



Emerging Trends in Sino-Nigeria Relations: Implications for new Economic Development Options

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Abstract

Emerging trends in Sino-Nigeria relations, anchored on the intricacies of China's Foreign Direct investment (FDI), powered by China's 'Going Global' strategy envisioned by globalists as beneficial for both parties' economic development, constitute serious concerns for critical analysts of African development who see the same as China's covert promptings of Nigeria into eternal bondage. Data obtained through ex -post facto research methodology were analyzed under the model of national interest which posits that as statesmen are governed by their respective national interest, which they pursue through various means in all their foreign relations. In the course of this study, the findings showed that China is pursuing series of tactically convoluted trade relations, investments and development financing for Nigeria, in return for her unfettered access to the extraction and expropriation of Nigeria's mineral resources for her vested interests. Furthermore, China is stage-managing Nigerian leaders through a labyrinth of subtleties and covert display of her super power capabilities to subjugate the nation. Through multi-pronged agreements that carry ominous clauses, Nigerian leaders are entwined into long term agreements for loans, infrastructural transformation and development financing, which critical analysts see as Greek gifts with ominous outcome. This remains the lot of many African nations in similar quagmire and hegemony powered by China's 'Going Global Strategy', that needs to be checkmated based on a re-evaluation and re-negotiation of agreements between China and Nigeria to avoid consequences that may drag her into modern day slavery under China's dominion.

Keywords: China-Africa relations, 'going-Global', economic cooperation, Nigeria, development



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Introduction

The past seventeen (17) years, spanning between years 2006 and 2023; has witnessed increases in Sino-Nigeria bilateral relations being tailored towards strategic trade, economic and infrastructural development for Nigeria in return for unfettered access to raw material, solid minerals and petroleum products extraction directly by Chinese companies for export to their mother land. Pursuant to China's use of her Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), powered by her 'Going Global strategy' to gain huge advantage over Nigeria and to a large extent most nations of Africa, these relations have had her focusing specifically on her national interest which remain multipronged and intriguing, (Adepegba, 2018). To achieve her objectives, China has sustained rapid expansion in trade relations and export of her variety of finished goods to Nigeria in return for opportunities of deepening her foothold on the direct extraction and expropriation of raw materials such as oil and gas, solid minerals of different kind from Nigeria for her development, (Danie & Maiwada, S, 2015). While globalists eulogize this emerging trend by praising China's investments, loan, and aids as well as infrastructural and other development financing in Nigeria as a step in the right direction for Nigeria's development, critical scholars disagree with them. Taken to a wider perspective, the globalists' contention that accruing long term benefits exist in the foreign investments from the emerging 'assumed' convivial mutual relations between Nigeria and China, have conversely met criticism by scholars and commentators who are of the opinion that the same exercise is tantamount to subjugating Nigeria's future to China's domination for ages to come, (Gimba and Ibrahim, 2018). Arising from these arguments, this study was carried out to widen the narratives from the critical perspective based on our efforts at evaluating the implications of the various dimensions of China's extra ordinary 'fiddly' entry into Nigeria to do business, anchored on her FDI which is powered by her 'Going Global' strategy. The contention



here is anchored on the past experiences of other African nations who have already fallen prey to China's intrigues across the continent. Such nations include Zimbabwe, Namibia, Ghana and Congo DR that are still reeling under China's weighty stranglehold stemming from their bad experiences. Most arguments against the emerging relations hold that it will be full hardy and suicidal for other nations to walk into the same trap of China's high handedness when many African nations have already fallen prey. For those just jumping into the fray, the fact remains that when the death knell sounds, the pains will be much more than the gains. From the experience of other nations, the emerging trend portends serious challenges to Nigeria and the future of her citizens. The crux of the matter is that China being a developed nation with extensive super power, (Alden, and Large, (2019), is using her FDI and 'Going Global' strategy to entrap Nigeria, a weaker developing nation into decades of second slavery, akin to a re-colonization of Nigeria by other means. The intriguing aspect of all these comes against the backdrop of China's dare devil and dark faced charade which she has been parading across Africa, (Asiedu, 2006), believing that no power any where can challenge or stop her. China is seemingly cruising to her destination in these relations with Nigeria through the complicity of Nigeria's ineffectual rulers, who are more concerned about their contemporary clannish interests than the wider national interests of their citizens.

Through her infamous FDI and other largesse managed by her guile, hidden under their 'Going Global strategy', (Asiedu, 2006 and Bukarambe, 2005), China has continued pushing Nigeria into relations with undefined terms, classified as top state secret, which analysts assume are skewed diametrically towards compromising the national integrity and sovereignty of Nigeria. Other aspects of the emerging order is that as China deepens her Asian dragon's fangs into the belly of the earth underneath Nigerian villages where their domestic companies have spread out to exploit the people's resources, they have also been embarking on the creation of small enclaves and settlements of mini Chinese towns exclusively for their citizens while strengthening a disconnect between themselves and their host communities. The consequential impacts have remained tales of woes and echoes of pain, agony and loses occasioned by Chinese companies who Nigerian citizens accuse of human rights abuses and renege on their corporate social



responsibilities to their host communities. They are also alleged to be operating as independent sovereigns within the sovereign Nigerian nation where they are not responsible and accountable to local authorities, emboldened by the nature of the engagements between China and the Nigerian ruling class.

