

Understanding Sino-Africa Relations: An Analysis Sino-Nigeria Relations Nigeria's fourth republic

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ABSTRACT

No doubt, Sino-Nigeria relations, have been without doubt characterized by twist and turns depending on the leadership. There have been period of docility, some administration have been marked by improved economic and political interaction. Using descriptive analysis and secondary data, this paper examines Sino-Nigeria relations since the fourth republic-1999-2023. The paper is divided into five epoch, pre- fourth republic, Obasanjo era, Yar'adua era, Jonathan era and Buhari's era. Findings from the study shows that Sino-Nigeria relations have primary focused on improving economic relations through improving trade and infrastructure development in Nigeria under various leadership from 1999. The infrastructure development cut across major sector of Nigeria's economy such as petroleum, energy, road and rails, telecommunication. China's support for infrastructure development in Nigeria could be viewed from its Belt and Road initiative. The study concludes that Sino-Nigeria relations reached its highest level under Buhari's administration with economic and political cooperation climaxing in the closure of Taiwanese Embassy in Abuja in furtherance of One-China Policy.

ملخص

لا شك أن العلاقات الصينية-النيجيرية قد تميزت بتقلبات وتعقيدات تختلف باختلاف طبيعة القيادة. رغم أنها شهدت فترات من الركود، اتسمت بعض عهود الإدارات بتحسين في العلاقات والتعاونات الاقتصادية والسياسية. تعتمد هذه الورقة البحثية على التحليل الوصفي والبيانات الثانوية لتباحث العلاقات الصينية-النيجيرية منذ عهد الجمهورية الرابعة 1999-2023. وتعرض الورقة خمس مراحل زمنية، وهي: عهد ما قبل الجمهورية الرابعة، عهد أوباسانجو، عهد يارادوا، عهد جوناتان، وعهد بخاري. وتشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن العلاقات الصينية-النيجيرية ركزت بشكل رئيسي على تعزيز العلاقات الاقتصادية من خلال تحسين التجارة وتطوير البنية

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التحتية في نيجيريا تحت قيادات مختلفة منذ عام 1999. وقد شمل تطوير البنية التحتية قطاعات رئيسية من الاقتصاد النيجيري، مثل النفط والطاقة والطرق والسكك الحديدية والاتصالات. ويمكن النظر إلى دعم الصين لتطوير البنية التحتية في نيجيريا من منظور مبادرة الحزام والطريق. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن العلاقات الصينية-النيجيرية بلغت ذروتها خلال إدارة بخاري، حيث وصلت مستويات التعاون الاقتصادي والسياسي إلى أوجها، وقد تجلى ذلك في إغلاق السفارة التايوانية في أبوجا تعزيزا لسياسة الصين الواحدة.

RÉSUMÉ

Il ne fait aucun doute que les relations sino-nigériennes ont été caractérisées par des rebondissements en fonction des dirigeants. Il y a eu des périodes de docilité, certaines administrations ont été marquées par une amélioration de l'interaction économique et politique. À l'aide d'une analyse descriptive et de données secondaires, cet article examine les relations sino-nigériennes depuis la quatrième république (1999-2023). L'article est divisé en cinq époques : avant la quatrième république, l'ère Obasanjo, l'ère Yar'adua, l'ère Jonathan et l'ère Buhari. Les résultats de l'étude montrent que les relations sino-nigériennes se sont principalement concentrées sur l'amélioration des relations économiques par le biais de l'amélioration du commerce et du développement des infrastructures au Nigéria sous les différents dirigeants depuis 1999. Le développement des infrastructures concerne les principaux secteurs de l'économie nigérienne, tels que le pétrole, l'énergie, les routes et les chemins de fer, les télécommunications. Le soutien de la Chine au développement des infrastructures au Nigéria pourrait être envisagé dans le cadre de son initiative « Belt and Road ». L'étude conclut que les relations sino-nigériennes ont atteint leur plus haut niveau sous l'administration de Buhari, avec une coopération économique et politique qui a culminé avec la fermeture de l'ambassade de Taïwan à Abuja dans le cadre de la politique d'une seule Chine.

