



Landmarks in Nigeria- China Economic Relations



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Abstract: *The study examines some landmarks in Nigeria-China economic relations between 2010 and 2019. The study used secondary sources of data as veritable tool for this analysis. The study is anchored on the theory of realism. Findings revealed that Sino- Nigeria relations is a model of friendly cooperation that evolved through the dynamic of an ever changing international system. Further findings revealed that today China is globally relevant economically and has become the second largest economy in the world. More findings revealed that China's bilateral balance of trade, economic cooperation and investments in Nigeria can benefit the both countries. The study concludes that there are socio-political and economic implications in this relationship which Nigeria should not take for granted. The study recommends that Nigeria should emulate China's economic development strategy so as to become economically great and relevant globally as well.*

Keywords: Bilateral relation, Economic relation, Sino-Nigeria, Trade relation, realism

INTRODUCTION

Diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China was established on February 10, 1971. Relations between the two countries grew closer and stronger as a result of the international isolation and Western condemnation of Nigeria's military regimes from 1970s to 1998. Also conflict situations as well as competition over natural resources have provided ideal opportunities for foreign powers such as China to intervene in the affairs of other countries like Nigeria. The Nigeria civil war, 1967-1970, offered such an opportunity to foreign powers to intervene in the internal affairs. In this case, because of Nigeria's military weakness vis-à-vis Biafra's military weakness in terms of armaments, the latter was compelled to rely on world powers for arms and ammunition. Secondly, the foreign powers were involved because of ideological conflict as evident in the support China gave to Biafra because the Soviet Union was backing the federal military government (Okpe, 2019)

Diplomatic visits at the highest level were recorded within the period under study all of which no doubt, were precursors to Sino-Nigeria relationship which dates back to more than four (4) decades. This study intends among other things to provide an analysis of this relationship with China based on the latter's story of a phenomenal transformation from a poor state into a wealthy and to becoming the world's second largest economy today (Okpeh, 2019)

Objectives of the study

The study is predicated on the following research objective:

1. Examine Nigeria-China economic relations between 2010 and 2019

2. Identify internal dynamics and other events that may encourage or severe closer Nigeria- China economic relations.
3. Advance reasons why in the wider context of bilateral relations China has benefitted more than Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

The framework of analysis for this study is the theory of realism and the founding fathers are Thucydides, Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes and the main rival of realism is Marxism. Political realism believes that politics like society in general is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature and in order to improve society, it is necessary first and foremost to understand the laws by which society operates. The operation of these laws being impervious to our preferences will be challenged by men only at the risk of failure.

The main signpost that helps realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. This concept helps us to understand international politics and set politics as an autonomous sphere of action different from economics understood in terms of interest defined as wealth, ethics, aesthetics or religion and without it, knowledge about domestic and international politics would have been difficult neither could we distinguish between politics and non-political facts or issues, nor could we bring at least a measure of system order to the political sphere.

Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid but it does not endow the concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all. The idea of interest is indeed of the essence to politics and is unaffected by the circumstances of times and place. Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe. It distinguishes between truth and opinion and it has distinctive intellectual and moral attitude to political matters. (Rodrick, 2011)

The theoretical underpinning of realism is firmly rooted in the argument that the main actors on the world stage are nation-states otherwise referred to as sovereign actors. Sovereignty in this context implies that there is no actor superior to the nation-state that can compel it or cause it to act in any given situational environment. The realist strongly believes that nation-state actors like multinational and international non-government organizations (NGOs) all have to function and operate within the framework of inter-state relations. Furthermore; the realist assumes that the world system practically represents a constant struggle for interests and values especially economic and political power between non-states as they all try to enhance the maximization of their interests. In some practical instances, such struggles have led to the deployment of the balance of power mechanism through which national states form alliance to stop any one state from dominating the rest as exemplified by the blocs during the cold war. These practical and universally acceptable facts are the rationale for adopting the theory for this study. (Rodricks, 2011)

