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CHINA: AFRICA'S NEW ECONOMIC PARTNER OR COLONISER? A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA-CHINA RELATIONS

Bachelor's thesis

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I declare that I have compiled the paper independently

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ABSTRACT

Apart from other factors, China's remarkable economic growth and relative stability have seen it taking on bigger international roles as an economic and political power of its own kind and in its own right. Being this planet's most populous nation and having the second largest economy in the world at about USD $14.0 trillion and increasing, China has firmly established its dominance in Asia and, to an extent, globally. The country's massive growth in the manufacturing sector has also meant the ever increasing need to source for the scarce natural resources from the outside, and Africa has gradually become one of the most important supplies of raw materials for the Chinese economy to meet its continued growth. Arguably, both trade and investments are an important part of China's activities in African countries with a broad interest across oil, construction, solid minerals, and agricultural sectors, and this has led some observers to accuse the Chinese power of neo-colonialism.

This thesis examines the speculation if China is Africa's new economic partner or a colonizer of the modern times by studying the Nigeria-China interconnections through the prism of international relations paradigms and focusing the discussion trade and trade-related interactions between the two sides.

Keywords: China, Nigeria-China relations, economic partnership, trade and investments, neo-colonialism.

INTRODUCTION

China's trade and political involvement with Africa started in early 1950s, which coincidentally marked the beginning of the agitations by African countries to break the yoke of colonialism. Entering into the 1960s, China's relationship with Africa manifested in the form of a support for the liberation of African countries from the colonial manacles by the European empires. At the onset, China's involvement in Africa was as a result of ideological motivation but this soon changed over time. The dynamics of China-Africa relations encountered a major shift in the 1980s with the Asian nation embarking on its opening-up reforms, which included a wide range of policies that gave birth to the China of today standing strong amongst the superpowers.

The philosophical drive of China's relations with Africa currently is more of an economic interest rather than political domination. The incidence of China's opening up and redirecting its relationship with Africa more importantly coincided with a time when African nations were deeply enmeshed in poor economic performances as a result of various conflicts, government mismanagement and also a series of flawed Western neoliberal structural adjustment programs. During this time, China introduced African nations to a wide range of viable alternative economic development formulas that can uplift the social and political outlook of African nations. Soon enough, African governments, while being frustrated with the donor policies of the colonial masters with its neoliberal policies and agenda started to appreciate the alternatives presented by China in a world that is multipolar by nature (Tull 2006).

Bearing in mind that China as a nation too has experienced what it means to be poor at a time when the Western global north is veering towards industrialization to create wealth and affluence at an unprecedented rate. The reality and negative experience previously encountered by China was still fresh in their memories. But the transformational ideology of Mao Zedong in a space of four decades made China, which is home to a fifth of the total world's population, has managed to put itself on the world map as a major power. This monumental achievement gave rise to a nation that has been able to lay down a model for other nations to follow in order to become a successful nation that has the capacity to create wealth development formulas.

Presently, China seems to be willing to share its successful model as an economic blueprint for other developing countries. More so, the importance of China with regards to African politics and development is constantly on the rise and thus critiqued. The launch of the XXI century Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FORAC) and the continued participation of new countries in the forum is evidence enough of the level of enhancement the China-Africa partnership as witnessed over time. A record 42 heads of governments attended the 5th FORAC meeting in Beijing in 2012, attracting a very enviable attention in the international community.

It is unsurprising; however, that China has not only been accused of recolonising Africa, but also consecutively accused of supplying arms and ammunition to rogue regimes in Africa. Notwithstanding, a close examination of these accusation by the same major information sources reveals that all these accusations are unfounded. As China's arms sale are mostly sold to the officially recognised central governments or sold before the conflicts, as the case of the UN panel on South Sudan (Tiezzi 2015). Also, the arms shipment information data shows that China's major arms export is to the Middle East and Asia, only a mere 7% of its arms shipment ends up in Africa (Bräuner 2015, 18). Between 1998 and 2007, the USA, Russia and Germany were the largest exporters of arms into Africa with China taking up the 10th position on the table of the list of countries shipping arms to Africa. A look at Sudan that has a strategic partnership with China shows that 87% of its arm procurements come from Russia (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2008). Therefore, it can be surmised that China's role in Africa does not really differ much in the practices of its counterparts in the West.

Africa's major problem lies in the fact that majority of the economies are weak when it comes to creating value. **Thus, this research focuses on China's political and economic role in Nigeria by examining if China is Africa's new economic partner or a colonizer.** The research used qualitative analysis method to explore the impact of China on the Nigerian economy, how China influences the social and political landscape particularly government policies, and the global relevance of China's presence in Nigeria. This research further concludes that the bilateral relations between China and Africa will be of benefit to both parties, however, the success or failure of this relation will be largely dependent on the balance in trade and investment.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The growing relationship between China and Africa has become a subject of international scrutiny, triggering debates about the motive for China's involvement with Africa. Politicians, economists and historians have continually formulated wide divergent hypotheses to factually arrive at a rational reason for both the colonizer and economic partner theories. A school of thought argued that China's policies on Africa seem inferior to that of its western counterparts. However, a close examination reveals that such thinking is only targeted at berating the China-African impact and diverts focus from the progress recorded from the relations. A fervent look at China's trading regime with Africa shows the focus to be centred on consumer goods. This is of much benefit to the African nations since China's consumer goods come at a relatively cheaper rate than what is obtainable from the West, coupled with the fact that there is an indirect unemployment from decades of trading with the West.