Further concerns are also identified in the area of addressing the allegation that China is executing a modern day enclosure movement and enslavement of man and land across the vast areas of Nigeria. These and other related challenges Nigerians are said to be contending with, while the Nigerian authorities do practically nothing to nip the emerging trends in the bud before they fester into cancerous socioeconomic and national sovereignty catastrophe for Nigerians. Here the fundamental question seeking for answers is why does the Sino-Nigeria bilateral relation focus fundamentally on implementing China's specially designed 'Going Global' strategies and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) objectives? Secondly, on whose long term interest are these emerging trends designed to serve? The aim of raising the concerns which may sound like a death knell to Nigerians is for them arise question their political leaders about the details of these relations with China. This again serves as a wakeup call on Nigerians to be wary of the emerging challenges and be able to make demands on their leaders to take precautionary measures to protect their sovereign wealth, resources and indigenous industrial development in the event of a backlash from these awkward Sino-Nigeria relations.

Conceptual Clarifications about Nigeria and China

The Nigerian Nation State

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation-state made up of over 250 ethnic groups who among themselves are again made up of sub-ethnic and tribal groups, (Nnoli, 1978). These peoples who speak over 450 languages endowed with multicultural, religious and political affiliations constitute over 230 million people, (NPC). Among the citizens, 60% of the population represents the majority found among the Igbo at the south east, Hausa in the north and Yoruba in the west, while the remaining 40% are spread among the minority groups, (Egwu, 2007).



Nigeria is located between the Sahel region of Africa at the north and the Gulf of Guinea to the south along the west African region of the Atlantic ocean and has a land mass covering an area of 923,769 square kilometers (356,669 sq miles) and remains the sixth most populous black African nation on earth, Nigeria's neighbour to the north is Niger Republic, with Chad at North West, Cameroun in the east and Benin Republic at the west.

(<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/developed-countries>). Nigeria is a British colonial entity forcefully re-created out of the pre-colonial peoples of the region who had existed as independent indigenous nations and kingdoms with diverse cultures and other ways of life, linked the Nok civilization that dates back to the second millennium BC, and up to the 15th century BC, (Zenker, 2011). After long decades of British colonial rule, (Yoon, 2009), Nigeria progressed to independence first by gaining some degree of self rule in 1956 from where she progressed to become a politically independent entity in 1960.

Her independence ushered in by the handover of the symbolic flag independence from the United Kingdom on 1 October 1960 led her to be known as the federal Republic of Nigeria under the political leadership of her indigenous politicians. Following series of historical movements which does not fall under the purview of this research, the federal Republic of Nigeria has come to exist as an independent sovereign nation whose people have paid dearly to develop for their benefit. Such efforts have seen various evolutions such as the pains of the political crises and the civil war from 1960 to 1970, the various military dictatorships and the inexperienced floundering civilian rulers which cumulatively account for the citizen's zeal at protecting their national integrity. Today, Nigeria has grown in leaps and bounds with development gradually spreading across her six geo-political zones and 36 states and 774 local government areas as well as federal capital territory located in Abuja and various other monumental achievements, (Nnoli, 1978). These efforts have however, not come so easily as there have always been some intractable political crises, regionalist and ethnic formations which constrained her through the four republics. Added to the challenges of nation hood is the intermittent military interregnums that heralded the endless political crises facing the nation, (Dudley, 1973).



Following the series of military, Nigeria's political and indeed other aspects of development went through series of backward motion in the evolution of her own brand of democratic governance. With the political leadership in disarray, the economic base of the nation-state of Nigeria became the primary victim of the outcome of the crises, thus exposing her to various kinds of offers by foreign nations and trans-national corporations whose primary interest remains the exploitation and expropriation of her resources, (Thomson, 2000). Nigeria's mono-cultural economy on its part has not been helping matters regarding her vulnerability to external influence by those with keen interest in exploiting her. Despite the fact that Nigeria endowed with the enormous resources which range from varieties of agricultural products, (Oyovbaire, 1984), to the oil and gas resources, (Osaldor, 2010), as well as the countless solid minerals which abound in the country, the import dependent economy has left her too open to manipulations to externally motivated forces. .

The 21st century deepening of the world economic and financial crises, saw Nigeria being caught out in the cold with her rapidly dwindling mono-cultural dependent economy being hit hard by falling prices of petroleum products at the international market. These challenges included her rising foreign debt, domestic challenges compounded by high consumer goods importation, exacerbated by poor technologies, infrastructural failures, all generally debilitated her socioeconomic system, leading the already confounded leadership into kneejerk reactions that got the nation caught up on a journey often taken by a failing state, (Remi, Idike, etal, 2021). In their often faulted efforts at managing the colossal failures they have at various times thrown Nigeria into, the ruling class have continued steering the already wrecked national ship of state to the precipice, exemplified by the current ill conceived Sino-Nigeria bilateral relations which many analysts see as a furtherance of the calamity facing Nigeria. Just like the experiments with heavy external borrowing and experimenting with various anti-people policies imposed on the nation by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank which deepened the nation's debt and other development crises, (Maier, 2000), the Nigerian ruling class are at it again in their romance with China, (Ogunsanwo, 2008; Nkwede, 2015).



Despite their colossal failures, the Nigerian rulers, goaded by liberal scholars and western nations, institutions of the World Bank and IMF to always accept ‘gifts’ from the developed world, are indeed taking further steps to sustain the carnage in the land by engaging China in diverse forms of national development agenda under China’s Foreign Direct Investment, (FDI), (Giovannetti and Sanfilippo, 2009), that is already deepening the crises across the various strata of the nation. Here we find Nigeria, a desperate nation facing monumental underdevelopment, led avariciously into China’s den by their awkward leaders as they gleefully embrace ‘Chinese brand’ of development.