Conceptual clarifications

The concept of diplomacy: This is an art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations. It usually refers to international diplomacy, the conduct of international relations through the intercession of professional diplomats with regards to issues of peace-making, trade, war, economics, politics, culture, religion, environment and human rights that combine creatively to shape and develop the world and make it peaceful and habitable for all mankind irrespective of your colour, race and creed. (Barnett, 2012)

International relations: this is the branch of political science that is concerned with foreign affairs and relations among countries, including the roles of states, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations (MNCs). It is both an academic and public policy field, and can be either positive or negative or normative as it both seeks to analyze as well as formulate the foreign policy of a particular state. (Rowland, 2013)

Bilateral Trade: This is the type of trade that takes place exclusively between two states particularly barter trade based on bilateral deal between governments and without using hard currency for payment. Bilateral trade agreement often aims to keep trade deficits at minimum level by keeping a clearing account where deficit would accumulate. (Rowland, 2013)

International Trade: This is the exchange of capital, goods and services across international borders or territories. In most countries, such trade represents a significant share of gross domestic product (GDP). Increasing international trade is crucial to the continuance of globalization. Without international trade; nations would be limited to the goods and services produced within their borders. There will also be limited global commerce competitiveness, specialization and the comparative advantage some countries have over certain good and services as well as limiting the incomes of many countries thereby. (Kotilainen, 2012)

Review of related literature

Historical review of Sino- African relations

An inter-state relation is a major issue in world politics. From the 1970s when enlightenment thinkers posited a trend toward the social unification of the world, up to the 2000 when global political and economic institutions have become centrally visible in the determination of outcomes in inter-state political and economic relations, the idea of inter-state relations has remained constant. The African continent has maintained its angle of visibility and importance in the world affairs over the centuries, but not without some compelling dynamics. (Naidei& Davis, 2014)

The attraction of Africa to the great economic powers of the world that have continued to vigorously pursue extensive relations with the continent lies in the fact that Africa has enormous potentials that are easily exploited and translated to economic fortunes for the benefit of economics giants of the world. Sino-African relations largely typify Africa's strategic position as a source of vital mineral resource and potentials for the economic enhancement of both the developed and fast developing economies of the world. In very lucid terms, Taylor (2015) argued that China views Africa as a ripe zone for investment and enormous trade opportunities. China–African relations got off to a slow start after the first Asia-Africa conference, the Bandung conference in 1955 as Beijing attempted to assert its leadership over the Third World and the non-aligned movement. Egypt became the first African country to establish diplomatic relations with China in May 1956. In the early 1960s over ten (10) African countries including Morocco, Algeria and Sudan, had establish diplomatic relations with China. By the end of 1970, 44 of the 50 independent African countries had entered into diplomatic relations with China. February 10th 1971. Nigeria established diplomatic relations with China (Wenping, 2015) China supported independent movements in Africa providing not only moral and theoretical support, but also weapons and military training. For two decades from the mid-1950s to mid-1970, China gave about \$2.5 billion to 36 African countries in aid. China also sent ten thousand engineers, doctors and technicians to provide assistance for African development and undertook various

infrastructural projects, one of which was the 1860-kilometer long Tanzanian-Zambia railway. Through those aid programs, China gained a good reputation among Africans. In retrospect, China's contemporary engagement with Africa has its roots in policies pursued during this early period. The ultimate achievement of China's-Africa policy during this period was that the People's Republic of China (PRC) replaces the Taiwan-based Republic of China (ROC) as a member of the United Nations in 1971 with the help of African countries (Pere & Shelton 2015)

According to Bello (2017) the new millennium has seen the China-Africa relationship explode in all aspects. China-African trade had grown rapidly from \$10.5 billion in 2000 to \$29.4 billion in 2004, nearly \$40 in 2005 and over \$50 billion in 2006. In 2008, the volume reached a record of \$106.8 billion with an over age growth rate of 30% in eight straight years. By 2007, China had become the second largest trade partner second only to United States, and the largest individual country exporter to Sub-Saharan Africa with a market share of 9.8% and a volume of \$26.5 billion. Between 2011-2018, Chinese investment, aid infrastructure engineers, doctors, technicians have permeated almost all African countries. Loans and direct investment in Africa increased sharply and exceeded \$986. 7billion (Thousand, 2011)