Keywords: Infrastructure, Investment, Development, Nigeria and China

JEL Classification: F5, F21, O1, and P33

1. Introduction

Following 1978 economic reforms that opened up its market to international economic cooperation while creating an opportunity for a new orientation toward Africa through the Forum on China Africa Cooperation, China has become the world's second-largest economy with growing influence in the African continent. (Hynes, 1998., Jackson, 2019). China's growing influence is attributed to three significant factors, its sustained high economic growth rate, its large economy underpinned by a vast population with rapidly rising income, and a largely outward-

oriented growing economy that imports fuels and raw commodities and exports manufactured goods (Oyejide, Abiodun & Adeolu, 2009). On the other hand, Nigeria ranked as a middle-income country, is one of the top 10 economies in Africa on a vigorous campaign for foreign direct investments boasting of abundant resources that include enormous energy reserves and a large domestic market of over 200 million citizens striving to become one of the world's top 20 economies (Egbula & Zheng, 2011., PWC, 2019). Thus, irrespective of their geographies and economies, Nigeria and China have developed essential links that have reached a new height by instituting a strategic opportunity for bilateral relations in economy, trade and commerce in multiple areas for Nigeria's economic development (Ogunkola, Bankole, & Adewuyi, 2008., Egbula & Zheng, 2011).

Nigeria's energy reserves and its large consumer-based population has particularly attracted China's attention. China's rapid economic growth and its need for energy reserves as well as an outlet for raw materials and finished products is a defining attribute of its relations; and the reason it broadens its investment activities with African countries like Nigeria to meet domestic demand and remain competitive in the global market (Tull, 2006., Junbo & Frasher, 2015). Natural resources and materials are abundant in Nigeria, critical for China's continued economic growth, including crude oil needed for its manufacturing industries (Raji & Ogunrinu, 2018). Likewise, Nigeria's sizeable consumer-based population of over 200 million people with growing disposable incomes generates a profiteering alternative market for Chinese manufactured goods (Egbula & Zheng, 2011). Low-cost Chinese products such as textiles, electronics and household items fit the demands of Nigerian markets.

Within Sino- Nigeria relations, Nigeria seeks investments to improve its petroleum, power, telecommunications, transport, construction, and manufacturing sectors (Egbula & Zheng, 2011., Mthembu-Salter, 2009). China's unique economic approach, the Beijing consensus, and its acclaimed skill set in developing large-scale infrastructure and its massive capital investments in the world market meet Nigeria's need for funding and infrastructure development. Accordingly, the needs of both countries have increased trade, and the number of Chinese companies operating in Nigeria has made the latter a large recipient of Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Raji & Ogunrinu, 2018). Chinese investments in

establishing an objective discussion of the bilateral cooperation with China as neo-colonialism or a worthy development alliance make the analysis of Sino- Nigeria relations essential as available discuss does not fully portray Nigeria's role in China's international agenda and vice-versa.

This research offers an original contribution to the body of knowledge on the discourse of Sino-Nigeria relations within the context of each administration since 1999. Previous research have discussed specific of relations such as trade. This study provides thematic analysis of key infrastructure under each of the administration since 1999 to 2023. The study also contributes to importance of infrastructure to China's Road and Belt initiative and its benefit to Nigeria.

2. Understanding South-South Cooperation

South-South cooperation as a concept is often contested. Alden, Morphet, & Vieira (2010) (as cited in Seteolu & Oshodi, 2018) explain it as state and non-state actors, which depicts their shared experience of colonialism, imperialism and the subsequent challenge of nation-building and development within an international system dominated by countries of the North. It also refers to a broad framework of collaboration among the South's countries in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains (UNOSSC,2018). A means for developing countries to share knowledge and resources within formal, informal, bilateral, and inter or intra-regional levels to identify the most effective steps towards eradicating their developmental challenges (Ugwuja, Ubaku, Obiakor, Nwachukwu, & Ibekilo, 2014., UN DESA, 2019). Thus, it is a technical tool for states to collaborate and share knowledge, skills, and successful initiatives that resolve their vulnerability to global issues.