Another theory propounded was that China's investment in Africa seems opportunistic in approach. This is backed up with numerous criticisms that China always aims to take up investment niches that have been neglected and/or relinquished by other counterparts. Chinese companies are also believed to be willing to undertake a far greater risk than their western competitors with regards to financial calculations. While it might look true that China is engaging in expansionary programs for its private and state-owned companies with regards to investment in Africa, a holistic look at the various policies shows that they are not entirely different from that of the western competitors.

It has been observed that Europe and North American countries are also willing to ignore the issues of bad governance and other human right abuses while overtly purporting to adhere to the strict framework. This has been observed to be the norm in countries like Chad, Nigeria, Angola, Eritrea and a host of others most especially in situations where oil exploration is at stake. Therefore, it would be hypocritical to allege that China is not adhering to standards when its counterparts from the West are also guilty of such. More so, understanding the nature of the relationship between China and Africa would not be possible without looking into the historical engagements.

1.1 Historical involvement of China in Africa

The initial engagement of the Chinese in Africa actually began during the Bandung Conference of Non-Aligned Nations (Konings 2007). This conference happened in 1955 at the initial stages of the cold war era. However, there was a substantial improvement in China-African interactions by the early 1960s as a direct result of China's deteriorating ties with the USSR. With China looking for new allies to fill the vacuum created by the deteriorating engagement with the USSR, Africa happens to be the most available region where China can conveniently develop a counterbalance scheme to tackle the Russian hegemony as well as western imperialism (Zheng 2010). Due to the fact that China was once also a colonized nation, it saw itself as the leader of the so-called Third World countries.

This made China see African nations as natural allies. Also, China seemed to recognize the importance of Africa with regards to its diplomatic standoff going on with Taiwan then. China realized that the African countries were a key voting bloc in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and as such would be able to help veer the UN's decision in the feud with Taiwan to favour them (China). According to Konings (2007, 343) Apart from having Africa on its side in the context of the Taiwanese question, China has always maintained a strategic partnership with African independent countries since the 1950s. China was involved in many construction projects across Africa while also supporting the independence struggles of various African countries between 1959 and 1970. This directly had a positive influence on the bilateral relations between the two parties (Konings 2007, 347). It is worthwhile noting that, during this period, China provided aid to 30 African countries.

The hitherto favourable relationship with Africa began to decline in the 1980s when China began to shift personal focus to the issue of domestic economic development. This period was marked by an ideological shift from socialist economic development to capitalist economic ideologies. This necessitated the adventure of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from western countries. But, the romance with the western capitalist culture was cut short as a result of the aftermath of the crackdown on students during the Tiananmen Square crisis in 1989, with China been hit be series of economic sanctions aimed at isolating the most populous nation in the world. China, having learnt a great lesson during the period of the sanction not to wholly rely on western countries for FDI was prompted to once again widen its scope to the developing countries in Africa.

1.2. China’s re-emergence in Africa

The early 1990s was a very important phase with regards to China’s re-involvement with African countries. This period witnessed an unprecedented level of involvement of China with the African nations (Konings 2007, 359). The seemingly stained relationship was further widened in areas of trade, investment, technological aids and also personnel training. This period also witnessed a very high level of developmental assistance from China to several African countries. The major developmental assistance was focused on the technical aspects as well as infrastructural development.

Contrary to popular belief, China did not at any point in time impose itself on the constituted authorities of various African regions like the western colonialists did by taking up the control of the administrative government and forcefully controlling the resources of such colonized regions. In truth, the majority of Africa leaders really considered a closer economic relation with China as the only guarantee for future economic prosperity since they consider China’s economic accomplishments (within a short period of time) as something worth emulating. It is on record that between the years of 1981 and 2005, China was able to reduce the number of people living in poverty from a high 84% to as low as 15.9% (World Bank 2013).

Most African nations did not only see China as a viable economic friend but also, they perceive the Asian giant as a country that can offer alternative development model which can further be emulated. Also, with regards to accessibility of loans and providing funds for projects, most African countries believe China to be an alternative to financial institutions such as the IMF as well as World Bank. The African countries too on their own were nurturing ambitions of internal development and they believed that China often makes use of its aids for supporting strategic alignment, commercial benefits and also ideological values. Almost all of China’s engagements in Africa reflect these priorities very much.