China in History

China remains both a surprise to many who have been observing her development trajectories as she enigmatically rides through thick and thin to become a development colossus ready to devour all preys in her path. This is a nation that has within a period of over seven and a half decades, progressively transformed itself from a being closed-off Asian nation, mired in poverty and underdevelopment, interpreted by European and American analysts as a failure, (Angelou, 2016), to emerge as a classical case of self reliance to the chagrin many superpowers. Dating back to the events that heralded the 1949 socialist revolution under which Mao Tze Dong founded the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the nation China, had experienced some pre-socialist revolutionary challenges and turbulence created by domestic travails and international capitalist conspiracies, (Ang, 2016). History has it that pre-socialist China had been under a one-party system of governance called the Chinese Nationalist Party, (CNP) or the Kuomintang (KMT), led by Chiang Kai-shek which was based in Nanjing from 1927 to 1949 and who ruled China tyrannically until the outbreak of their civil war that cost so much in human and material resources, (Yueh, 2013).

While Chiang Kai-shek’s tyranny lasted, the Communists were work hard to oust the Kuomintang that by July 1946, the Chinese civil war was fully running its course with the Communists raising the people’s army against Chiang Kai-shek’s government in China under the Chinese Nationalist Party, (CNP) also known as Kuomintang (KMT), (Hughes, and Luard, 1959). This



war which lasted from 1945 to 1949 was fought intensely against Chiang Kai-shek's government and his allies from America and Europe. By 1949, victory came the way when China's rag tag Kuomintang army lost the war. Backed indirectly by the USSR the Communists led by Mao Zedong officially declared China Communist enclave, under the effective control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Hughes and Luard, 1959). Having seized power, the CCP chose Mao Zedong as the official leader of China with Xi Jinping as the Party's General Secretary at the October 1, 1949 declaration and formal proclamation of the People's Republic of China. This marked the formal positioning of China as the world's largest socialist state by population and size, which in turn created new waves in global power balance, (Yueh, 2013).

Following at the heels of this victory of the Communists in China, came the impacts of the World War II and the rising agitations for a new world order where the equal rights and freedom of man will be guaranteed, which triggered much resentment against China by the western capitalist bloc, (Kemp, 1978). Undeterred by the bullying from the capitalist enclave, China took a quantum leap into the sphere of self preservation often ridiculed as closed 'backward' economic system. While maintain relative relations with co-communist states and a few developing nations who were neutral to the western bullying of China, she practically banned contacts and trade with most western nations, (Shinn and Eisenman, 2012).

Moving forward, China took bold but painful and needful steps that slowed down her economic development processes, but undeterred she trudged on throughout the cold war era when ideological divisions propelled national interests in the international arena to extreme rights or extreme left positions, (Egbula and Zheng, 2011). Mao's socialist government in China remained resilient and inward looking for her development needs, resulting to an all time high as a frontline leadership of the ideological campaigns across climes along with the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) led by Russia, (LeVan and Ukata, 2018).

China trudged on without letting the outside world know what breakthroughs they were introducing until the death of Mao Zedong when new wind of changes began to blow across various frontiers of China. This was occasioned by her responses to the dynamics of unavoidable



changes in domestic politics, socioeconomic development achievements and the realities of the rapidly spreading globalization processes across the world, (Vogel, 2011). China took to adjusting towards reforms which wrought some major changes in their political ideologies, their economy and other sectors as part of their next plan of action pursuant to her new drive in development policies. China also began to adjust her international political and economic relations with selected friendly nations especially among African nations who are the nerve centre of her out-sourcing for needed raw materials for her industrial expansion, (Vogel, 2011).

At the 3rd Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the ruling party held in Beijing in 1978, the early signs of the China's extension of an olive branch towards friendly nations such as Nigeria and a cautious leaning towards some relative liberalist ideals resulting to fundamental changes in the CCP's policies. Arising from this CCP's policy adjustments and demands occasioned by the post Maoist change mantra; China began to shift its hard stance on the pursuit of the communist ideology towards a drive for pseudo liberalist economic and industrial development reforms anchored on a mix economy paradigm, (Arkebe and Yifu Lin, 2019). Deng and his new team took China state affairs to the world with a new mindset in which they believed primarily that an ideological leaning was only important if its objectives were for the development of the nation. To them, be it capitalist or socialist modes of socioeconomic reproduction, what really mattered was whether a given ideology gave strength to policies that achieved the goals of national development for nations, an objective she held tenaciously onto as she entered the competitive global market place to win laurels, (Vogel, 2011).

In 1982, the Twelfth National Congress of the CPC shifted China's global policy from 'war and revolution' to 'peace and development'. China also signaled that it would make fewer resources available for aiding other countries. China's Premier Zhao Ziyang made an eleven-country tour of Africa in 1982 followed up by Vice Premier Li Peng's visit in 1984, promising that steps were underway to improve on the otherwise few high-level relations between China and Africa. We aver therefore that the Zhou Ziyang tour resembled Zhou Enlai's famous 1963–64 visit and was an effort to reaffirm China's interest in Africa, (Shinn and Eisenman, 2023). He indicated that



China was ready to normalize relations with the Soviet Union and that China no longer expected African states to choose between China and the Soviet Union, thus setting the stage for different kinds of economic cooperation between China and Africa (Shinn and Eisenman, 2012 and Taylor, 1998). As much as the strategies worked for the new leadership of China, a dent occurred in their image to slow down their progress of work, arising from the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre that occurred in June 1989. This was a conflict between the state and the citizens that left scores of protesting students and youths dead and injured. This incident which occurred out of China's high handedness in handling domestic dissent and opposition attracted condemnation from many nations of the world. This also played China into the hands of the United States and her allies in the capitalist bloc who have for decades sought for a way to disrepute China. They successfully achieved the imposition of international sanctions against China in the areas of trade and economic relations. These actions impacted heavily on China's economic reforms, with her real GDP growth rate falling from 11.3% in 1988 to 4.2% in 1989, followed by a further decline to 3.9% in 1990, (Farooki, and Kaplinsky, (2013).

