, security, education, and cultural exchanges. Both countries use these platforms to explore new opportunities for collaboration and address challenges in existing projects.

During these dialogues, Nigeria and China may sign MoUs to formalize their agreements and commitments. These MoUs serve as legal instruments that outline the specifics of cooperation in different areas and provide a basis for further action. One of the significant objectives of these dialogues is to address trade imbalances between

Nigeria and China and explore measures to promote more balanced trade. Both countries aim to enhance market access for their respective products and remove barriers to trade. Joint commissions and dialogues have proven to be effective mechanisms for strengthening Nigeria-China relations. These platforms enable both countries to engage in open and constructive dialogue, enhance understanding, and develop practical solutions to advance their shared interests and cooperation in diverse areas. As the relationship continues to evolve, joint commissions and dialogues will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Nigeria-China relations.

In conclusion, in the 21st century, Nigeria and China have forged a deep and multifaceted relationship, characterized by significant economic dimensions and growing political engagement. The strengthening of trade ties, investment cooperation, and mutual diplomatic efforts have not only benefitted both nations' economies but have also contributed to regional and global stability. However, as the relationship continues to evolve, it is essential for both parties to address challenges related to trade imbalances, local industry development, and sustainable development to ensure a mutually beneficial partnership in the years to come.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN NIGERIA-CHINA RELATIONS**

Nigeria-China relations have evolved significantly in the 21st century, marked by increased economic cooperation and growing political engagement. While the relationship offers substantial opportunities for both countries, it also faces various challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its continued growth and mutual benefit. This chapter examines the key challenges and opportunities in Nigeria-China relations, shedding light on the complexities and potential areas for further collaboration.

#### **Challenges in Nigeria-China Relations**

##### **Trade Imbalance**

Trade imbalance refers to the disparity between the value of a country's exports and imports.<sup>1</sup> When a nation imports significantly more goods and services than it exports, it results in a trade deficit.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, when a country exports more than it imports, it leads to a trade surplus. In the context of Nigeria-China relations, trade imbalance refers to the situation where Nigeria imports more goods and services from China than it exports to China. This imbalance has been a notable feature of the bilateral trade relationship between the two countries in recent years. There are many factors that

given rise to the trade imbalance. For instance, Nigeria is a major exporter of oil and other commodities, while China is a manufacturing powerhouse that exports a wide range of goods, including electronics, machinery, and consumer products. The difference in their economic structures results in Nigeria relying heavily on oil and commodity exports, while importing manufactured products from China. Nigeria's economy has historically been reliant on oil exports, which constitute a significant portion of its export earnings. The limited diversification of Nigeria's export basket makes it more susceptible to fluctuations in commodity prices and affects the trade balance with countries like China.<sup>3</sup>

China's advanced industrial capacity and lower production costs have made its manufactured goods competitive in the global market. Nigerian industries, on the other hand, often struggle to compete on a global scale due to infrastructure limitations and higher production costs. Nigeria's large and growing population creates substantial demand for consumer goods, many of which are imported from China due to their competitive prices and availability. Addressing the trade imbalance therefore requires efforts to diversify Nigeria's economy, promote export-oriented industries, and reduce dependency on commodity exports. Encouraging investments in manufacturing and value-added industries, as well as fostering technology transfer and innovation, can help Nigeria become more competitive in global markets and balance its trade relationship

with China. Additionally, promoting policies that support export-oriented businesses and leveraging China's investments to boost local production capacity can contribute to a more balanced trade partnership between the two countries.

### **Debt Burden**

Debt burden refers to the level of debt that a country carries in relation to its ability to service and repay those debts.<sup>4</sup> When a nation accumulates high levels of debt relative to its GDP and revenue, it can face challenges in meeting its debt obligations and may risk debt default or economic instability.<sup>5</sup> In the context of Nigeria-China relations, the debt burden refers to Nigeria's increasing reliance on loans and financial assistance from China to fund various infrastructure projects and development initiatives. Over the years, Nigeria has turned to China as a major source of financing for its infrastructure needs, leading to a significant rise in its external debt levels. Factors contributing to the increase debt burden of Nigeria are multifaceted. Nigeria, like many developing countries, faces significant infrastructure deficits. To address these gaps and boost economic growth, Nigeria has sought Chinese loans and investments for building roads, railways, ports, and energy projects. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global infrastructure development program, has presented opportunities for countries like Nigeria to access funding for critical projects.<sup>6</sup> Chinese loans often come with attractive terms, such as

low-interest rates and extended repayment periods, making them appealing to countries in need of development capital.<sup>7</sup>