As it has been initially noted, a diplomatic China often relates to Africa in order to secure support for a ‘One China’ policy at the UN General Assembly. The ideological China, on the other hand, believes it was once in the shoes African economies find themselves in. Collecting low-interest loans from Japan in 1978 in order to finance the export of industrial technology in exchange for crude oil and coal. China began the journey to economic development (Brautigam 2002, 42). China also made use of similar agreements to forge an economic tie with African nations much to the advantage of the latter as a result of the development that would be achieved. China often sees its African investment and aids as important tools to gain the trust of African governments. By achieving a sustained economic development, China is of the view that Africa too can adopt its development blueprint in order to achieve relative economic emergence.

Close to 50% of China's assistance to Africa is categorized under official aid with the rest made up of loans and debt reliefs (Zheng 2007). In 1996, China officially recorded $410 million as overseas development assistance while this has increased to more than $3 billion by 2007 (Kobilynski 2012). Chinese aid coming in from of concessional aid to Africa has steadily been increasing from $800 million in 2005 to as high as $10 billion in 2009 (Xiaofang 2013). But a secret manual gotten from a US database of Chinese aid to Africa obtained by the Washington based Center for Global Development estimated that the concessional aid to 50 African countries in a period of 10 years (2001 – 2011) is $75 billion.

In the area of infrastructural projects, China's finance in Africa increased from $1 billion to $7 billion between 2003 and 2006. It is generally believed that China's aid is as a result of their belief in equality and a mutual respect for the sovereignty of the receiving countries. Furthermore, it was observed that majority of these loans are not with any conditions, free of any interest and an easy repayment schedule. It was also gathered that the loans are meant for various projects aimed at generating income for receiving countries so that they can be self-reliant and not be overly dependent on other nations.

China's numerous aids to the African nation seem attractive to the respective governments due to the following reasons: First, it has no conditions attached to it unlike the ones received from IMF and western countries that have conditions of good governance, fiscal discipline and so on attached to it. Second, a high number of totalitarian African leaders are being threatened by demands for political liberalization when they want to access loans from western countries (Konings 2007, 349-350). Third, instead of making use of the debt to control an African country, China was quick to grant debt relief as it did in 2000 when a total of $1.3 billion debt was cancelled for 31 African countries (Konings 2007, 351). Last, China's export credit has provided an avenue for African governments to use it as an alternative source of finance and this has helped most countries in diversifying from the traditional colonial trading patterns (Moss & Rose 2006, 2).

1.3. China’s investment pattern in Africa

The manner of investment pattern recently being undertaken by China with regards to Africa have become a matter of serious concern to both Africans and non-Africans altogether. But there seems to be evidence that the reporting of China's investment in Africa is from a sentimental point of view. It is a norm that when two countries engage in trade, the gain of each party to the trade will largely be dependent on the structural output of each party as well as the relative competitive advantage. In addition to this, the transactional cost in each party's territory would ultimately be a determinant of whether or not such party has a competitive advantage over the other. In the case of China and other African countries, it remains the same.

China involves both its state-owned enterprises as well as private-owned companies in Africa. But the philosophy guiding the two sets of Chinese organizations are quite different (Haroz 2011). The extractive sector is majorly left in the hands of state-owned enterprises and these set of organizations are driven by the state's interest thereby investing heavily in the mining and extractive activities. The private owned Chinese companies, on the other hand, are being driven majorly by the market forces, investing way beyond the caprice of just the extractive activities. The privately owned companies also as a result of being profit-oriented tend to invest not just heavily but rationally in order to maintain a reasonable cash flow. But all in all, both sets of organization tend to concentrate on different sectors as well as different countries and regions. But it would not be so out of the way to conclude that a significant amount of investment has come from the Chinese state-owned enterprises while investments from the privately owned Chinese companies are steadily on the rise (Gu 2009, 573).

Further observation shows that the scale of investment varies. This is an indication that China's investment in Africa is on the rise as ever with a diverse concentration, making it not wholly limited to extractive activities. Both of China's sets of organizations are actively involved in Foreign Direct Investment in almost all the countries in Africa, taking up various kinds of investment. In conclusion, a breakdown of China's investment pattern in Africa shows that each and every region in Africa offers some sort of unique attractiveness to the Asian powerhouse. Therefore, the Western-held opinion that Chinese pattern of investment in Africa is aggressive definitely falls like a pack of cards in the face of available data and record.

1.4. Gains or losses for Africa?

Whenever the issue of China’s relations with Africa is being discussed, the question of whether or not Chinese investment in Africa is a threat or a blessing always seems to crop up. To answer this question, it is important to identify how the western partners who incidentally happen be China's competitors had been doing from past till the present. It is not far-fetched to assert that the Western bloc has provided a significant amount of aid which pales that of China in comparison (Hanson 2008). However, the act of throwing money at every problem has not been able to comfortably solve the challenges of African countries. If it were, the billions of dollars that have been granted as aid in the past 50 years should have positively improved the economy of Africa. But this has not been the case as it becomes clearer that the western powers seem to arbitrarily just pick a particular economic development plan that is in line with their own agenda.