Following the lifting of the sanctions against China in 1991, her economic reforms witnessed boosts that propelled her to greater heights in her economic relations with developing nations. This saw the 'Going Global Strategy' being re-invigorated with the government actively providing policy guidelines and various forms of backing for her Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) which spread her reach to many developing nations including those in Africa such as Nigeria. China went into Africa as part of her next level of actions, spreading her tentacles and gradually wrapping the same around Africa, displacing many nations' global relationships that had dominated African economy for centuries. China arrived as a global economic giant to take charge of many aspects of the global development processes exemplified in her stance during the global financial crisis 2008, during which she stood firm to contribute over 30 per cent to global growth, became the largest global trader based on her net export driven through her foreign direct investment (FDI) that she is using to reach out to many nations of the world with many



African nations engaging China in her 'going global strategies' which offers developing nations various forms of collaborations for their required leap into fame.

It is instructive to point out at this stage of the study that China's contemporary colossal status did not come by accident, but remains a product of well calculated designs by that Asian dragon to take world development to greater heights on her terms, (Ibrahim, & Sari, 2019). This we can recall from the 2001 dramatic entry of China into the World Trade Organization (WTO), with a fierce competitive edge coming from its domestic market where Chinese companies' performances made her 'going global strategy' not only attractive but unavoidable for the emerging expansions needed in their economy which attracted many African countries to her.

We therefore aver that China, the former sleeping Asian dragon awoke under the dynamic leadership of Deng Xiaoping in 1978 to join other developed nations of Europe and America in the scramble for Africa's resources, (Alden and Large (2019). Opening her doors to the world, China placed great emphasis on her Sino-African engagement without pushing for ideological indoctrination of her new found friends. While avoiding direct interferences in her new African friends' politics and socio-cultural formations, China steadily focused her attention on trade, commercial, economic and industrial relations with some African nations such as Nigeria where she has continued to gain unfettered access to direct extraction and exportation of their raw materials, (Ogunsanwo, 2008). This laid the foundation for China's great leap forward, with her search light for external opportunities zoomed on Nigeria where efforts at improved bilateral relations continues to garner strength as she surreptitiously forages into the deep fissures of Nigerian lands, extracting resources which remain in high demand for China's industrial development. From Nigeria to many nations of Africa, China has taken the lead ahead of other nations of the west and the Asiatic world in wooing African nations into bilateral relations for socioeconomic development, a process she continues to use to her advantage, (Ogunkola, Bankole, & Adewuyi, 2008).



Propelled further by the competitiveness among nations of the world for Nigeria's abundant raw materials, China has accelerated her domestic industrialization drive to greater heights with Nigeria's resources which she uses to service her rising consumption of energy and economic goods, thus effectively feeding her large and steadily increasing population's rising living standards. Just like she has done in many African nations that are engaged in this China miracle policy of 'Going Global strategy', which critiques see as a political economy web winding and twisting around Africa with impacts yet to unfold for decades to come.

Pursuant to the furtherance of her industrialization and other developmental 'catch up' games with other developed nations of the capitalist big league champions, China has steadfastly been deepening her footholds into Nigeria and other African nations' soil where they found willing allies among the ruling class (Nkwede, 2015). It is no secret that Nigerian rulers are providing opportunities for China's acceleration of her unfettered installation of diverse forms of technological, strategic military and economic mechanisms for other purposes in Nigeria, all in the name of development assistance, when the obvious reason remains the facilitation of cheap access for China's unfettered pillage of Nigeria's trillion dollars worth of oil and gas and other natural resources, (Oke, Oshinfowokan & Okonoda, 2019). This remains so through a multi-linked process guaranteed by Chinese government and private capital inflows to developing countries tagged; 'the road to financial integration' by China.

Economic Development Implications of Sino-Nigeria Relations

China's initiation of socioeconomic reforms, trade liberalization and other forms of relations with nations of the world nearly 40 years earlier, (Lin, 2012), constitutes a major aspect of her decision to reach out to developing nations such as Nigeria and others in Africa to forge diverse forms of partnerships. As much as the various dimensions to these moves by China in parts of Africa remains contentious among analysts of African development, the fact still remains that China's determination to prove her detractors wrong across the world has brought her to Africa where she is offering to develop Africa not just for her economic gains, but also as part of her



deliberate development line of actions which seeks to encourage weaker nations to develop, (Zafar, 2007).

These processes are anchored on the ‘Going Global Strategy’ designed to create new forms of socioeconomic growth among weaker nations who China is synergizing with towards the emergence of a new world order that may stand in favour of China, pursuant to her future agenda in global affairs, (Utomi, 2008). This remains a sacrosanct reality Africans must face regarding the reality of the emerging trends in their relations with other nations of the world under which China’s ingenuity at grandstanding with many weak nations for her national interests is rewarding her. There can be no denying the fact that China has arrived Africa to stay and beyond all forms of criticism or otherwise China is steadfastly building relationships. In African nations like Nigeria, China is consolidating her foreign policy objectives which she announced in 2001 as a deliberate expansion of her outreach to underdeveloped areas of the world not as an oppressor or aggressor , but as a collaborator and an investor, (UNCTAD, 2013).