Nigeria's economy has historically relied heavily on oil exports, which makes it susceptible to fluctuations in global oil prices. During periods of low oil prices, Nigeria's revenue may be insufficient to cover debt payments, leading to concerns about debt sustainability. Implementing large-scale infrastructure projects requires the capacity to manage and absorb funds effectively. If projects are not executed efficiently, there is a risk of cost overruns and debt mismanagement. In the quarter of 2023 reviewed, Debt Management Office (DMO) said Nigeria has borrowed \$4.34 billion from China through the Exim Bank of China.<sup>8</sup> The loan is 84 percent of the country's total bilateral debt, implying that the Asian nation is Nigeria's largest creditor.<sup>9</sup> To address the debt burden, it requires prudent fiscal management, effective project implementation, and a comprehensive debt management strategy. Nigeria must prioritize projects that have a high potential for economic returns and focus on diversifying its revenue sources to reduce dependency on commodity exports. Engaging in transparent and accountable borrowing practices, as well as negotiating favorable loan terms with Chinese lenders, can also help manage the debt burden and ensure sustainable economic development. Additionally, efforts to enhance revenue generation, reduce wasteful spending, and

promote private sector investments can contribute to debt sustainability and long-term economic stability.

### **Labor Practices and Local Content**

Labor practices and local content refer to the employment and utilization of local workers, skills, and resources in projects and investments undertaken by foreign companies, particularly in the context of international economic cooperation.<sup>10</sup> In the context of Nigeria-China relations, labor practices and local content have been areas of concern and discussion, particularly regarding Chinese companies involved in infrastructure projects and investments in Nigeria. One of the key concerns raised by Nigerian authorities and local communities is the extensive employment of Chinese workers in some infrastructure projects.<sup>11</sup> This practice has led to criticisms that Nigerian workers are being excluded from employment opportunities, contributing to social tensions and disputes. Some projects undertaken by Chinese companies may not effectively transfer technology, knowledge, and technical skills to Nigerian workers and businesses. This limits the potential for local capacity building and sustainable development.<sup>12</sup>

Nigerian regulations often include local content requirements, mandating a certain percentage of participation by local companies, workers, and materials in major projects. Ensuring strict compliance with these regulations can be a challenge in certain cases. Language differences and communication challenges between Chinese workers and local communities can hinder effective cooperation and may lead to misunderstandings or difficulties in implementing projects. Addressing labor practices and local content issues in Nigeria-China relations requires constructive dialogue, commitment from both parties, and adherence to existing regulations. By actively seeking opportunities for skills development, technology transfer, and local participation, China's investments in Nigeria can be better aligned with the country's development goals and contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth. A transparent and cooperative approach can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes and strengthen the overall partnership between Nigeria and China.

### **Environmental Impact**

The environmental impact refers to the effects that human activities, including infrastructure development, industrial operations, and resource extraction, have on the natural environment.<sup>13</sup> In the context of Nigeria-China relations, the environmental impact is a significant consideration, especially concerning large-scale infrastructure

projects and industrial activities undertaken by Chinese companies in Nigeria. China's involvement in funding and executing major infrastructure projects in Nigeria, such as roads, railways, dams, and ports, can have significant environmental consequences. The construction and operation of these projects may lead to habitat destruction, deforestation, and disruption of ecosystems. Chinese investments in Nigeria's energy sector, including oil and gas extraction, may pose environmental risks, such as oil spills and water pollution, if not carried out with adequate environmental safeguards.

Industrial activities, particularly those involving manufacturing, can generate pollution and waste, impacting air and water quality. Ensuring proper waste management practices is crucial to minimize the environmental impact of industrial operations. Nigeria is a country rich in biodiversity, with diverse ecosystems and wildlife. Infrastructure development and industrial activities can encroach upon natural habitats and threaten biodiversity conservation efforts. The environmental impact of infrastructure and industrial activities may contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, affecting climate change and exacerbating the challenges of global warming. Managing the environmental impact of Chinese investments and projects in Nigeria is a shared responsibility between both countries. By promoting sustainable practices, adhering to environmental regulations, and investing in conservation efforts, Nigeria and China can work together to achieve a

balance between economic development and environmental protection. Sustainable development practices not only benefit the environment but also contribute to the long-term socio-economic well-being of both nations.

## **Security Concerns**

Security concerns in Nigeria-China relations encompass a range of issues related to regional security, counterterrorism efforts, and the implications of Chinese investments and infrastructure projects for Nigeria's national security. Nigeria has faced significant security challenges due to the activities of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in the northeastern part of the country. China's involvement in Nigeria's security landscape is notable, and both countries have cooperated on intelligence sharing, counterterrorism strategies, and capacity building to address this shared security threat. The Gulf of Guinea region, which includes Nigeria's coastal waters, has experienced an increase in maritime piracy incidents. Addressing this security challenge requires collaboration between Nigeria and China to enhance maritime security, protect shipping routes, and combat illegal activities at sea. Large-scale infrastructure projects financed and executed by Chinese companies in Nigeria can have security implications. Concerns have been raised about the strategic significance of some projects and the potential risks they may pose to Nigeria's national security.