On the contrary, China seems to be investing at crucial times and in areas that would benefit the recipient countries more without a particular agenda in mind. Africa recorded the highest annual economic growth in 2007, owing largely in part to Chinese investment (Kaiman 2013). It is pertinent to recognize the fact that the Chinese government do not engage in imposing political conditions on African governments before embarking on granting aid to the respective countries. And it has been clearly confirmed that most Chinese companies are always willing to invest in sectors where their western counterparts seem reluctant to take up.

Western agencies as it had been noted are always not interested in investment in physical infrastructure, and agriculture which are major areas that are crucial to Africa's development. This is so because it is a well-known fact that Africa is desperately in need of infrastructure of all types. And the finding of about $200 billion annually to pump on such infrastructure is a herculean task (Ling 2009). Therefore, China’s investment is a welcome development for Africa. As far back as the 1970s, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been reluctant to commit heavily to infrastructural projects in Africa. In the 1990s, the World Bank in conjunction with USAID reduced agricultural grants to Africa by 90% (Konings 2007). And recently, the World Bank pulled out of the support for palm oil farmers in Africa due to pressure from some Non-Governmental Organisation whereas Chinese firms have taken up the responsibility of committing huge investment into infrastructural upgrading in Africa.

In the last few years, Chinese companies have provided grants and aid for the completion and upgrading of bridges, railroads, telecommunication networks as well as other much-needed infrastructure across Africa. And the unique thing here is that irrespective of the scale of investment earmarked for any infrastructural project in any African country, no conditions are attached. While there exists unwillingness on the part of western countries and their respective agencies to invest heavily in Africa in relation to infrastructures, as a result of fear of not being able to generate adequate returns needed to offset the investment risks, Chinese investment is high and very significant.

China's growing demand for minerals and other extractives which have, in turn, increased the prices of such commodities in the international market has helped African countries to generate more revenue which has also resulted in some form economic boost. Many of the projects embarked upon by Chinese firms are projects that their western counterparts would not stake their investment. For instance, in 2005, Nigerian and China signed an $800 million crude oil sale agreement (Ezigbo 2005). This would lead to China purchasing 30,000 barrels daily for a period of five years. In addition to this, the Chinese government also accepted to take over and run a Nigerian refinery. These are risky ventures that western nations would normally not even venture into due to the fact that these investments are located in politically volatile regions of the country.

While it is an undisputable fact that China's investment has brought a lot of development to Africa, it has been observed that the impact of Chinese investment in Africa is majorly dependent on four important factors: 1) the investment motives of the firm in question; 2) the time range of the investment; 3) the extent of linkages to other firms in the same industry; 4) the capability of indigenous companies to fully absorb any spill-over effect and face competition (Ayodele & Sotola 2014).

While it has been clarified that majority of Chinese private investments are market driven and that of the state-owned enterprises are government driven, the investment motive also serves as a reflection of the level of attraction that is in the African market. With respect to spill-over effects and linkages, these seem to depend solely on the prevailing public opinion of the host country. China has actually helped to fast-track the economic growth of African nations but there is this belief that more can still be done. The missing element is the inherent lack a strategic engagement required on the long run which would have a wider impact on the alleviation of poverty in the African continent (Hanson 2008).

On a final note regarding whether or not Africa stands to gain or lose from the numerous offers of China, it can be said that most African countries import three dominant commodities from China; machinery, transport equipment and handicrafts (Wen 2013). Chinese products are generally known to be relatively cheaper and more suited to African demand, thereby making it affordable for a large number of people. The products fit into the income level of each African country very well. The relatively low price of mobile phones in Africa is largely due to the influx of China-made phones flooding the African market. This has given mobile access to millions of Africans who would not have been able to afford the phones obtainable in the West.

1.5. Research methodology

This research examined China's political and economic role in Nigeria by identify if China is Africa's new economic partner or a colonizer, and adopted the qualitative approach method to analyses the information sourced from multiple online resources. The online resources are analyzed as qualitative data using the case study research method (Yin 1984, 23). The researcher examined the qualitative data using the dependency theory to answer the research question. The qualitative data refers to all non-numeric data or data that are not quantified and can be a product of all research strategies. The reason for using qualitative data is to be able to get a holistic view of the subject matter.

The further analysis of this qualitative data is hinged on conceptualising the various documents released by reliable economic agencies, as well as governmental institutions with regards to the subject matter. This will allow the researcher to form a valid stand-point by induction on the state of the relationship between China and Africa using Nigeria as a case study.

Method of data collection

Data for this study were majorly secondary data which have been analysed for various set of objectives by the initial compilers. As Saunders et al (2005), posited, certain types of research project, especially those that require a global or international comparison make use of secondary data as the main source in order to answer the research questions and address the study objectives. For the benefit of this study, the multi-source secondary data were used. This is based entirely on survey secondary data which were collected through a variety of ad-hoc surveys.