Besides, the concept further refers to a conscious, systematic, and politically motivated system developed to create a structure of multiple links between developing countries as well as a strategy aimed at empowering developing countries to uplift their citizens' quality of life in mutual respect while accepting the specificity and comparative advantage of each country in their ability to influence the development agenda (SEGIB, 2009., PPD, n.d.). In addition, to Carlsson (1982), south-south cooperation assumes capital flow primarily in direct investments from the more prominent and more affluent countries to the small and more

impoverished in the south and trade contacts that concern foodstuffs and raw materials. Therefore, Bergamaschi, Moore & Tickner (2007) summatively posit that:

In common parlance, it can include political, military, economic, or cultural relationships; humanitarian assistance and technical co-operation between developing countries; the allocation of financial resources for development projects and regional integration as well as the constitution of blocks—a common position and agenda in multilateral negotiations. Bergamaschi, Moore & Tickner (2007, p. 1)

The emergence of South-South Cooperation dates back to the Bandung conference of 1955 that sought to enhance further economic and cultural cooperation between developing African and Asian states to achieve their self-reliance. It also dates back to the 1978 Buenos Plan of Action for promoting and implementing technical cooperation among developing countries (The Reality of Aid, 2010., UN DESA, 2019). The dominant mode of relations within the global economy, the North-South system that often reflected lower income levels, resource bases of developing countries as well as the North's control of international economic governance, caused developing countries in the global South to begin seeking an alternative source for the existing economic and political order; and to improve their economic growth and development (Spero & Hart, 2010., UN DESA, 2019).

Thus, in resolving the recalcitrant economic asymmetry between countries of the Global North and South, the emergence of the framework of South-South Cooperation led to the formation of various southern movements and institutions. It led to the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, the Group of 77 in 1964, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964. It also drove the New International Economic Order in 1974, sharing a perception that learning and knowledge exchange between south countries was a better tool to assess and resolve development challenges beyond conventional North-South transfers (Bergamaschi, Moore & Tickner, 2007). Countries of the global South sought to de-link themselves from the existing international order at that time that had failed to tackle the legacies of colonialism while forging stronger economic ties among themselves, which they assumed

would be less exploitative and more relevant to their development (Moore, 2012., Gray & Gills, 2016).

Additionally, in recent times, South-South cooperation has fostered a new set of development cooperation actors, south-led development finance institutions, contributing further to the South's development assistance architecture. It fostered the creation of the New Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and Southern-owned development cooperation funds such as Mexico-Chile Joint Cooperation Fund, FAO-China Fund, India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Fund; and India-U.N. Development Partnership Fund. The establishment of these financial institutions has created alternatives for the existing development cooperation system while enabling developing countries to finance development projects in infrastructure and agriculture, and industry sectors (Onyekwena, & Ekeruche, 2019).

Moreover, discussions on South-South Cooperation have undergone a paradigm shift. It now includes a growing emphasis on China - Africa relations, which necessitates a rethink of South-South development along national or regional lines. It likewise now includes discussions on the rising impact of other members of the BRICS, Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa; Chile, Turkey, Thailand, Palestine, whose emergence creates a new multipolarity in international development (Mohan & Power, 2009., Onyekwena & Ekeruche, 2019). Within South-South cooperation, the countries have created rising investment and aid sources outside the West while establishing dedicated agencies for international development cooperation. They collaborate on a wide range of science, technology development, education, health, and cultural exchanges with benefits ranging from collective experiences, technology and economic collaboration, common positions in international fora, trilateral cooperation (Chidaushe, 2010). However, their recent economic and diplomatic achievements that have intensified production's globalisation, trade and financial flows have caused increasing debates of benefits and possible failures of their development alternatives to replace the global North's hegemonic and neo-colonial ones (Gray & Gills, 2016).

3. Empirical review on Sino-African Relations

Currently, China is considered Africa's prime economic and development partner. It accounts for increased merchandise trade that has caused it to

outpace traditional partners; massive foreign direct investment flows from nearly 900 companies in retail, manufacturing, agricultural and oil sectors, and aid initiatives in the form of economic and technical cooperation (Brautigam, 2009., Busse, Erdogan & Mühlen, 2014). China's interests in Africa also encompass security, diplomacy and soft power issues (Hanauer & Morris, 2014). However, relations between China and Africa have led to many perspectives, analysing Chinese practices' scope, scale, and mode. Its natural resource demands, development assistance model, export of low-cost manufactured goods to African markets has caused extensive debates on Sino- Africa relations to determine if China is a constructive partner or otherwise (Asongu, & Aminkeng, 2013). In line with this, several researchers have published numerous articles addressing Sino-Africa relation issues as exploitative or development partners.