With increasing economic ties China boosted its development assistance to Africa as well. In June, 2006, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao announced that China's assistance to Africa between 1975 and 2006 had totaled RMB 44.4 billion (\$5.7) billion. According to Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs LI Zhaoxing, between 2000 and 2003, the aid to Africa represented 44% of China's total foreign aid doubling the aid by 2009, 2010 to 2015, as promised would bring the budget for Africa aid to around \$3.6 billion a year. China equally intensified its political ties with African countries during the same period (Brookes & Shin, 2019)

From 2002 to 2006, ninety (90) African parties sent their delegations to China and the Communist party of China sent 78 delegations to Africa. In addition to the contacts between parties, China and Africa also increased exchanges between their high level leaders, congresses and parliaments and this continues till today. The forum on China-Africa cooperation (FOCAC) was established to facilitate "South-South" cooperation in 2000. China's first white paper on its African Policy in 2006 publicly announced Africa's strategic importance and stressed the interest to further such cooperation in the future (Meidan, 2018)

Emerging issues from China's increasing relevance

According to Tawen (2017) the rebirth of China after about five hundred years of decline would no doubt remain one of the major events during the 21st century. This development has however thrown up a number of critical issues over which analysts of the international political economy are contending. The first of these issues relates to the growing prospect of China consolidating her status as a regional hegemony and the implications of this on the stability of Asia. Early in the 1990s, particularly after the exit of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, (USSR) it was obvious that China was fast becoming a major contender for both regional and global power, having not been seriously involved in the cold war politics between the East and the West. Thus under the dynamic leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China leveraged on radical economic and social reforms that were driven by the combined philosophy of moderate communism and limited capitalism to achieve greater economic ties with the industrialized West, and also sustained accelerated economic growth and development and internal political stability. In addition to China being the most populous

nation, it is large and geo-strategically located in the Asia-Pacific region. China has the world largest military. She possesses strategic range nuclear weapons in addition to being a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and therefore possesses a veto power in the supra-national organization. (Abah, 2018)

Another important issue emerging from the reality of China stepping on the corridor of global power is associated with the anxiety being expressed in some quarters over the prospects of stepping into the vacuum created by the exit of USSR and the consequent diminishing significance of the ideology of communism. Also China's rising global profile has also become a great boost in the economic integration process in Asia Pacific region (Ikoku, 2016)

Nigeria –China trade relations

Nigeria's relation with China has grown in the last two decades from the limited and intermittent contact that marked the immediate post-independent era to an increasingly complex and expansive engagement. Right from 1980, both countries became closer in many respects. In 1982 precisely, the two countries signed an agreement on cultural and educational cooperation for their mutual benefits and China donated several works of art to Nigeria through their embassy in Lagos. This made Nigeria to begin to forget the role China played during the civil War (World Bank, 2011)

It is important to note here that China was shielded from international competition through an edifice of protectionism or closed economic policy. The country came out of this situation in the 1980s with tremendous record of economic growth and expansion that were impressive and these have made her to become one of the fastest growing economies in the world today. China's economic potential was evident in her trade performance from 1980 to 2007. From 1980 to 2006, for instance, China share in global export and import rose from 2.4% to 4.9% and to 8.6% respectively. From 1993 to 2012, the volume of export goods moved to an annual rate of 22.7% (Izundu, 2018)