2. WHO GAINS? THE NIGERIA-CHINA CASE

There seems to be a serious pitfall which Nigeria as a developing country needs to watch very closely in the much talked about win-win relationship with China. The existence of a magnanimous trade imbalance that continues to grow in favour of China should be a source of worry for the Nigerian leadership. Although it has been said in some quarters that Nigeria intends to reduce the vast trade imbalance by increasing exports of other products aside crude oil to China, how this plays out is still left much to the imagination. Reliable data reveals that while China's export to Nigeria is currently estimated to be in the region of $3 billion, the reversal of such case gives Nigeria only $1 billion opening up a trade gap of $2 billion (Peter 2013). This monumental deficit is a concern for Nigeria leaders and the private sector too if we are to believe the various deliberations of the Nigeria-China Joint Planning Commission.

Nigeria should beware of being turned to a dumping site of cheap Chinese goods most especially textiles, because of the fact that the existing trade imbalance might continue to increase between the two countries much to the favour of China and to the detriment of Nigeria as it might lead to more job losses within the Nigerian economy. It has already been reported by John (2012) that Nigeria's Trade Unions are already blaming the loss of over 300,000 manufacturing jobs in the textile sector to Chinese imports. Something of this nature happened in South Africa in 2006 which led the country to impose a two-year import restraint on some Chinese textile materials. In the same year in Nigeria, NAFDAC banned pharmaceutical products from some Chinese and Indian companies as a result of flooding the market with substandard medical goods (Idris 2007).

Therefore, while it is actually true to some extent that Nigeria's relationship with China has been beneficial to the former infrastructure-wise, it is evident that the relationship has been built in such a way that major mercantile transactions happen only to benefit the Nigerian elite businessmen and politicians. Not doubting that the terms of trade in still in favour of China whose exports to Nigeria has been on a monumental increase, the chart below should give some insight:

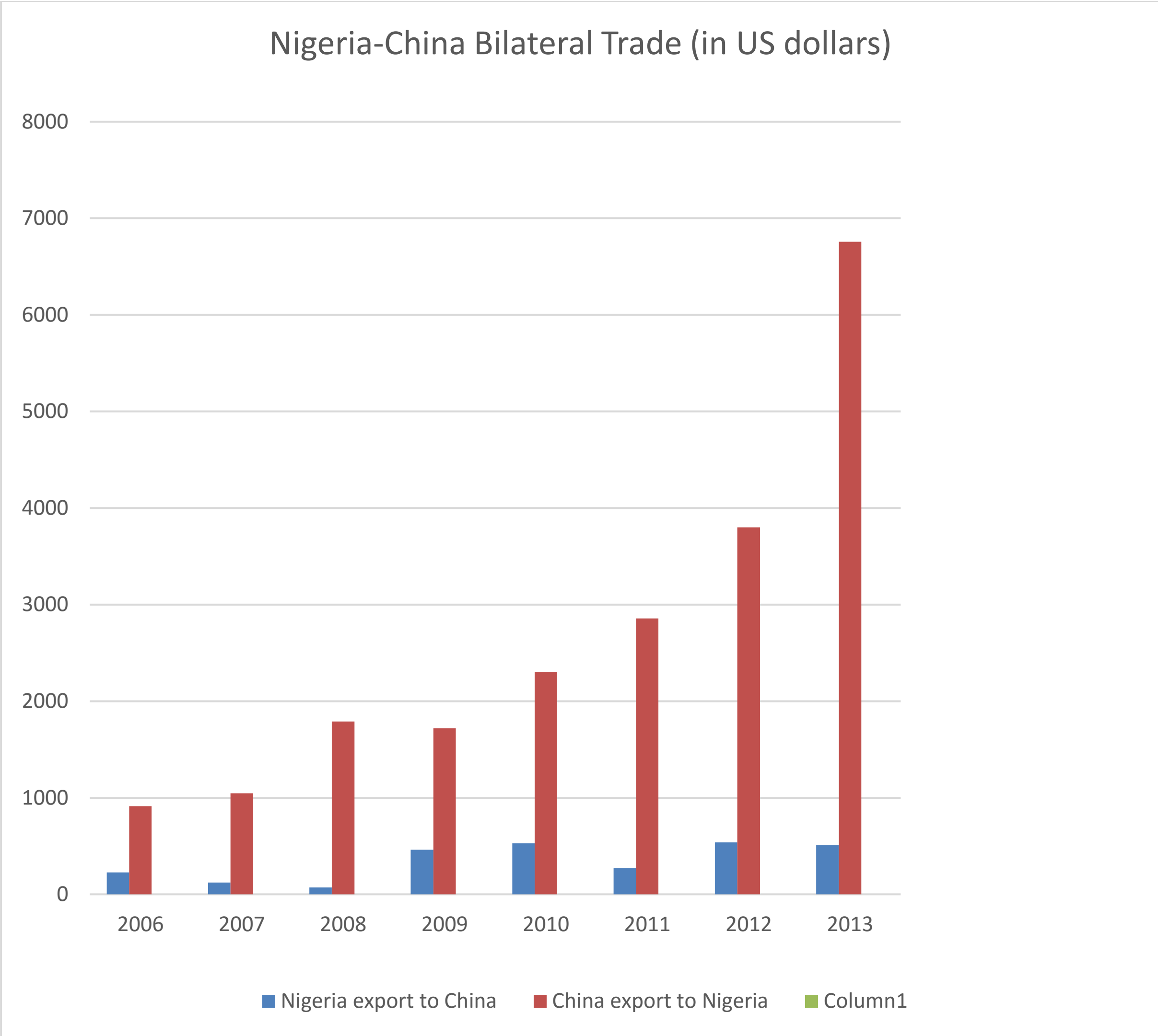

Figure 1. Nigeria-China Bilateral Trade (In US dollars)

Source: South African Institute of International Affairs (2018).

The above *Figure 1* shows the level of trade imbalance between the two countries with China being the major beneficiary of the two. In Nigeria, and likewise Africa in general, China has set up huge operations. They have built infrastructure which has been done by using equipment and labour from their own country without transferring the requisite skills to local communities. Hence, it is a situation of China taking raw materials from Nigeria and Africa while transferring manufactured goods in return. This relationship indirectly equips China with more technological skills while leaving the African countries with none. This situation is not really different from what was applicable during the colonial era when the British came to Nigeria to pick up raw materials while also bringing finished goods. The present relations with China as evident in the chart above shows that Nigeria is unknowingly and unconsciously opening up its shores to a new form of colonialism (Sino-imperialism) (Agubamah 2014, 68).

The olden days of Non-Aligned Movement which served as a united front against colonialism are over and long gone. China should not be viewed the same way it was viewed in times past as a fellow underdeveloped economy. China is now the second-biggest economy in the world that is capable of exploiting other weaker countries as the West. Further analysis of the chart shows that China can confidently be regarded as a significant contributor to Nigeria's deindustrialization because of Nigeria's overdependence on Chinese goods and services.

3.1. China's Role in Infrastructural Development of Africa

A very important area of China's involvement in Africa comes in the form of financing infrastructures. It is a known fact that Africa lags behind the rest of the world when it comes to adequate infrastructure both in quality and quantity. The new millennium has witnessed a significant increase in foreign financing of major infrastructural projects across Africa and China has been at the forefront (Maudsley 2007). Finance alone cannot provide adequate infrastructure without the availability of expert personnel to monitor such infrastructural projects. China has become a ready and willing source of finance and expatriates. This will be discussed under following subheadings:

3.1.1. Africa's Deficient Infrastructure

One of the major factors obstructing Africa's integration into the global economy happens to be its ubiquitous deficient infrastructure. This infrastructural weakness span across all the main sectors including roads, ports, telecommunications, water, power, sanitation etc. these evident deficiencies are more pronounced in low-income African countries. As at 2005, low-income African countries had very low road density when we are to look in respect to tarred roads (Naim 2007). In the area of telecommunications in the same year, available data showed that Sub-Saharan Africa lags behind seriously as the region could only boast of an average 10 phone lines per a thousand-population compared to 78 per thousand population for their counterparts in other continents (Kynge & Zhang 2007). Mobile phone density recorded for sub-Saharan Africa in 2005 was a meagre 50 per thousand populations which is slightly below that of their counterparts in Central America which were 78 for the same period.

When it comes to power generation, Sub-Saharan Africa could only boast of 16% of the populace having access to electricity with the lowest in any other continent being 41% (Wilson 2011). The situation of water and sanitation seemed much better; indicators acknowledging that accessibility to water are almost at par with other low-income countries in other continents. Access to adequate sanitation was lowest in the world with the average in Sub-Saharan Africa being 34% while the lowest among other low-income countries in other continents was 51% (Taylor 2011). While these data may look obsolete owing to the fact that they refer to indices more than a decade ago, it brings to the fore the fact that Africa has always been the back sitter when it comes to availability of adequate infrastructure.

3.1.2. Chinese Financing of African Infrastructure

In 2009, the World Bank in conjunction with other global donors investigated the infrastructural financing needs of Africa, coming up with their findings in a report titled 'Africa's Infrastructure: A Time for Transformation'. The detailed analysis was able to come up with a proposition that the continent has been allocated a joint $93 billion per year as the infrastructural investment (Kragelund 2011). With World Bank pledging nearly 20% of the allotted funds, the responsibility of the remaining 80% fell on other donors that China happened to be among (Clifton 2011). This provides an important perspective to analyze the surge in external financing of infrastructure in Africa since the turn of the millennium. In the 1990s, external financing was achieved through official development finance thereby remaining stable at less than $5 billion annually (Duffield 2001). The ODF is made up of various loans from development banks such as World Bank and African Development Bank.