Part of China’s help to Nigeria to restructure her economy for greater performance is her creation of formidable and irresistible opportunities and long term financial aids, based on strategies China uses to invest in African nations through her government owned companies who bring in human, financial, material and technological resources to ‘assist’ in re-invigorating some of the ailing African nations’ economies, (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2007). This is what China has for years been doing by ‘heartily assisting’ directly in the development of Nigeria’s failed infrastructures as well as providing special loans and financial leases, aids or grants and other concessions needing China’s investment, in return for her unfettered access to Nigeria’s raw materials, (Raji, & Ogunrinu, 2018). This is a service the Nigerian ruling class belief are necessary to move the nation forward based on terms and conditions that in China ‘s terms that guarantee her of Nigeria’s humble repayments spread out for decades.

Again, Nigeria and China have evolved some short term avenues for short term repayments of the debts accruing from China’s FDI based on direct Chinese investments in the exploration,



extraction and exploitation of Nigeria's oil and gas as well as other raw materials in high demand by China's fast rising industrial complexes across the major regions of their land, (Odeh, 2014).

Furthermore, analysts have continued to question some of the key areas of China-Nigeria agreements on investment portfolios and sponsorship of investments which remain foreboding to the future of the nation. Some of them include:

- 1) China's establishment of West Africa Trade Hub in Lagos with China's largest shipping company called Ocean Shipping Group Company (COSCO), in November 2010. It is a joint venture between China Merchants and the China Africa Development Fund which paid USD 154 million for a 47.5% stake in Nigeria's second largest container terminal at the Tin-Can Container Terminal of Lagos Port in control of three berths, with a capacity to handle 360 000 standard 20-foot containers per year. (www.globes.co.il/serveen/globes/)
- 2) China's 'One' condition for Diplomatic Relations under which she is offering aid with no political conditions – 'except one'. This so called butt one condition; remains the grand norm for Beijing's central requirement in its diplomatic relations with African countries which Nigeria has been positioned to pursue and guarantee. To the ham-fisted Nigerian self same ruling class, this condition has never been problematic hence they fall all over each other without any inkling the looming danger under which China wants to use her to control other developing nations' economies to get a strong grip on the UN for future dominance effect. So we say: here comes the Asia dragon as the next super power of the world in the next century. (<http://english.peopledaily.com>).
- 3) Nigerian incentives and Chinese investment under which Chinese private investors primarily invest in the agro-allied industries, manufacturing and communications with Chinese public FDI targeted at controlling natural resources and infrastructure, power and transport totaled at USD 1.03 billion. Here we have FDI stocks for the continent at USD 9.3 billion under which Chinese investments are concentrated in the oil industry, manufacturing, construction and telecoms, (www.aercafrica.org/documents/china-africa-policybriefs/NigeriaPB8).



- 4) In the banking sector Chinese investments in infrastructure are laying the groundwork for economic advancement on the continent. The move ‘will make investment viable while leaving a future economic legacy for African countries’. Here the South African Standard Bank has a Nigerian operation, Stanbic Bank, which was merged with those of IBTC Chartered Bank and Standard Bank acquired shares. In December 2007, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) invested USD 5.5 billion in Standard Bank for a 20% shareholding, (<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/> and <http://comtrade.un.org>)
- 5) The Lekki Free Trade Zone (LFTZ) which occupies a total of 165 square kilometres (16500 hectares) on the Lekki peninsula is about 60 kilometers southeast of Nigeria’s economic centre at central Lagos. The zone is administered through a joint venture between the Lagos State government, Lekki Worldwide Investments, a private company established by the Lagos State government and China-Africa Lekki Investment Ltd as well as a consortium of four Chinese enterprises that includes the China-Africa Development Fund, (<http://comtrade.un.org>)
- 6) Public-private partnerships (PPP) has also been explored Nigeria to build refineries with participation from Chinese investors. In May 2010, Nigeria’s state-run oil firm NNPC and the China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) signed a USD 23 billion Memorandum of Understanding for the construction of three refineries and a fuel complex, financed by Sinosure and China Exim Bank.¹ Under the terms of the first refinery deal, worth USD 8 billion, CSCEC agreed to cover 80% of the costs, with NNPC putting up the remaining 20% and the Lagos State government providing land and infrastructure. The Chinese company would build and run the refinery as a majority owner, repaying the loan with the proceeds from the construction contract as well as the revenue from the refinery. The oil refinery was set to be located in the Lekki Free Trade Zone in Lagos State and is expected to produce 300 000 barrels of oil a day and 500 000 metric tones of liquefied petroleum gas each year. Officials say the refinery will generate thousands of jobs and help reduce Nigeria’s development challenges, <http://af.reuters.com/article/>



- 7) Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone (OGFTZ) covers an area of 100 square kilometers (10 000 hectares) in Ogun, a south-western Nigerian state bordering Lagos State. The OGFTZ site is just 30 km from both the Apapa seaport and Murtala Mohammed International Airport, both in Lagos. The publicly-owned China-Africa Investment Co., a unit of Guangdong Xinguang International Group, holds a controlling 82% equity, with the remaining 18% held by the Ogun state government, with Guangdong Xinguang funding the USD 500 million first phase, and the First Bank of Nigeria collaborating in the areas of investment banking, project finance and business advisory service, (www.zjits.com/index.php/en/jwtz_c_detail/74.html and www.firstbanknigeria.com).
- 8) South-South co-operation that is an unconditional aid in China's relationship with Africa described as part of the new "South-South Co-operation" through which developing countries help each other rather than depend on wealthy Northern states.
- 9) Social and cultural connections which are spreading across Nigerian cities are aspects of the economic engagement between China and Nigeria that gives rise to multifaceted social networks and expatriate communities in each country. Although official statistics are not available but by 2010, an estimated 50 000 Chinese people have already become domiciled in Nigeria with China towns solely for the Chinese springing up here and there.