According to Marfa (2018) a major impact of the new wave of Sino-Nigeria relations was the formation of Nigeria-China Friendship Association (NICFA) in April 1994 with the objective of promoting friendship, socio-economic cultural, educational, trade, industrial, technological, scientific and sporting collaborations between the two countries. This is evident when in 1994, a symposium of Nigeria –China foreign relation was held. The forum attracted important dignitaries in industry and commerce, diplomatic corps and high government officials from both sides. The association also succeeded in sponsoring the performance of the first ever Nigeria cultural troupe to china in 1995 with the assistance of Nigeria Ministry of information and culture (Marfa, 2018)

Furthermore, NICFA and Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) sent economic delegation to Nigeria that visited Lagos, Enugu, Abuja and Akwalbom in October, 1997. NIFCA hosted the first Nigeria- China art and craft exhibition. The association invited a team of Chinese investors, culture promoters and entrepreneurs. NICFA also made effort to promote health care delivery system through collaboration with CPAFFC especially in trade and medical system. The result was the three-man Ariguna health care delegation to China in February 1999 to explore the possibility of manufacturing medical drugs in Kano Nigeria (Marfa, 2018)

Earlier on in 1993, the Babangida regime inaugurated an eleven-man committee that restructured the establishment of the Nigerian railway Plc. Nigerian Rail Track Authority (NRTA) and Nigerian Rail Integrated Board (NRIB). Chinese business organizations won several infrastructural contracts during Abacha regime. The Chinese Civil Engineering construction corporation won the contract to reposition the corporation and put its locomotives wagons and coaches back on track, the strengthening over the 300 curves of the 3,500 km, rail network as well as training of no fewer than 600 rail staff at a cost of \$65 billion (Ministry of Finance, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2015)

Nigeria–China trade and economic cooperation

According to Rothberg (2018) Nigeria and China have signed a number of trade, economic, scientific, and technological and investment cooperation. The Chinese government runs capacity building programs on annual basis to improve the capacity and competence of Nigerian government officials. Other areas of Chinese investments include: education, water and sanitation as well as infrastructure. The basic principles guiding Nigeria–China in the 21 century are:

1. Sincere friendship and mutual trust
2. Mutual benefit and common development
3. Enhanced consultation and mutual support and
4. Commitment to a long term perspective and a future oriented relationship.

The two sides share the view that Nigeria–China bilateral cooperation in trade and other economic activities with its huge potential remains a powerful driving force behind their relations with the aim of stepping up exchanges and cooperation of other companies and enterprises and create enabling environment that will facilitate trade and investment between them. This also include mutual cooperation in oil and natural gas ventures as well as energy development projects (Rothberg, 2018)

On international issues, the two countries agree to share extensive interest in maintaining world peace, facilitate the establishment of a just and equitable new international politics and economic order strengthening South-outh cooperation and promoting the cause of universal prosperity, safeguard national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity (Rothberg, 2018)

Various technical assistance in education, military, health and technology were received from China for example; a \$46 billion Yuan was given to Nigeria for the purchase of anti-malaria medicines and for the training of Nigeria health personnel on malaria control and prevention. In recent years, Nigeria has become one of the purchases of anti-malaria medicines and for the training of Nigerian health personnel on malaria control and prevention. In recent years, Nigeria has becomes one of the Chinese most important telecom market and the two largest players are the state-owned Zhong Xing telecom equipment company (ZTE) and Huawei established in 1985 but entered into Nigerian market in 1999 (Egbula & Zheng, 2016)

Composition and significance of trade

Trade between Nigeria and China started in the early 1980s and while China import growth grew at a progressive and sustainable higher rate since 1998, in contrast, Nigerian growth has rather been unstable and has experienced five times import contractions in the last decade while China only experienced twice contractions within the same period of time (Ministry of Commerce and Industry 2016)

Chemical products which ranked second only to machinery and transport equipment in 2013, was replaced by manufactured products in 2014. Generally speaking Chinese economy grew faster than her Nigerian counterpart; she equally has higher savings than Nigeria. China also has higher gross investment rate as depicted by the GDP ratio suggesting that China's savings are more appropriately channeled into investment than that of Nigeria (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2019)