For the most part, few review articles reported empirical research on Sino-African relations as neo-colonial or economic development. However, some researchers have attempted to review the effects of China's activities in Africa by analysing trade, foreign direct investment and aid. For example, Ogunkola, Bankole & Adewuyi (2008) analysed the impact of China–Africa trade relations at the aggregate African and national levels of a selected sample of countries between 2000 and 2008 and found several benefits and costs. The study found trade benefits to be in the form of lower import prices, access to a wide variety of final and intermediate goods, and increased demand for Africa's exports, leading to increased export prices. While on the negative side, Africa manufacturing sectors face intense Chinese competition in domestic and external markets. Competition stems from the existing trading pattern that does not correspond to Africa's longer-term objectives of diversifying economic and trade structures for industrial development. Eiseman (2012) finds that significant market-driven disparities in China's trade with African resource and non-resource producers will continue to generate new political challenges. It also assumes that little can be done to reduce some African countries' dependence on natural resource exports to China or African consumers' preference for low-cost, decent quality Chinese consumer goods. Besides, studying the effects of growing Chinese influence in Africa on intra-regional trade using a Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood estimation method for 135 countries from 1990-2012, Kholosa (2015) attests that African countries that are not oil-abundant are marginalised from global trade. Cheap imports from China

and China's preferential tariff treatment awarded to exporters in African countries have diverted imports and exports from African countries to China. However, the study observes that Chinese investments and aid packages that have improved infrastructure have partly enabled African countries to trade more; regardless, it concludes that the long term effects of China's influence in Africa do not seem favourable.

With regards foreign direct investment, Ross (2015), in a study to identify and analyse determinants of Chinese outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) in Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, Ghana, Kenya, Algeria, Egypt and Sudan from 2003 to 2012, found that Chinese investments in African countries are driven by natural resources, factors related to infrastructure quality and the regulatory environment enforced by host governments. Bräutigam, Diao, McMillan, & Silver (2017) conducted an empirical study using official Chinese data to examine the patterns of Chinese engagement in Africa for the period 1998 to 2015 to present a balanced view on what we know about Chinese investment in Africa and found that Chinese investment is smaller, more diverse and more growth-oriented than is often believed. The study suggests that China still accounts for a small but increasing share of Africa's inward FDI stocks and a stagnant share of China's outward FDI stocks. Contrary to the general belief that China invests more in natural resources, it discovers that construction, mining, and manufacturing investments are comparable to other sectors and are not limited to resource-rich countries. It also observes that China is a significant source of Africa's imports and destination for its exports and contributes significantly to Africa's infrastructure necessary for unlocking further investment potential from China and other countries, and leads to both direct and indirect job creation, the majority of which is for local workers.

Lönnqvist (2008), in an overview of China's ODA to Africa for civil society organisations (CSOs), finds that China's aid and commercial presence mirror western countries early post-colonial modernist development efforts found not to work. However, it infers that China's activities may pressure northern donors to make more strenuous efforts to lead by example and give recipient Africa governments autonomy to untie aid and push for sustainability. It nevertheless concludes that China, as an ODA partner for Africa, may have more radical consequences in its knock-on effects on existing aid than its immediate impact on the African continent. On the other hand, Busse, Erdogan, & Mühlen (2014)

dictated by economic and political expediency, which is the standard accusation from the West, but as mutually beneficial – in other words, a win-win strategy.

Conversely, in the recent past, Tukumbi (2011) conducted an empirically-based analysis and a reflection study using the data and figures from Chinese sectoral investments and export-import of China and specific African countries to critically evaluate these relations to determine if they are qualified to be called neo-imperialist or neo-liberal. As per the research finding, China has not established yet any strong institutional and cultural alliances with the African elite to have a neo-imperialist system. Moreover, Africa did not emulate China's governance model after the Cold war; their trade relations do not portray its whole meaning and impact; no international relations theory thoroughly explains unorthodox China -Africa relations that are not static or fit dual world system (Tukumbi, 2011). Thus, the study suggests that even though China has an instinct to act as a neo-colonialist, available data does not provide tangible evidence supporting the view that China intends to control Africa politically or has a hidden agenda to divide some African territoriality for political gains. Instead, it observes that China intends to exploit African security resources as much as possible and not necessarily exploit cheap African labour. Hence, the article resolves that even though China has increased its role in Africa, it is up to African states to determine how they use the relationship positively and effectively and priorities they can pursue within that would not allow China to dictate what they should do, exploit their relations or destroy its environment and culture. It also proposes that China should not be considered an absolute enemy to Africa and the African people and vice-versa, but an equal partner.