Nigeria shares a border with Niger, a country that also has significant economic ties with China. Ensuring border security and preventing cross-border criminal activities and insurgency require coordinated efforts and intelligence sharing between the two countries. China's investments in the Gulf of Guinea region have raised questions about its interests and potential implications for territorial disputes in contested maritime areas. Nigeria and China need to maintain transparency and open communication to address any concerns related to sovereignty and territorial claims. Nigeria has been grappling with issues of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. Close cooperation between Nigeria and China is crucial to combat these illegal activities and address the root causes of such crimes. Security concerns in Nigeria-China relations require proactive cooperation and dialogue. By addressing shared security threats, enhancing intelligence sharing, and promoting sustainable security strategies, Nigeria and China can foster a more secure environment for both countries and the wider region. Additionally, adhering to principles of mutual respect, sovereignty, and transparency can contribute to a stronger and more enduring partnership between the two nations.

## **Opportunities in Nigeria-China Relations**

Opportunities in Nigeria-China relations are numerous and diverse, offering both countries significant potential for mutual benefits and cooperation. These opportunities span economic, technological, cultural, and diplomatic spheres.

### **Infrastructure Development**

Infrastructure development is a critical aspect of Nigeria-China relations, as China has been actively involved in financing and executing major infrastructure projects in Nigeria. This cooperation presents significant opportunities for Nigeria's economic growth, connectivity, and overall development. China has been instrumental in funding and constructing road and highway projects in Nigeria. These infrastructure developments have improved transportation connectivity, facilitated the movement of goods and people, and enhanced regional integration. Chinese investments in Nigeria's railway sector have led to the construction and modernization of rail networks. This includes projects such as the Abuja-Kaduna railway and the Lagos-Ibadan railway project.<sup>14</sup> These initiatives aim to improve intra-country mobility and support economic activities. Nigeria's maritime industry has also benefited from Chinese investments, leading to the expansion and modernization of ports and related infrastructure. Upgrades

to ports facilitate trade and contribute to Nigeria's position as a major economic player in Africa.

Chinese investments in Nigeria's power sector have focused on enhancing electricity generation and distribution. Projects in hydroelectric, solar, and thermal power contribute to improving Nigeria's energy supply and support industrial growth. China's involvement in Nigeria's telecommunications sector has contributed to improved connectivity, expanded mobile networks, and the deployment of advanced technologies. This has facilitated communication and access to information for the Nigerian population. Chinese companies have also been engaged in housing and urban development projects in Nigeria. These initiatives aim to address the country's housing deficit and urbanization challenges, providing improved living conditions for residents. China's expertise in industrial development has led to the establishment of industrial parks and special economic zones in Nigeria. These zones attract foreign investments, encourage local production, and promote job creation. China has been involved in projects to upgrade and expand Nigeria's airport infrastructure. Improved airports support increased air traffic, tourism, and business travel.

Infrastructure development is a significant opportunity for Nigeria-China relations. Chinese investments in various sectors have the potential to transform Nigeria's economic

landscape and foster sustainable development. By leveraging China's expertise, technology, and funding, Nigeria can build a more robust and resilient infrastructure network, facilitating economic growth and improving the overall quality of life for its citizens. It is essential for both countries to continue collaborating in a manner that promotes mutual benefit, sustainability, and inclusivity in their infrastructure development endeavors.

### **Investment and Trade**

Investment and trade are crucial aspects of Nigeria-China relations, representing a major component of their bilateral economic cooperation. Both countries have been actively engaged in various trade activities and investment projects, creating opportunities for economic growth and development. China's investments in Nigeria span various sectors, including infrastructure, energy, manufacturing, telecommunications, and agriculture. These investments have the potential to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and foster technological advancements. Chinese investments in roads, railways, ports, and airports have improved Nigeria's transportation and logistics networks, boosting trade and connectivity within the country and across regions. China has been involved in Nigeria's oil and gas sector, supporting exploration, production, and refining activities. Additionally, investments in renewable energy projects can help diversify

Nigeria's energy sources and promote environmental sustainability. Chinese investments in manufacturing industries contribute to industrialization and job creation in Nigeria, leading to the development of value-added products and export opportunities. Telecommunications and Technology: Investments in Nigeria's telecommunications sector have expanded mobile networks and improved internet connectivity, promoting digital inclusion and innovation. Agriculture: Chinese investments in agriculture contribute to modernization and productivity improvements in Nigeria's farming sector, enhancing food security and export potential.