Nigeria's import from China grew consistently given that most of what she imported was finished goods which come to compete with Nigeria's domestic manufacturing, and the fact that imports constitute leakage to economy, Nigeria's economy is negatively affected as imports have negative relationship with national income. Trade between Nigeria and China comes with opportunities and challenges. First, it gives Nigeria an opportunity to learn from China's growth, development and poverty-reduction strategy second, it provides Nigeria with alternative markets for sourcing inputs for industrial sector and finished products for consumption purposes. This is important for Nigeria given the size of Chinese market at its growth trajectory in recent times. The challenge is however that Nigeria is a country that has high propensity towards imitative technology rather than innovative technology and so will she be ready to humbly and patiently follow the Chinese hard way to success and glory?

Ministry of commerce and industry overview of Nigeria- China investment relations

In the import and export trade structure, Nigeria's total imports increased from US \$11.8 billion in 2013 to US\$15.9 billion in 2016 and from US\$ 15.9 in 2016 to US \$22.7 in 2018. In 2015, import of machinery and transport equipment ranked first followed by manufactured goods, miscellaneous manufactured goods chemical and food and live animals. In 2016, chemical product imports ranked second to machinery and transport equipment while in 2017, manufactured products replaced chemical in second place. Machinery and transport equipment input thus ranked highest in all the reference years. (Bamidele & Chilaka, 2018)

Nigeria imported more of miscellaneous manufactures from China relative to the rest of world. This rose from 14.9% in 2013 to 49.7% in 2017. Chemical share of Nigeria's imports also rose consecutively in food and live animals as well as beverages and tobacco. Crude materials etc. countries exporting these products to Nigeria however lost their market share to China as Nigeria imports almost all these goods from China (Bamidele & Chiliaika, 2018).

Nigeria's export to China includes food, animals, crude materials, oils, chemical products. Minerals cocoa, cotton and agro-allied manufactured goods. In contrast to the nature of Nigeria's top 10 export commodities, the top 10 export commodities from China are all manufactured goods. These include electrical machinery equipment parts, sound records, vehicles, as well as nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances articles of iron and steel and plastics, organic chemical and articles of apparel and clothing accessories, ceramic products as well as inorganic chemicals and radioactive element are also part of the list even though not as manufactured goods. (Anshan, 2017)

Nigeria's export GDP ratio grew over the years reinforcing the country's trade orientation. Again, the export GDP ratio in many cases almost doubled that of China. However, China's export maintained a generally stable growth of 2-digits rate particularly since 2011. This is in contrast with Nigeria's export growth which was unstable with many cases in negative growth rate. Nigeria's sole reliance on crude oil, the international price of which fluctuates and unstable accounted for this negative growth (Anshan, 2017)

Table 1 Global Import Performance: Nigeria and China

Year	Import GDP		Import Growth %	
	Nigeria	China	Nigeria	China
2013	32.2	20.9	-0.8	24.5
2014	32.5	20.5	8.9	10.8
2015	41.6	22.6	20.6	27.8
2016	41.5	27.4	10.2	24.8
2017	37.4	31.4	2.0	22.5
2018	35.2	31.9	21.3	11.4

Source: World Bank 2018: World Development Indicators

Table 2 Global/export performance Nigeria and China

Year	Export GDP		Import Growth %	
	Nigeria	China	Nigeria	China
2013	54.3	23.3	16.4	30.6
2014	43.3	22.6	-3.9	9.6
2015	40.9	25.1	-10.6	29.4
2016	49.7	29.5	31.6	26.8
2017	54.6	33.9	3.1	28.4
2018	53.1	37.4	-1.8	24.2

Source: World Bank 2018. World Development indicators

Bilateral balance of trade

Nigeria's trade with the People's Republic of China (PRC) has raised several policy concerns. The trade is highly unbalanced in favour of the Chinese with Nigeria deficit in billions in 2012. This is associated with the concomitant loss of jobs in industries competing with rapidly rising imports from China (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 201)