There are some very interesting aspects to these China-Nigeria relations that require further investigation and these we find in the types of agreements these two nations have entered into so far such as shown below:

Types of agreements	Year
Agreement on Trade, Investment Promotion and Protection	2001
Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Tax on Income	2002
Agreement on Consular Affairs	2002
Agreement on Co-operation on Strengthening Management of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Diversion of Precursor Chemical	2002



Agreement on Tourism Co-operation	2002
Agreement of South-South Co-operation among China, Nigeria and FAO2	2003
Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership	2006
Agreement against fake products exported to Nigeria from China	2009
Memorandum of Understanding on promotion bicameral economic co-operation And partnership between Ogun State of Nigeria and Zhejiang Province of China	2009
Memorandum of Understanding on peace co-operation	2010

Sources:

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- 2- www.fao.org/english/newsroom/news/2003/15085-en.html
- 3 – Ogun signs pact with China, www.vanguardngr.com/2009/07/ogun-signs-pact-with-china/
- 4 – <http://allafrica.com/stories/201001110775.html>

Again it is established that Chinese grants have been used for the building of small and medium-sized social welfare projects with wide ranges of concessional and standard loans from China to nations that include Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, and Ghana and other African nations whose infrastructures China has continued to build, (Cheung, Haan, Qian and Yu, 2012).

As at the year 2022, Nigeria which was acclaimed to be the richest African nation ahead of Egypt and South Africa held an estimated GDP of \$477 billion in earnings with a greater part of such coming from China. These earnings are correspondingly spent on imports from China. Further records show Nigeria's importation of large volumes of Chinese product which range from Rubber Foot wears estimated at \$566M, to Non-Knit Women's Suits valued at \$792M, and Broadcasting Equipment valued at \$503M as well as other products estimated at about \$21.4B, (Giovannetti and Sanfilippo, 2009).

It is as well interesting to note that while Nigeria is busy importing large volumes of finished goods from China, small and medium scale Chinese companies have continued to throng the country in their numbers, without a commensurate number of Nigerian companies entering and settling down to do similar businesses in China, thus raising question marks about the place of



equity in the Sino-Nigeria relations that are begging for answers. Among such Chinese companies that have settled in Nigeria include Guangzhou Automobile Group Company (GAC), Huawei, ZTE, Chinese Constructions Companies, oil exploration and drilling companies, solid mineral mining companies and consumer goods manufacturers, (Cheung, etal 2012). Discrimination nepotism, human rights abuse and disregard for their statutory corporate-social responsibilities in communities where these Chinese companies operate remain a common characteristic among these Chinese companies. To this end, commentators have been questioning the veracity of allowing foreign companies such as those from China to establish and operate their businesses in Nigeria when they are engaged in such inhuman activities, (Zafar, 2007).

There are also those that have gone into commercial quantity production of consumer products in the eateries, restaurants, hotels management and a host of other areas which China is sponsoring in Nigeria and other African nations, but cannot allow the same to be operated by foreigners in their land, thus raising question marks in these so called bilateral relations. All these constitute aspects of China's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), anchored which and the 'Going global' strategy being pursued in China's interest.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical perspective for this paper is the model of national interests which contends that all statesmen and actors in the international arena are governed by their respective national interest, which they pursue through various means to fulfill. This model of national interest was adopted from the theory of realism, which remains a strong theory in the discussion of issues in international relations. The theory of realism in its analysis places emphasis on the competitive and contentious nature of national interests among nations of the world which traces its roots to the early historical writings of philosophers like Thucydides. Writing on the history of the Peloponnesian War between 431 and 404 BCE, Thucydides emphasized that the first assumption of realism remains the permanent interest of nation-states which actors in the system have always strove to sustain. Furthering the prepositions in modern thoughts, Niccolò Machiavelli in his work, 'The Prince' averred that national interest under the theory of realism emphasizes the



reality of basic human characteristics which influence the security of the state. He went further to advocate that since leaders (as at his era in history) were usually male who influence the realist account of the successes of politics, such leaders' primary concern must be focused on the promotion of their national interests, (Machiavelli, 1532). Post Second World War events led Hans Morgenthau, (1948:973), to develop a comprehensive theorization about international politics and contended that the politics of national interest is governed by laws that have roots in human nature. He furthered that national interest in the international area remains that of;

the survival of a political unit ... in its identity as the irreducible minimum of a state's interest vis-a-vis other units, encompassing in this the integrity of a state's territory, its political institutions, and its culture.

This model of national interest asserts that for men and indeed the state or actors in the international system to successfully perform their task of pursuit, protection and defense of their national interests they must remain alert and actively focused on pursuing the realities of both internal and external events concerning their nation-state. Here the paradigm that actors in the international system must be both the lion and the fox remains sacrosanct which implies that the appropriate acquisition and use of power (the Lion) and deception (the Fox) which constitutes the crux of the foreign policy arsenals must be utilized covertly or otherwise in the pursuit of the interest of the nation involved.

Hans J. Morganthau, (1952), believe that there is an irreducible minimum at the core of national interests for every state or actor at any given time in the international arena based on their vital interest, which being a basis for their presence at the arena is often regarded as a permanent interest. National interest mean a situation under which the affairs of a nation are valued solely for its benefit to the nation, with all statesmen being governed by their respective national interest, which they pursue through various means to fulfill, (Beard, 1934). National interests are supposed to remain permanent objectives to which all other aspects of a nation's values remain subordinated at the international arena. These include for all states, all irreducible minimum bothering on the protection and preservation of their independence and territorial integrity with changes occurring only under the impact of various factors that may involve fulfilling the values



that each state or actor bring to the table in concordance with their definition of the concept of their specific national interest. Sometimes a contemporary subject of national interest which may or may not have an immediate intrinsic importance to specific actors, may become vital if it assumes symbolic value or if it involves the question of national prestige or stands to serve future advantage to an actor.