Trade between Nigeria and China has seen significant growth over the years. China is one of Nigeria's largest trading partners, and the trade relationship is characterized by the exchange of commodities, manufactured goods, and machinery. Nigeria is a major exporter of crude oil to China, meeting China's energy demands and contributing to Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. Nigeria imports a wide range of products from China, including electronics, machinery, textiles, consumer goods, and industrial equipment. Thus, investment and trade between Nigeria and China offer opportunities for both countries to strengthen economic ties and promote inclusive growth. Chinese investments contribute to Nigeria's infrastructure development, industrialization, and technology transfer. Enhanced trade relations enable access to

affordable goods and machinery from China, supporting Nigeria's domestic consumption and economic diversification.

Despite the benefits of trade, there is also a concern about the trade imbalance, with Nigeria importing significantly more from China than it exports. Efforts to address this imbalance and promote more balanced trade relations are important to ensure sustainable economic development. Both countries have established economic cooperation zones to promote investments and facilitate trade. For example, the China-Nigeria Lekki Free Trade Zone offers a platform for businesses to engage in trade and manufacturing activities. Investment and trade are fundamental pillars of Nigeria-China relations, creating opportunities for economic growth, technology transfer, and infrastructure development.<sup>15</sup> Both countries can continue to foster a collaborative and mutually beneficial approach to investment and trade, seeking to balance their economic interests and promote sustainable development. By addressing trade imbalances and focusing on inclusive economic policies, Nigeria and China can further strengthen their economic ties and forge a stronger and more resilient partnership in the 21st century.

## **Technology Transfer**

Technology transfer refers to the process of sharing knowledge, skills, expertise, and technological innovations between two or more entities, often from a developed country or organization to a developing one.<sup>16</sup> In the context of Nigeria-China relations, technology transfer has been an essential aspect of their economic cooperation, particularly with Chinese investments and involvement in various sectors of Nigeria's economy. Chinese investments in Nigeria's infrastructure, such as roads, railways, ports, and energy projects, often involve the transfer of advanced engineering and construction technologies. These technologies contribute to the modernization and efficiency of Nigeria's infrastructure network. Chinese investments in Nigeria's manufacturing sector have facilitated the transfer of production techniques, machinery, and technical know-how. This technology transfer supports industrialization efforts and enhances Nigeria's manufacturing capabilities. China's expertise in telecommunications and information and communication technology (ICT) has played a significant role in improving Nigeria's digital infrastructure.<sup>17</sup> Technology transfer in this sector has led to the expansion of mobile networks, increased internet penetration, and the adoption of advanced ICT solutions.

China's leadership in renewable energy technologies has presented opportunities for technology transfer in Nigeria's energy sector. Collaboration in solar, wind, and hydroelectric projects can help Nigeria transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources.<sup>18</sup> Chinese investments in Nigeria's agriculture sector offer opportunities for technology transfer in agricultural practices, irrigation, crop processing, and value chain development. This helps boost agricultural productivity and supports food security efforts. Technology transfer is a critical driver of Nigeria-China relations, contributing to economic growth, infrastructure development, and industrialization in Nigeria. By fostering a collaborative and mutually beneficial approach to technology transfer, both countries can further strengthen their partnership and support Nigeria's journey towards sustainable development and technological advancement. It is essential for Nigeria to develop policies that encourage innovation, protect intellectual property, and promote skill development to fully harness the potential benefits of technology transfer from China.

### **Healthcare and Public Health Cooperation**

Healthcare and public health cooperation between Nigeria and China hold great potential for addressing healthcare challenges and improving health outcomes in both countries.<sup>18</sup> Collaboration in this area can lead to the exchange of best practices, technology transfer,

capacity building, and joint efforts to combat diseases and promote public health. Both Nigeria and China face various health challenges, including infectious diseases. Cooperation can involve joint efforts in disease surveillance, outbreak response, and prevention strategies. Sharing information and experiences can improve early detection and control of diseases. Collaboration in medical research and innovation can accelerate progress in finding solutions to health problems. Joint research projects, clinical trials, and the exchange of medical knowledge can lead to improved diagnostics, treatment, and medical technologies. Chinese expertise in healthcare and medical education can be leveraged to support capacity building in Nigeria's healthcare workforce. Training programs, workshops, and medical exchange opportunities can enhance the skills and knowledge of Nigerian healthcare professionals.