Chinese investments in Nigeria hit US\$ 16 billion in 2013. According to the Chinese customs, the bilateral trade volume between the two countries in 2013 reached US\$11.16 billion, up by 10.6% among which China's export to Nigeria was US\$ 16.11 billion, up by 23.9% while Chinese import from Nigeria was US\$ 390 million down by 59.3% . China had a surplus of US\$ 4.57 billion. According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (2017) the turnover of completed engineering contracts by Chinese companies in Nigeria reached US\$ 6.68 billion in 2012 and the volume of completed labour service cooperation contracts was US\$ 28 billion. Direct investment volume of Chinese financial projects in Nigeria reached US\$ 257 million same year. According to Riojing (2018) Nigeria invested in 15 projects in China in 2012 with a contracted volume of US\$ 220 billion and an actual utilization of US\$ 230 million.

Customs procedures constituted major obstacle to trade with China. Importers face inordinately long clearance procedures and high berthing and unloading costs. The Nigerian government currently practices a double inspection system requiring both pre-shipment inspection and 100% on arrival inspection as well. Cargoes are kept at the ports waiting for

clearance for weeks while some even delayed for months. Nigerian government announced in July, 2014 that it would remove the required pre-shipping inspection and only adopts destination inspection system. For some unknown reasons however, the removal has not yet been implemented. However, China hoped that Nigerian government will conscientiously fulfill its obligations under the agreement on pre shipping inspection of the world trade organization (WTO) (Osiki, 2018)

Nigeria started implementing standard organization of Nigger conformity assessment program (SONCAP) since September, 2005, applying mandatory certification to certain import products such as electrical and electronic products auto tires, auto glass, auto parts, auto batteries, gas apparatus, toys, galvanized steel products, generators etc. Manufacturer or exporters must provide inspection report issued by qualified labs in accordance with standard organization of Nigeria requirements. The certification certificate values only 3 years. Nigerian government has named INTRTEK as the only organization to conduct the SONCAP certification (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017)

There are no obvious policy barriers existing between Nigeria and China in respect to the operation and exit of foreign investment in Nigeria. There is no restriction on remittance of profit gained by Chinese funded enterprises. Besides, foreign investment is allowed in all sectors except the production of arms, ammunition, narcotic drugs and uniforms for the army, police and the customs. (Rothberg, 2018)

Oil and gas investment

One major material Chinese needs is crude oil which has made Africa one of the better grounds for competition over resources among the world powers in the so-call global politics and diplomacy. Nigeria is one of world's largest producers of crude oil. The country recently produces an average of 2.5 (plus and minus) million barrels of crude oil per day. This makes her the 10th largest producer of crude oil in the world. The need for oil to service her growing economy makes China the second largest importer of oil from Nigeria. China as a country has taken advantage of the shrinkage in European and American influence in Nigeria to begin to build her economic and political influences. This is evident in the trade between China and Nigeria making her one of the 10 top trade partners (Emodi, 2019)

July 2005 witnessed Chinese entering into US\$ 800 million crude oil deal with Nigeria and Beijing was reconsidering 47 billion dollar worth of investment in Nigeria. This consideration perhaps gave birth to Chinese National offshore oil corporation (CNOOC) a Chinese state owned company that agree on January, 2006 to pay \$2.3 billion for a stake in Nigerian oil and natural gas field. The deal was regarded as the Chinese largest over sea's acquisition. China's readiness to invest in Nigeria is to ensure her energy security. Trade rights secured by China were aimed at rehabilitating and refining power and other infrastructures in Nigeria. The first stage of the ambitious 20 years rail modernization plan was reached. There was also a joint venture by the Chinese oil and natural gas corporation and an Indian multinational company. Furthermore, \$200 billion dollar project by a Chinese firm in preferential buyer's credit for Nigeria's communication satellite was signed. (Emodi and Osiki 2019) It should be noted that the Nigeria-China deal in oil is such that China, the world's most populous nation, needs more imported oil to fuel her rapidly growing economy. On the other hand, Nigeria, African most populous economy, but also one of the poorest countries in the world needs infrastructure to speed up development, the lack of which to a very large extent has been the bane of her formidable and sustainable socio-economic growth and development (Egbula&Zheng, 2019)