3.1. Nigeria-China Relations

3.1.1. Nigeria – China relations before 1999

For most of its years, Sino- Nigeria relations were tense, of much less relative importance yielding no diplomatic or economic benefits. In the early post-independence years, political relations were sour and bridled by scepticism. Nigeria considered China a non-aligned developing country and feared the spread of communism within its pro-western ideological stance. As a result of fears, Nigeria fostered little to no relationship with China even though the latter had sought Africa's self-reliance through the Bandung conference of 1955. The Chinese premier

held rhetorical support for anti-imperialist struggles, affected its relations with Nigeria (Adunbi, & Stein, 2019).

Besides, Nigeria's military coups series intensified economic collapse and ever-worsening foreign relations between both countries even though the Abacha regime had looked east following western sanctions and international criticism (Egbula & Zheng, 2011). So, while Nigeria struggled with military rule and Western sanctions, China strived, adopting a varying economic development strategy that enabled reforms and opened its economy to the world. Nevertheless, Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999 provided a historic turning point for China-Nigeria economic relations; revived against the need to rid Nigeria of inadequate infrastructure and lingering western debts (Mthembu-Salter, 2009).

China's recent engagements with Nigeria have primarily reflected its rapidly expanding economic growth, accumulated foreign reserves and trade exchanges. For Nigeria, a significant political ideology change following failed western economic policies and the need to alleviate poverty and expand the economy and trade through infrastructural development. Subsequently, their economic relations became more interdependent as despite having poor initial ties, Nigeria and China have established a strategic partnership of needs. China recognises that Nigeria is a credible player in the international arena, strategic to its resource needs and interest in Africa and the international community of states; Nigeria likewise feels the same. As a result, both countries have shifted their strategy for each other. Nigeria and China's strategy for each other rely on the formation of an alliance exhibited by distinctive characteristics, such as sincere friendship and mutual trust, mutual benefit and joint development, enhanced consultation and mutual support, and commitment to a long-term perspective and a future-oriented relationship (Deng, 2011). In this light, the following chapter provides an overview of Sino Nigeria relations in the last twenty years, starting with the Obasanjo administration, 1999 to 2007, as to various scholars, Nigeria-China relations intensified further in that administration. The different Nigerian presidential administrations of the past twenty years will constitute the chapter's subcategories to understand historic events better.

3.1.2. Obasanjo Administration, 1999 – 2007

In 2000, China - Nigeria relations under the Obasanjo administration took a different, more intense stance based on a strategic partnership driving principle to realise Nigeria's economic prosperity. A strategic stance that coincided with the start of a new Chinese orientation towards Africa that saw a steadily growing wave of outward Chinese investment to Africa through initiatives of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) (Mthembu-Salter, 2009). Having set aside fears following visits at various levels, in 2001, Nigeria and China signed an agreement on trade, and an agreement on investment Promotion and Protection, which stabilised their economic relations (PRC, n.d., Ogunkola, Bankole & Adewuyi, 2008).

In the following year, 2002, Nigeria and China established the basis for consolidating strong and prosperous bilateral relations. Both countries signed agreements to avoid double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income, consular affairs, cooperation on strengthening management of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and diversion of precursor chemicals, and tourism cooperation (PRC, n.d.). In 2003, China, Nigeria and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) signed an agreement. The latter was due to China's bid to work with Nigeria on food security under a south-south cooperation programme designed to implement activities aimed at safeguarding food security. The programme included water control projects, production systems to boost crops and diversification of production.