Technology-driven solutions, such as telemedicine and e-health initiatives, can facilitate remote medical consultations and improve access to healthcare services, especially in underserved areas. Both Nigeria and China have rich traditions in traditional medicine. Collaborative efforts in traditional medicine research and exchange of knowledge can lead to a better understanding of traditional healing practices and their potential integration into modern healthcare systems. China's expertise in infrastructure development can support the construction and upgrading of healthcare facilities in

Nigeria. This includes hospitals, clinics, and medical centers, contributing to improved healthcare accessibility and delivery. Healthcare and public health cooperation between Nigeria and China present an opportunity for mutual benefit and improved health outcomes. By pooling resources, sharing knowledge, and collaborating on research and infrastructure development, both countries can address healthcare challenges more effectively. A well-structured and sustained cooperation in this area can contribute to better healthcare access, disease control, and healthcare system strengthening in both Nigeria and China.

### **Diplomatic Cooperation**

Diplomatic cooperation between Nigeria and China plays a crucial role in shaping their bilateral relations and fostering mutual understanding. Diplomatic engagement between the two countries involves communication, negotiation, and collaboration on various regional and global issues. Regular high-level visits by leaders from both countries enhance diplomatic ties and provide opportunities for discussions on important issues. These visits facilitate the signing of agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to deepen cooperation in various sectors. Both Nigeria and China are active participants in multilateral forums such as the United Nations, African Union, and BRICS. Diplomatic cooperation in these forums enables them to align positions on regional and

global issues, advocate for shared interests, and address common challenges. Diplomatic efforts are directed towards promoting economic cooperation and attracting investments between the two countries. This includes supporting business delegations, trade missions, and promoting Nigeria as an investment destination for Chinese businesses.

Diplomatic cooperation extends to cultural and educational exchanges, promoting people-to-people interactions and enhancing mutual understanding between the two societies. Diplomatic cooperation involves joint efforts in addressing regional security challenges, counterterrorism, and peacekeeping. Nigeria and China collaborate to maintain peace and stability in Africa and other regions. Nigeria and China both identify as part of the Global South and share a commitment to South-South cooperation. They engage in initiatives that promote economic development, poverty reduction, and sustainable growth in developing countries. Both countries cooperate on security matters, particularly in areas of counterterrorism, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and regional stability. Intelligence sharing, joint training exercises, and capacity building are part of their security cooperation efforts. Diplomatic cooperation includes promoting people-to-people interactions, cultural exchanges, and educational collaborations. These initiatives foster mutual understanding and strengthen the bond between the citizens of Nigeria and China. Diplomatic cooperation between Nigeria and China is thus crucial for addressing

common challenges and promoting their bilateral interests. By collaborating in multilateral forums, economic partnerships, security matters, and cultural exchanges, both countries can deepen their relationship, foster mutual respect, and achieve shared objectives. A constructive and sustained diplomatic approach serves as a foundation for a strong and enduring partnership that benefits both nations and contributes to regional and global stability and development.

### **Industrialization and Manufacturing**

Industrialization and manufacturing play essential roles in Nigeria-China relations, offering opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and technological advancement in both countries.<sup>19</sup> Chinese investments in Nigeria's manufacturing sector have contributed to industrialization efforts and increased production capacity. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has enabled the establishment of new industries and the expansion of existing ones, supporting Nigeria's economic diversification goals. Chinese investments in manufacturing often involve technology transfer, bringing advanced production techniques, machinery, and expertise to Nigeria. This technology infusion enhances productivity, efficiency, and product quality in Nigerian industries. Manufacturing collaborations between Nigeria and China have the potential to produce goods for export

to regional and global markets. Leveraging China's manufacturing expertise and Nigeria's resources can lead to the production of competitive goods for international trade.

Industrialization and manufacturing projects create employment opportunities for Nigerians. As new industries emerge and existing ones expand, the demand for skilled and unskilled labor increases, leading to job creation and economic empowerment. Increased manufacturing capacity in Nigeria supports value addition to raw materials and promotes the development of downstream industries. This helps retain more economic value within the country and boosts the overall competitiveness of Nigerian products. Collaboration with Chinese manufacturers can provide opportunities for Nigerian SMEs to participate in global supply chains. Partnerships with Chinese companies can enhance the capabilities and competitiveness of Nigerian SMEs. Industrialization and manufacturing cooperation between Nigeria and China offer opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and technological advancement. By leveraging China's expertise and investments, Nigeria can accelerate its industrialization efforts, promote economic diversification, and enhance its global competitiveness. To maximize the benefits, both countries must address challenges related to infrastructure, workforce skills, and regulatory environment. A sustained commitment to industrial cooperation can lead to a

mutually beneficial partnership that fosters economic development and prosperity in both Nigeria and China.