Chinese investment and its implications in Nigeria

According to Utomi (2016) there is a mixed feeling and reactions from different people regarding Chinese investment in Nigeria. While some argued that there is no benefit Nigeria will derive from China but that only China will benefit from Nigeria, others are of the opinion that the two countries will benefit from each other. According to Waziri Ibrahim, Nigeria former Minister of commerce and industry, China is the fastest growing economy in the world with effective practice and practical know-how while Nigeria has rich resources and market potentials. This synergy will therefore benefit both sides.

Addressing a joint session of the Nigeria's national Assembly, Mr. Hu Jintao has this to say "we will work together to forge a new type of Nigeria-China strategic partnership. That China will firmly share the desire of Nigeria to maintain dependent and sovereignty and pursue models of development that suit their particular and national conditions". Jintao maintained that China is determined to "expand win-win economic cooperation that will feature capacity building, human resources and capacity exchanges". Furthermore, Nigeria will benefit from this relationship since China grants loans without conditionality attached to them like those of Western institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank (Utomi, 2016)

According to (Jarvis and Jiao 2017) this trade relation will engender mega bilateral relationships, The relationship will encourage growth of the socio-cultural tranquility, create a favorable atmosphere for further trading and engender greater bond between them and other African nations. (Jarvis & Jiao, 2017)

The public investment and economic activities of China in Nigeria have gained prominence in recent times. In the agricultural sector for instance, Chinese government provided training to Nigerian nationals in the field of rice production, agricultural machinery, acupuncture, small hydropower, food and agro-processing and tropical disease control (the Weekly China Briefing, October, 2013)

Despite all these seemingly good gestures, it is argued by some scholars that China is on a mission to plunder Nigeria resources as the Western nations did during the colonial period. According to Abah (2018) the Chinese are taking over from the imperialist West who exploited our resources and left us dry. It is a latter day invasion of our economic landscape and it is merely an expansionist tendency. Some human rights activists too were worried that China's policies could prevent Nigeria from democratizing. They maintained that increased trading with China which often floods Nigeria's market with cheap finished goods is bankrupting local manufactures. Furthermore there are several complaints of unethical industrial practices by Chinese investors whose impact is horrendous on the welfare of Nigeria as a host country. This ranged from insincerity in their accounting procedures in order to invade tax, to draining Nigeria's economy especially from the oil sector, support for and promotion of undemocratic tendencies in Nigeria, saturating Nigeria's markets with sub-standard products and refusal to transfer skill or technology (Daily independent 2016)

According to the Nigerian Labour Congress (2014) foreign investment is supposed to lead to job creation, Chinese companies have employed 30,000 local workers but this pales in comparison to the 350,000 manufacturing job lost because of Chinese imports as well as the collapse of domestic industry. Labour Union also complaint about working conditions in Chinese companies where Nigerians are poorly paid compared to their Chinese counterparts

and where Nigeria workers no matter how educated and qualified never climbed to management level. Chinese companies have also been accused of flaunting labour laws and discouraging unionism. These companies are also accused by Nigeria businessmen of exploiting tariff concessions to dump cheap goods in Nigerian markets and stifle competition. Another implication of Chinese investment in Nigeria is seen in areas of language barriers and cultural differences weighing heavily against the transfer of technical skills and education from China to Nigeria citizens. (Daily Independent, 2016)

The major findings of these bilateral economic relations between the two countries are that Chinese engagement with Nigeria is full of contradictions. Firstly, Nigerian producers have been marginalized and displaced from the market because of the influx of Chinese goods, at the same time, these same individuals have gained because of the affordability of Chinese goods. Secondly, Nigeria leaders dictated to Chinese which development project they would like to undertake, but the absence of true leaders who are willing to stand up and articulate a long-term development strategy that will adequately address the needs of the majority of Nigerian citizens remains a key challenge. Nigeria's rampant corruption has also proven to be a serious cultural obstacle that needs to be overcome if Nigeria is to successfully leverage its demands vis-a- vis China (Djeri, 2017)