The surge in external financing since the year 2000 is based on some factors which to a large extent include the emergence of China as a significant financier. And although it can be argued that China's financing of Africa infrastructure is very substantial, it is still regarded as the smallest among the major sources of Africa infrastructural financing. This is itself is a major point that needs to be passed within the context of this study. While China's economic activity has been growing rapidly since the turn of the millennium, there tends to be some form of exaggeration from the press. Just as the same with direct investment, the popular notion that China is saturating Africa with infrastructure finance is quite overblown. This misconception partly comes from vague deals often announced by the press. Though it is important to note that in reality, based on the available data, China has become a major source of infrastructure finance in Africa, funding from other sources such as private investment and traditional official sources too have also increased (Lare 2008). And it all deals announced are processed; China's financing of infrastructures in Africa will grow rapidly in future years.

3.2. Africa Borrowing from China

A careful perusal of the magnitude of China's infrastructure financing in Africa will lead to rational evaluation of whether or not Africa's borrowing is leading to new debt problems. Most of China's financing of Africa comes from China Exim Bank and therefore dealt with commercial interest rates. Brautigam and Hwang (2016) published a report showing the data of China's lending to Africa sourced from IMF documents on African countries' debt reports and publications from Chinese banks. The database included loans given to various African state enterprises that are accompanied with a guarantee from the recipient government. This massive data led to three major findings: Firstly, the World Bank remains the biggest external source of finance for African development, but China Exim Bank is close behind. Secondly, China's lending to Africa is really significant but not on a gigantic scale as it is being peddled by some media outlets. Thirdly, the growth rate of African countries has diminished as a result of the ending of the commodity boom.

Some other minor findings revealed that China's loan to Africa go to a diverse set of countries with Angola being the largest recipient between the years 2000 and 2014 (Ling 2010). Other countries taking up a large chunk of China's loan are Sudan, Kenya, DR Congo and Ethiopia. This goes on to show that China does not distinguish between countries with more liberal rule of law and those without, unlike its western counterparts.

Also, the Brautigam-Hwang study revealed that more than 33% of China's loans to Africa are commodity-secured (Jianbo & Xiaomin 2011). Be that as it may, it should be noted that this manner of lending is not really a new scheme. Western banks have in the time past made use of commodities as loan securities. In fact, it was specifically revealed that China actually pledged commodities on loans that were received during its reform period when it had not yet achieved a reputation of a lender within the international circuit. These types of loans from China Exim Bank had finances tied to goods and services originating from China, the downsides are that the loans are basically used to shop for goods specifically from the lending country alone and as such cannot be used as the recipient wishes.

3.3. Chinese Construction Companies in Africa

Looking beyond the incidence of finance, we now have to examine how infrastructural projects are being implemented by Chinese companies in African countries. China Exim Bank also comes to the fore view in this regard too as the bank is the main source of fund for China's numerous infrastructure projects in Africa. The same way all other export credit agencies around the world promotes their home countries' interests, China Exim Bank has a goal of promoting the export of Chinese goods in order to increase the international presence of Chinese goods (Mold 2009).

The main instruments being used by this bank are preferential foreign loans and export credit. In other words, projects that are hitherto backed by loans involving concessions must be executed by Chinese contractors that are often selected based on a non-competitive negotiation process. Therefore, Chinese construction firms have benefitted more from access to lines of credit that are relatively low in cost while also being tied to overseas concessional loans.

Bearing in mind the mandate of China's Exim Bank, it is not surprising that preferential treatment is given to Chinese companies whenever the situation arises. China seems to be following a model established by its western counterparts, with India also embracing the approach. The only difference with China's strategy is evident only in the magnitude of involvement. The infrastructure loans being granted by China totals about 50% of the overall official development finance in Africa (Chinese State Council 2011).

China makes provision for large amounts of funding for its indigenous companies who act as contractors in order to have a strong foothold on the continent. The extent of this can be analyzed by looking at the data from World Bank that includes the list of contractors that have won major infrastructure projects bidding in Africa. The trend here is that companies from a particular region most times always win the bidding of such projects that are being initiated by their home countries respectively.

3.4. Chinese Workers' Presence and Labour in Africa

A relatively large number of Chinese workers seemed to have migrated to Africa since the turn of the millennium and this issue is one of the most controversial aspects of the relationship between Africa and China. Official data from China reveals that as at 2014, there were approximately 259,385 Chinese workers in Africa (Chinese State Council 2017). Though, it is believed that a large proportion of Chinese migrants are not included in this data which leads to unverified estimates totalling as much as one million Chinese personnel in Africa. Irrespective of the actual number of Chinese workers in Africa, the positive point here is that these Chinese workers provide the missing skills, a much faster construction scheme and a positive connection with the world's second-largest economy.