In conclusion, navigating the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities in Nigeria-China relations require continuous dialogue, cooperation, and strategic planning. Addressing trade imbalances, environmental concerns, and debt sustainability while leveraging China's expertise in infrastructure and technology transfer can foster a more balanced, equitable, and sustainable partnership. Both countries should actively explore areas of mutual interest, such as agriculture, education, and renewable energy, to deepen cooperation and create a win-win relationship that benefits their respective economies and peoples.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis of the origins and development of Nigeria-China relations provide valuable insights into the complexities, challenges, and opportunities. That have characterized the bilateral partnership over time. The historical background of Nigeria-China relations reveals a longstanding relationship rooted in early trade interactions and cultural exchanges. Chinese traders had earlier explored. The maritime route along the West African coast, establishing contact with local communities and laying the foundation for future relations. The bilateral ties between the two countries have significantly evolved over the years, with China emerging as a key strategic partner for Nigeria in several areas. Chinas first official contact with the People's Republic of China (P.R.C) was in 1960, when it was invited to the country's independence celebrations. The delegation delivered congratulatory messages from Zhou Enlai and the late Vice-Premier, Marshall Chen Yi. In their message, the Chinese leaders acclaimed “the great victory won by the Nigerian people in their struggles against colonialism”. Nigeria seemed to have reciprocated this gesture when on gaining admission to the United Nations (UN) later that year supported PRC's membership in the world body. Nigeria China relations has grown, particularly in the economic area. Chapter one

includes objectives which this paper hopes to achieve which are analyzing the key milestones, exploring the political and economic dimensions and the identification of challenges and opportunities in Nigeria-China relations. With focus on the period from Nigeria's independence and consideration of regional and global contexts and how they influence Nigeria-China relations.

The political dimensions of Nigeria China relations have evolved significantly. Nigeria's recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1971 marked a turning point in their diplomatic relations and paved way for closer ties. Nigeria is non alignment policy and China's aim to build strategic partnerships with developing nations created a strong basis for collaboration. It is in pursuit of their foreign policy objectives that Nigeria and China assented a joint communique. On the establishment of diplomatic and economic relations in 1971. Before formal diplomatic ties were made, Chinese traders were known to explore maritime routes and established contacts with local communities along West African coasts; including Nigeria. These early interactions involved the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural influences, laying foundation for the more formal ties or relations. The early years of Nigeria China relations where influenced by shared struggles against imperialism and colonialism. Both countries had found common ground in their opposition to these forces during the Cold War era. Nigeria had pursued a policy

of non alignment seeking alliances outside the spheres of influence of the United States and the Soviet Union. China, led by the Chinese Communist party, aimed to consolidate its position on the global stage and build strategic partnerships with developing nations. Overtime, Nigeria and China witnessed a significant expansion of their bilateral cooperation encompassing diverse areas such as trade and investment, infrastructure development, energy, agriculture, and cultural exchanges. In the 30 years that followed 1971, diplomatic ties between the two demographic juggernauts of Asia and Africa yielded little economic significance. The 1980s and 1990s in Nigeria were characterized by a string of military coups while China was developing into an economic superpower. However, it should be emphasized that General Sanni Abacha, who ruled from 1993 to 1998, made contact with the Chinese authorities very early into his administration. Founded in 1994, was the Nigerian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The return of democratic rule in Nigeria was the reason why economic relations with China began to develop in earnest. When Obasanjo was the president of Nigeria (2003 to 2007), President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Nigeria.

Diplomatic cooperation between Nigeria and China has facilitated constructive dialogue on regional and global issues, enabling both countries to align their positions on various international matters. Their collaboration in multilateral forums and commitment

to South-South cooperation has strengthened their influence and fostered mutual understanding. It is crucial for both nations to continue engaging in open and transparent communication to address any challenges and deepen their diplomatic ties. Security cooperation between Nigeria and China has been instrumental in addressing shared security threats, such as terrorism and piracy. Intelligence sharing, capacity building, and joint efforts have contributed to enhancing regional stability and countering security challenges. Continued collaboration in this area is vital for maintaining peace and security in the region. Some of the major agreements between Nigeria and China are:

- i. Agreement on trade, Investment Promotion and Protection in 2001 which led to the establishment of a Nigeria trade office in China and China Investment Development and Trade Promotion Centre in Nigeria.
- ii. Agreement on consular affairs in 2002.
- iii. Agreement on tourism Cooperation in 2002.
- iv. Memorandum of understanding on a strategic partnership in 2006.
- v. Memorandum of Understanding on promotion bicameral Economic Cooperation and partnership between Ogun State, Nigeria and Zhenjiang province of China in 2009.
- vi. Memorandum of Understanding on peace cooperation in 2012.