Another noticeable implication is that Chinese firms have been criticized for being "closed" as they hardly employ local experts. There are submissions that they even maltreat indigenous experts. According to a report by the Joint Venture (JV) and Wholly Foreign Owned (WFO), conditions of Nigerian workers in Chinese firms neither conform with the Nigerian labour laws nor to that of international labour organization (ILO). The report also alleged that technology transfer from Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) is insignificant because most of the Chinese firms bring into the country industrial products and complete equipment with Chinese technicians and Nigeria technicians are dumped. (Djeri, 2017)

Another serious implication that will affect the relationship between these two countries in terms of politics, trade and investment is the advent of Covid-19 that sprang up from Wuhan province in China and is ravaging the whole world. The advent of this deadly pandemic has led to restriction in movement by government officials as well as diplomats from both countries and these restrictions have negatively affected the cordial relationship that had existed between Nigeria, Africa and the rest of the world in politics, trade and investment. (Jane, 2021)

Methodology

The study made use of secondary sources of data to analyses Nigeria-China economic relations between 2010 and 2019. Survey research method was used. The choice of this method was informed by its outstanding qualities and expert submissions that enhance efforts of findings and obtaining understanding about the importance and or the benefits the two countries will derive from such bilateral relations. This methodology helps us to understand in the broadest possible form, not just the product of scientific enquiry, but the process itself because it outlines the step- by- step details of the procedures followed in carrying out the study. It also avail readers the opportunity of assessing the views of authorities cited in the literature review. Data for study were sourced from internet, newspapers, journals, published articles, text books, quoted speeches, dictionaries, encyclopedias, magazines, seminar papers and official publications.

Conclusion

The main objective of the study is to articulate the landmarks in Nigeria- China economic as well as diplomatic relations. The study also examines the historical review of Sino-Africa relations known to be a model of friendly cooperative relations which evolved through the dynamics of an ever changing international system. It considers emerging issues from China's increasing global relevance relating to how the development or renaissance of China has created a number of critical issues over which analysts of international system are contending. Findings revealed those Nigeria-China economic relations, technical assistance and scientific cooperation's, investment relations, important export trade structures, bilateral balance of trade, oil and gas investment and the implications of this investment.

Further findings revealed that the recent resurgence in the relationship has been attributed to improved and deliberate and mutual efforts at the highest political levels and it is discovered that investment from China are mainly into manufacturing, oil and gas, telecommunication, building and construction. The study revealed that while possibilities certainly exist for Nigeria to derive high value from China's growing influence, Nigerians have not fully capitalized on the potential benefits through people oriented leadership to maximize such gains. Most importantly, Nigeria needs to develop a comprehensive strategy to more effectively balance the engagement of China and the West to leverage its own strength and develop a plan for sustainable development that resonates with its citizens by meeting their felt needs, yearnings and aspirations which is the essence of such relationships.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the discussions involved, and the conclusion thereafter drawn, the following recommendations are hereby proposed.

1. Nigeria needs to realize that China's engagement gives it a unique opportunity to significantly expand its development and articulate a comprehensive strategy that will address its long-term needs
2. Nigerian government should avoid short-term fixes and front-loaded deals with the Chinese and move beyond arrangements that focus solely on the petroleum sector.
3. Nigeria should clearly ascertain how china's engagement in Africa fits into the broader perspective of international engagement and diversify her development by balancing Western assistance with that of the Chinese.
4. Nigeria should learn from the success and failure of other countries relating with China and their policies towards development.
5. Great emphasis should be placed on building human capital and overcoming language and cultural barriers to facilitate the transfer of business know-how and technology to a wider array of the Nigerian population.

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