In 2006 both countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on a strategic partnership (Riddle, 2002, PRC, n.d.). According to Egbula & Zheng (2011), the need for petroleum, power, telecommunications, and manufacturing sectors was specified as the Chinese's main investment targets at the MOU signing. The MOU was the first for an African country, and its partnership laid the foundation for Obasanjo's economic policy approach towards China (Adunbi & Stein, 2019). Keeping with precedent, as the Obasanjo administration came into office, it initiated a varying economic policy position towards China. It adopted a foreign policy rationale that took into account the effects of China's economic reform policies that birthed impressive economic development and industrial energy and market expansion needs as grounds for furthering Sino-Nigeria relations (Utomi, 2008., Mthembu-Salter, 2009).

Within Obasanjo's approach for China lay the central concept scholars branded oil-for-infrastructure. The Obasanjo administration reasoned that China's development and its energy need provides a strategically favourable position for Nigeria in terms of trade and development, especially infrastructure, and as an alternate source for aid and thus sought the strategy of awarding oil contracts, under favourable terms, to the Chinese government and its subsidiary organisation in exchange for their delivery of essential infrastructure development projects (Mthembu-Salter, 2009., Egbula & Zheng,2011). Oil-for-infrastructure resulted in the Obasanjo administration ceding significant oil blocs through four bidding rounds to the Chinese to rehabilitate Lagos- Kano railway and transition existing rail routes toward higher-capacity standard-gauge tracks to connect the federation's thirty-six states and economic hubs. Oil blocs were also awarded to the Chinese to construct a massive 2600 MW hydroelectric power station at Mambilla in Taraba state and for investments in downstream and infrastructure projects, including the Kaduna refinery (Wong, 2009., Chen, 2018., Mthembu-Salter, 2009).

3.1.3. Yar'Adua administration, 2007 – 2010

Yar'Adua won the 2007 Nigeria presidential election and resumed office with a rhetorical agenda that placed citizens at the epicentre of its foreign policy considerations while citing concerns about the absence of transparency and due process in the past government and its oil-for-infrastructure approach with the Chinese (Egbula & Zheng, 2011). Soon after taking office, the Yar'Adua administration investigated 2005, 2006 and 2007 bidding rounds that saw the Chinese acquire significant oil blocks. The resulting government report was riddled with criticisms and complaints of irregularities. According to Vines, Wong & Weimer (2009), criticisms regarding Obasanjo's oil-for-infrastructure stemmed from the fact that infrastructure projects linked to Chinese acquisition of oil blocks were not executed because of Nigeria's lack of a formal mechanism to enforce deals and hidden political agendas, allegations of corruption due to inflated costs from hastily awarded contracts deemed not to be in Nigeria's national interests and overall mismanagement.

Subsequently, the Yar'Adua administration cancelled and suspended most of the oil-for-infrastructure contracts. Rehabilitation of the Lagos-Kano railway was placed on hold. The construction of the Mambilla power station and a 950 MW hydroelectric power station in Zungeru was

3.1.4. Jonathan administration, 2010 – 2015

At Yar'Adua's death in 2010, his vice president, Goodluck Jonathan, following elections, took over power, maintaining his predecessor's foreign policy approach towards China; but on varying economic terms. The Jonathan administration expected to develop Nigeria's local economy and adopted a foreign policy thrust embedded within a transformation agenda to address Nigeria's macroeconomics framework and economic direction. Seeking to create jobs, manage public expenditure, enact good governance, facilitate justice judicially, improve legislature, transform education, health, power and transportation sector; improve labour and productivity; improve information and communication technology; and resolve conflicts in the Niger Delta through foreign direct investments (Ituma, 2012). In this line of thought, Jonathan's administration fostered economic relations with China based on its need to attract investment to develop its economic programmes to improve Nigeria's economy.

In 2013, President Jonathan paid a visit to China and signed agreements with the Chinese to further enhance economic relations, trade, and financial investments and deepen cooperation in infrastructure construction, agriculture, energy, aviation and aerospace (Agande, 2013. FMPRC, 2014). China's Import-Export Bank and the Nigerian Ministry of Finance signed a lending pact to expand Lagos, Kano, Abuja and Port Harcourt airports as part of a Chinese loan of USD 1.5 billion for Nigeria's infrastructure development (Agubamah, 2014). Likewise, a new agreement on economic and technical cooperation was signed between both countries. The First Bank of Nigeria signed an agreement with China Development Bank to support Nigeria's small and medium enterprises with an on-lending facility of USD 100 million (Mordi, 2013). President Jonathan's visit to China was significant as it undermined Nigeria's growing economic relationship with China; from the Nigerian perspective, closer economic ties became imperative, leading to substantial economic relations with China (Agubamah, 2014).