Methodology

The research design adopted here was the ex-post facto research, based on the qualitative survey approach (Abbott and McKinney, 2013), which is a non-experimental perspective with a focus on pre-existing data collected from related literature which were examined to establish possible influences of one factor over another, (Khotari, 2013 and De Vaus, 2001).

The ex-post facto research was used in the content analysis of the historical facts as buttressed by Ezeah, (2004), when he opined that historical research is the type of research that is based on history and already existing data from sources in varying literature found in secondary sources based on the researcher's concerted efforts at exploring and analyzing them as they concern the subject being studied. Accordingly, such data were collected mainly from secondary sources concerning the emerging trends in China-Nigeria bilateral relations, which were critically appraised to establish their possible implications for Nigeria's economic development. The ex post facto design which also works appropriately with qualitative research design came in handy to guide the researcher in the examination of the possible influences that one factor or condition may have on another factor or condition, (Khotari, 2013), was reliably adopted for the purpose of its high dependence on the content analyses of historical information drawn from existing related literature.

Findings

First, the findings of this study shows that China has arrive Nigeria and is here to stay for a very long time. This position is anchored on the fact that she has meticulously entangled Nigerian leaders into subjugating the future of the nation into the hands of China going by the



commitments of these leaders to China in their various loans, financial and other dealings. It is crystal clear that China has ensnared the nation into long term indebtedness through conditions powered by her 'Going Global strategy' in combination with their tactically coordinated Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Inward Foreign Direct Investment (IFDI) which Nigerian leaders hurriedly signed.

Secondly, China's furtherance of her foot hold in Nigeria through her encouragement of indigenous Chinese firms to go global has resulted to their domestic small and medium scale business enterprises, going global thus overrunning the Nigerian business spaces based on complex strategies patterns of trade relations that continue to boost the profits of Chinese domestic enterprises.

Thirdly, our findings also show that through Chinese small and medium enterprises, China is not only causing the degrading of Nigerian indigenous firms, but is also providing Chinese government backed capital and financial inflows to support their companies' capability for improved production of cheap large scale consumer goods within Nigeria, (Foster, 2014).

The fourth finding is that beyond the half hearted criticism targeted at China and Africa by anti-Africa development theorists and neo-liberalists from the United States, European and other parts of the capitalist exploiters of Africa, the fact remains that China has come into Africa to stay for a very long time. The emerging trends in Sino-Nigeria relations shown that without directly and forcefully colonizing Nigeria to cause the eternal damages which Britain did in the past, China is perfecting a new form of settler co-existence that gives her the leverage to penetrate Nigerian domains for socioeconomic businesses beyond the comprehension of many.

The fifth finding of this study is that as China settles in Africa, the obvious fact remains that 'China's gain may either be to equal Nigeria' gains as well or in the reverse turn to Nigeria's long term pains' and loses in many dimensions. If these analogies come true, then a serious threat to Nigeria's sovereignty is imminent if the political leaders do not act with caution in their dealings, agreements and accommodation of China too deeply into her nationality.



Discussion of Findings

The fact remains that China has penetrated into Nigeria to do business with her FDI powered by her ‘Going Global strategy’ which scholars here have continued to interrogate. If the existing facts about Nigeria’s export to China are to be critically evaluated, there is an obvious need for deeper examination of these relations to nip in the bud, the emerging imbalance in the relations with astounding challenges loading to disadvantage Nigeria on a wider scale in the near future. It is imperative for Nigerian and indeed all African nations’ leaders to appreciate the bare face fact that China is neither father Christmas nor a donor agencies, but a serious minded and aggressive investment competitor in the volatile international market. China has come to Africa to do the business of maximizing her economic interests as well as re-strategizing for Africa’s block support at the appointed time when she will make her moves and demands on the United Nations Organization (UNO) and World Trade Organization (WTO) for both a right of place as a determinant of global affairs and a major beneficiary of world political and economic matters.

Looking back at research findings that buttress our arguments here, we cite Larry Hanauer, and Lyle J. Morris, (2014:2), in a brief description work done for the RAND national Defense Research Institute documented on Chinese Engagement in Africa: captioned ‘Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy’, when they succinctly pointed out that:

China has four overarching strategic interests in Africa. First, it wants access to natural resources, particularly oil and gas. It is estimated that, by 2020, China will import more oil worldwide than the United States. To guarantee future supply, China is heavily investing in the oil sectors in countries such as Sudan, Angola, and Nigeria. Second, investments in Africa, a huge market for Chinese exported goods, might facilitate China’s efforts to restructure its own economy away from labor intensive industries, especially as labor costs in China increase. Third, China wants political legitimacy. The Chinese government believes that strengthening Sino-African relations helps raise China’s own international influence. Most African governments express support for Beijing’s “One China” policy, a prerequisite for attracting Chinese aid and investment. Finally, China has sought a more constructive role as contributor to stability in the region, partly to mitigate security-related threats to China’s economic interests...

If these were prophesies made as far back as 2014 with results for the same confirmed from 2020 through the years till date, then events at the heels of these moves by China, are found in the



follow up strategies which China is putting in place to create strongholds across African economies. China has continued to spread her domestic companies across Africa with many located in Nigeria where they have taken huge strides in doing outbound-inbound investments.