Economic relations between Nigeria and China is one of the most acknowledged area in comprehensive studies on Nigeria China relations. It is the most important aspect on the study of the bilateral relations till date. The oil and gas sector, followed by power generating, real transport, construction, communication, manufacturing and financial sectors. China has been able to dive deep into the economy of Nigeria that the latter is now China's second largest partner in sub-Saharan Africa, with trade volume rising up to about 80% of the inflow to West Africa originating from China. Trade relations have grown, with focus on various trade patterns, investment inflows, infrastructure projects, and energy collaboration. Nigeria's exports to China primarily consist of food, animals, crude materials, oils, chemical products and manufactured goods. On the other hand, Nigeria imports wide range of products from China including machinery, transport equipment, manufactured goods, chemicals, and food. Chinese investments have also been significant, particularly in the sectors of construction, oil and gas, technology, services and education. Chinese companies have established numerous wholly owned or joint venture enterprises in Nigeria, benefiting from incentives such as pioneer status and expatriates' quotas. The oil industry in Nigeria also received Chinese investments, China acquires stakes in oil fields an engaged in infrastructure projects. Chinese financing has

supported projects such as the national communication satellites, railway modernization, and thermal power stations. China's expertise in these areas have been valuable to Nigeria's development efforts. Over all the economic dimensions of Nigeria China relations involve a growing trade relationship, Chinese investments in various sectors, and Chinese support for infrastructure projects. While the relationship has brought benefits there are cons that resulted from these collaborations.

Despite the many benefits of the Nigeria-China relationship, challenges remain. These include trade imbalances, debt burden, environmental impact, labor practices, and cultural differences, which require careful attention and cooperation to address effectively. These challenges are contemporary problems that arose due to the differences in economic policies and concerns about debt sustainability and the impact of Chinese investments on local industries in Nigeria. Trade imbalance on the part of Nigerian economy, means that imports from China as surpassing exports to Nigeria. Since 2010, Nigeria has become china second largest export destination on the continent of Africa. According to a graph provided by the UN Comtrade, Nigeria trade relations with China surpasses other trade partners by 30 to 35% from 2000 to 2009. While the official numbers are impressive, they failed to capture the complete picture of trade between Nigeria and China. There is a sizable amount of unrecorded commerce,

particularly in Chinese commodities, in addition to registered trade that illustrates the trade imbalance. According to some reports, the majority of the illegal imports passed through neighboring countries that have porous, long borders with Nigeria. In another report by UN Comtrade, Nigeria ranked in percentage, 1.5 in imports to China and 11.3 in exports from China in 2010, ranking second biggest importer of goods from China after South Africa. Nigeria has also accumulated substantial debt to China through loans for infrastructure projects. Concerns have been raised about the sustainability of this debt and its potential impact on Nigeria's economy. The exact amount of Nigeria's debt to China is not publicly disclosed, but estimates suggest that it is significant. Difficulties in loan repayment could lead to further increase in debt and potential economic instability. This raises concerns about Nigeria's economic dependency on China. If Nigeria becomes heavily reliant on Chinese financial assistance, it may compromise its economic sovereignty and limit its policy flexibility. In the long run, the challenge of debt burden could lead to stunted economic growth and give China significant leverage in influencing Nigeria's domestic and foreign policy decisions. It is essential for both countries to engage in sustainable practices, adhere to international norms, and ensure that investments and projects align with their development goals and respect local communities. Environmental impact is also a significant challenge discussed earlier in

this work, with focus on the extractive industries and china's involvement in them, particularly the oil sector. This challenge emphasizes China's demand for natural resources, particularly oil and minerals, which has led to increased resource extraction activities in Nigeria. These activities often have negative environmental consequences, such as pollution, deforestation, and so on. Long term impacts are not far fetched, they include environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, disruptions to agriculture, and many more. Some of the other concerns in Nigeria China relations are the extensive employment of Chinese workers in infrastructure projects which can limit the job opportunities for Nigerian workers, the problem of the implementation of local content regulations that will ensure the participation of local companies, workers and materials in major projects directed by the Chinese.

The opportunities in Nigeria-China relations are vast, ranging from infrastructure development and technology transfer to healthcare cooperation and cultural exchanges. By capitalizing on these opportunities and addressing challenges collaboratively, Nigeria and China can continue to build a strong and mutually beneficial partnership. Nigeria has the opportunity to significantly expand its development through its engagement with China. Nigeria should move beyond arrangements that focus solely on the petroleum sector and avoid short term fixes. By formulating a comprehensive strategy that