The Jonathan administration's economic policy approach opened Nigeria to the Chinese business community and made Nigeria the second-highest Chinese foreign direct investment recipient after South Africa. Chinese companies also relocated to Nigeria during this period, with an estimated 208 registered Chinese companies focusing on oil and gas, construction, and telecommunications. (Egbula & Zheng, 2011., Adunbi & Stein,

asked Taiwan to change its name from Trade Mission of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Nigeria to the Taipei Trade Office in Nigeria and reduce staff (Taiwan today, 2017., Vanguard, 2017). A decision which Hsu (2017) refers to as Nigeria playing along in China's 'peremptory political scheme.

Taiwan protested the administration's decisions, asking Nigeria to observe its 1990 agreement and the principles of equality and mutual benefits based on reciprocity that let Nigeria operate a Taipei trade office (Taiwan Embassy, 2017). However, Nigeria responded to Taiwan's protest with a crackdown, asking the Trade office director to leave Nigeria under the assumption that it could not guarantee his safety and used military personnel to force staff out of the trade office to seal it off (Yi-hsuan & Chin, 2017). The Buhari administration's crackdown on Taiwan deepened economic ties within Sino- Nigeria relations; Nigeria received a pledge of 40 billion dollars in investments and subsequent financial aids for development.

Moreover, in deepening economic ties within Sino- Nigeria relations, the Buhari administration in 2018 agreed to an RMB 16 billion, an estimated 720 billion Naira currency swap with China. The currency swap in which Nigeria was to inject RMB16 billion and China the Naira equivalent into their financial systems, intended for the Chinese Renminbi Yuan to enhance the country's foreign exchange reserves as an alternative foreign reserve currency to the U.S. dollar and to make trade between both countries less reliant on the latter (CBN, 2018., Onu & Wallace, 2018). By reducing the dominance of the U.S. dollar as a trading currency that was often volatile and scarce, the currency swap ensured that trade and investment between China and Nigeria improved as it significantly reduced the increasing pressure on the U.S. dollar (Banwo & Ighodalo, 2018). Hence, the more accessible the Naira was to Chinese businesses, the more Chinese foreign direct and portfolio investments in Nigeria increased as banks allowed Yuan transactions from foreign and local investors and businesses (Bello, Dutse, & Othman, 2017).

4. Heading 1 (Conclusion)

At the inception, Sino- Nigeria relations were tense, of much less relative importance yielding no diplomatic or economic benefits. In the early post-independence years, political relations were sour and bridled by

scepticism. Nigeria considered China a non-aligned developing country and feared the spread of communism. In 2000, China - Nigeria relations under the Obasanjo administration took a different, more intense stance based on a strategic partnership driving principle to realise Nigeria's economic prosperity. A strategic stance that coincided with the start of a new Chinese orientation towards Africa that saw a steadily growing wave of outward Chinese investment to Africa through initiatives of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The oil-for-infrastructure was criticized by Obasanjo's successor; Umar Musa Yar'adua which was a setback for Sino-Nigeria relations. At Yar'Adua's death in 2010, his vice president, Goodluck Jonathan, following elections, took over power. The need to improve the economy Jonathan's administration fostered economic relations with China based on its need to attract investment to develop its economic programmes to improve Nigeria's economy. The Jonathan administration's economic policy approach opened Nigeria to the Chinese business community and made Nigeria the second-highest Chinese foreign direct investment recipient after South Africa. In 2015, the Buhari administration took over the government and furthered bilateral relations with China. Looking to deliver on its campaign mandate of Change, it sought infrastructure and trading cooperation with China to benefit both countries for development that led to an invitation to a state visit to China more than once. The study concludes that China's infrastructure support for Buhari's administration can be seen from the prism of Belt and Road Initiative. China infrastructure development since 2015 under Buhari cut across railway projects, road, hydro-power projects among others.

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