It is on record that China has continued to increase her presence in Africa through deliberate relentless business outreach into parts of the African nations such as Nigeria with increases recorded substantially by the year 2011. Such records show that trade between China and African nations recorded a 33% increase, which stood at US\$166 billion, carried out to boost Africa's exports to China, (Shinn, and Eisenman. 2012). This same report shows that China placed greater emphasis on the export of Africa's raw materials and natural resources such as crude oil, copper, cobalt and iron-ore, were exported to China. These transactions constitute some of the reasons for Nigeria's indispensable position to China as the latter continues her stride to reach out to developing nations across the globe, (Shinn, and Eisenman. 2012). African nations have on their part continued to complement their economic benefits, trade relations and other engagements with China by engaging in various forms of hustling and horse trading for greater relations with China.

Here we note that Nigeria has taken the lead as African nations continued to engage in high importation of finished goods from China in the areas of machinery, furniture, electronics, domestic equipments, office and house hold items and textiles. On her part, China has also been engaging African nations such as Nigeria in collaborative venture with Chinese companies providing skilled manpower, expertise and technology for development projects across the African continent. Secondary data available from studies carried out between 2001 and 2010 shows that relations between China and Nigeria yielded many dividends to China to the extent she took the bold step of entering into some land mark agreements as shown here:

Conclusion

Trends in China-Nigeria relations shows that a potential danger is looming for the future of Nigeria, if urgent steps are not taken to cause the ruling class in the nation to retrace their steps and go back to the drawing board to carry out detailed analyses and re-ordering of the various



aspects of the Sino-Nigeria relations. Here we aver that as much as there may be knee jerk reactions by some Nigerian politicians that half heartedly insist on the establishment of blue prints and balanced policies for a mutual and sustainable development of both nations, based on a win-win approach the Sino-Nigeria relations, they have failed to buttress the opinions on strong national policy for the kind of relations they seek after.

This is the scenario playing out in the sense that while Chinese leaders are more nationalistic in their approaches to matters of concern to their wider national interests across the globe, Nigerian leaders have always remained true to type in their pursuit of clannish self conceived vested interests, which undermines the nation in their dealings with foreign nations. Nigerian leaders across the regimes who have been having dealings with China have failed to understand the fact that Sino-Nigeria relations is a serious international transactions which must be handled with the utmost zeal of nationalism. They must appreciate the fact that beyond the sentiments, small inducements, incentives and the various largesse China may have been throwing on their path as well as local financial allowances for foreign trips and settlements for ease of entry into Nigeria by smart Chinese business moguls with investment interests in Nigeria, the truth remains that succumbing to such personal needs against the wider Nigerian national interests is tantamount to selling the nation to the Chinese.

In conclusion, this study established that whereas China is a far more advanced nation led by nationalists who believe in the development of their nation to dominate the world, Nigeria on her part is led by political jobbers and self seekers who are more interested in clannish wealth accumulation at the detriment of national interests. This remains the bane of all the drives at developing the nation which China can or has already identified and may have been working so hard to ensure that Nigerian leaders involved in any form of dealings with them are compromised to pave way for China's easy entry and ride through the land where she can subjugate and milk the people's mineral resources ad infinitum.



Recommendations

At the end of this study some recommendations were made as guide for Nigerian politicians, leaders and diplomats should go back to take refresher tutorials on the concept of national interest and grasp the basics that explain why and how nations engage each other in the international arena. This will sharpen their skills to know the exact strategy to adopt on each occasion in his relations she has already established with China. Secondly, there is need for caution regarding the ease with which Nigerian rulers allow China into the nation all in the name of international bilateral trade and business. It will amount to colossal double jeopardy for this nation to have come out of British colonial domination which occurred out of the ignorance of our traditional rulers' lack of education and civilization only to enter into a modern day second slavery and re-colonization under China. China being a determined nation that is seeking to dominate the world, has identified Africa as a continent that is made up of nations with leaders and has determinedly landed on the shores of our land with various tricks, manipulations, juicy offers anchored on her so called FDI and long term financing of development projects which being powered by her 'Going Global strategy' being shrouded in secrecy and high technology manipulations that continues to hoodwink African leaders with weak minds and primordial interests.

China is a loose Asian dragon on the prowl on the African continent, seeking for weak leaders of African nations to devour and in that process unleash mayhem on our socioeconomic development. This we must be conscious of with efforts being made to nip it in the bud before it is too late. Nigeria can start by using China's ideas to address her antics in our land by borrowing a leaf from her in this intriguing game by going back in history to learn from what China's Premier Zhao Ziyang announced during a particular press release under what he termed the 'four principles' of China's revised foreign aid policy, (Xuetong, 1988: 4), to serve as a roadmap to mutual relations between China and Nigeria. Premier Zhao Ziyang's 'four principles' were:

- i). Equality, mutual benefit, and non-interference in internal affairs other nations in their relationship.



- ii). Good economic results with less investment, shorter construction cycles, and quicker results.
- iii). Greater variety of projects that take into account specific local conditions, high quality of work, and a stress on friendship.
- v). Enhancement of the self-reliant capabilities of both sides and promotion of growth of respective national economies, (Yu Fai, 1984: 313).

The emphasis here must be on mutual trade relations as independent sovereign state, non-interference in the domestic affairs of your friends, pursuit of varieties of projects, mutually beneficial trade relations, balanced terms for repayable loans and other financial engagements, mutual cooperation and enhancement of self-reliance, must remain what Nigeria and other African nations should focus as they embrace China's 'Going Global strategy' and the FDI.

In all essence, the Sino-Nigeria bilateral relations which has reached advanced stages can be sustained through constant dialogue, reviews, readjustments and mutual agreements between the nations to forestall the looming crisis of China getting carried away by her achievements in Nigeria to begin imagining that she can introduce modern day slavery and neo-colonial domination and entrapment of Nigeria as her vassal state in Africa.

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