addresses its long term needs. Nigeria can leverage China's engagement to drive its economy into a more economically diversified state. Technology transfer to Nigeria from China we go a long way in achieving this development. Nigeria can also benefit from diversifying its development assistance by balancing western assistance with that of China, learning from the successes and failures of other states' relations with China and their policies towards development, as well as increasing focus on credible institutions and industries to build human capital and facilitate transfer of knowledge and technology to reduce dependency and balance out the imbalance in Nigeria-China relations. The opportunities in Nigeria-China relations lie in other different sectors as well. In trade and investment, since China is already one of Nigeria's major trading partners, there is a significant opportunity to expand bilateral trade in favour of Nigeria. To erase trade imbalance and improve Nigeria's economy through increased exports, especially on non oil resources and agricultural products. Opportunities also exist for collaboration that will help Nigeria become a manufacturing country. In addition to these opportunities, education and skills development is another area that present opportunities in Nigeria-China relations. China offers various scholarship programs for international students, including those from Nigeria. Nigerian students can benefit from studying in Chinese universities and acquiring knowledge and skills in various fields. This can contribute to

human capital development in Nigeria and foster closer educational ties between the two countries. Cultural exchanges are also an aspect that should be explored. Nigeria and China have rich cultural heritages. Cultural exchanges, such as art exhibitions, music festivals, and cultural performances can promote mutual understanding and appreciation between the peoples of both countries. This can strengthen people to people relations and cultural diplomacy.

The relationship between Nigeria and China is a dynamic and strategic one that holds tremendous potential for the economic, social, and political development of both nations. As the 21st century unfolds, both countries must work together to deepen their collaboration, promote sustainable development, and address common challenges. By fostering a spirit of mutual respect, transparency, and shared responsibility, Nigeria and China can build a robust and enduring partnership that benefits their peoples and contributes to regional and global prosperity and stability. It is through sustained cooperation, dialogue, and a commitment to shared goals that the Nigeria-China relationship can continue to thrive in the years to come. Nigeria has welcomed China as an economic partner, like many other African nations have done as well. The two nations' Relations have progressed a lot, the enormous trade imbalance favoring China has been the hallmark of Nigeria China relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nigeria most

common in this regard, make use of this bilateral engagement to strengthen its own economy, rather than just being a producer of raw materials for china. Otherwise, nigeria will continue to be hampered by the imbalance. The analysis of the origins and development of Nigeria-China relations revealed that before the political and economic engagement between Nigeria and China was anchored on strategic partnership. An analysis of the Nigerian perspective also reveals that increasing manufacturing and other economic capacities is the main goal of formulating a strategic partnership with Nigeria this goal is an umbrella that covers the objectives that Nigeria may have in mind when seeking a strategic partnership with China. Some of these key objectives include: Leveraging China's expertise, technology, and resources towards economic development; seeking China's support in developing critical infrastructure such as transportation networks, power plants, telecommunications, and industrial infrastructure; Collaborating with China in the energy sector and seeking to form closer diplomatic ties with China in order to enhance nigeria's international standing and influence in global affairs. This paper also unveiled the problems that are popular in Nigeria-China relations. The conflict in this relations between Nigeria and China may suggest that Nigeria China relations is not a true strategic partnership, with the balance of trade between both countries Consistently in favour of China, some of the works Consulted mentioned that

there is also a problem of China exporting substandard manufactured products to Nigeria while importing low levels of raw materials. The issue of debt burden highlights while Nigeria keeps receiving Chinese loans, there are concerns fact there are no clear performance milestones associated with these loans. This questions the notion of a win win engagement and your real impact of Chinese loans alongside the dominance of Chinese companies in Nigeria.

However, the country's foreign policy objectives are to promote national interests. Bilateral on multilateral relations should direct towards the achievement of national interest. So further increase the opportunities of Nigeria China relations for Nigeria, this paper therefore makes the following recommendations.

1. Nigeria needs to address internal issues such as corruption, insecurity, dysfunctional educational system, the problem of maintenance of infrastructure etc. China cannot solve nigeria's problems through aids and collaboration unless Nigeria itself confronts the challenges that have stunted its industrial and economic growth over the years.
2. Both Nigeria and China should review the strategic partnership that anchors the economic dimensions of their relations. The Nigerian government should, in the review, push for a more balanced trade approach whether through the reduction of

imports from China or the promotion of exports through policy implementation internally.

3. Nigeria and China should both encourage collaboration between Chinese companies and Nigerian SMEs to foster technology transfer and skill development which is a valuable approach to empower local businesses to participate more actively in industrial projects.
4. Nigeria and China should maintain high-level diplomatic engagement and open communication channels that reaffirms the sovereignty and autonomy of Nigeria and China. It is clear practical term that will acknowledge the importance of collaboration and interdependence in a globalized world and allow Nigeria to approach the partnership with caution and be reminded not to be overly dependent on China.
5. In infrastructure projects and industrial collaborations, both countries should focus on enhancing local content participation. To support Nigerian businesses and ensure sustainable growth. Nigeria especially should pay attention to the high level of unemployment and the opportunities that diplomatic cooperations, and technology transfer presented in the relations between both countries. This would encourage partnerships between local contractors and Chinese firms.

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