With China now in a phase where it has to create new jobs to cater for its citizens, the excess labour that is redundant in China seems to have found a new ground to move to; Africa. While there might be the issues of underpaid labour in Africa, this would be cushioned by the fact that most of these Chinese migrants to Africa do so having in mind that the Chinese companies in Africa would provide them with adequate wages that would make them better off than staying in China and be redundant. Chinese migrants to Africa while becoming a controversial issue still is not backed up by reliable data as to the exact population. Howard (2014), acknowledged that there is a higher degree of uncertainty regarding the number of Chinese living in Africa, but a fact that cannot be denied is that the number keeps growing. It should also be made known that not every Chinese migrant to Africa is a worker. The Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (Zafar 2007) provides a comprehensive detail of Chinese workers in Africa to include: firstly, dispatched labourers on contracted projects: these are workers that migrated to get involved in projects managed by State-owned enterprises and Chinese private enterprises outside China. Secondly, dispatched labourers of labour services; these are those hired by domestic companies, who act as intermediaries by recruiting and sending Chinese workers to provide labour services to foreign companies.

All in all, the NBS estimates of 2014 reveals that Algeria and Angola are the African countries with the highest number of Chinese workers, putting the figures at 71,542 and 50,231 respectively (see *Figure 2*).

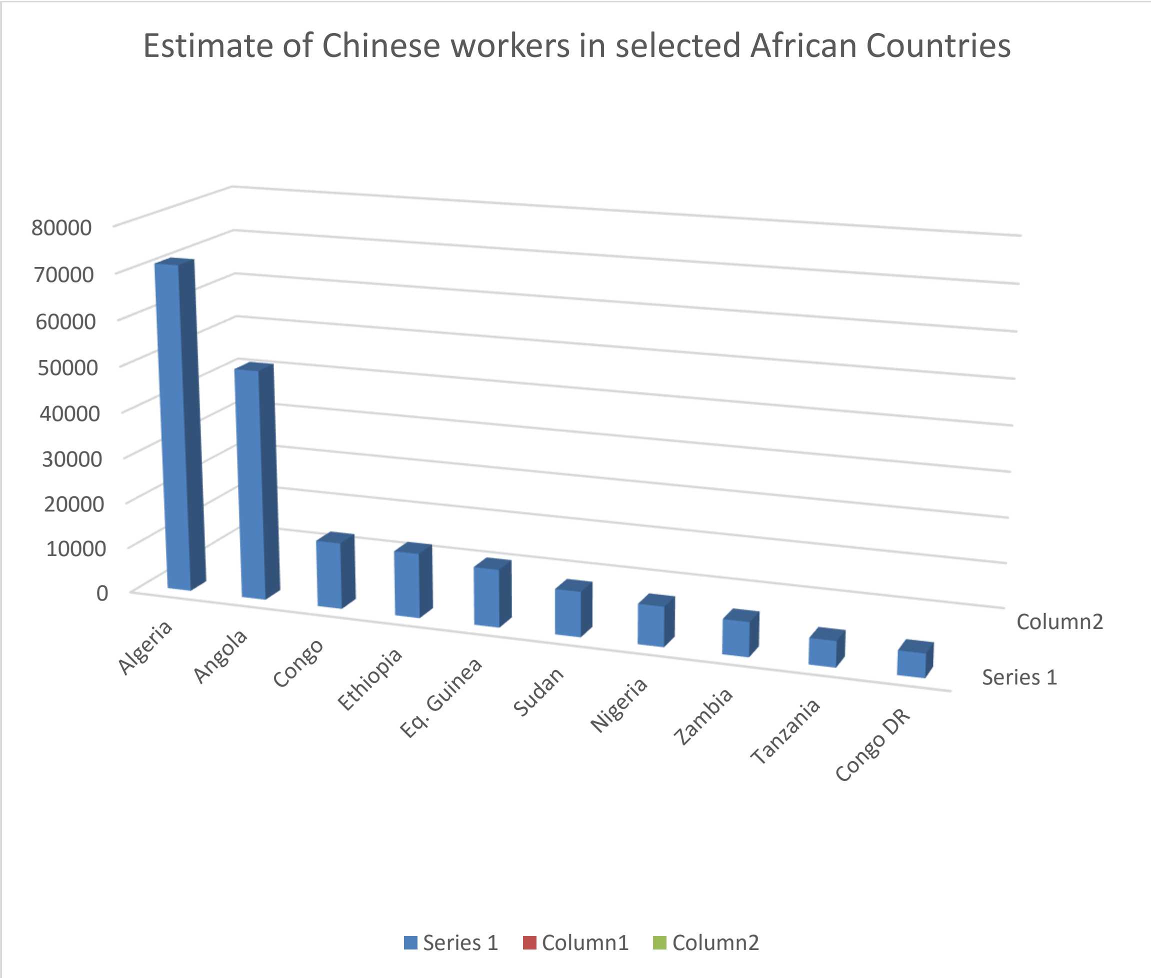

Figure 2. Estimate of Chinese workers in selected African countries
Source: Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (2018).

Some other researchers have generated different estimates of the number of Chinese migrants in African countries. Park (2009) estimated the number of Chinese nationals living in various African countries in the mid-2000s. Suffice to say that these numbers are much higher than what is contained in the Chinese NBS, with a high level of variance. The Park's estimates (see *Figure 3*) revealed about 700,000 Chinese migrants in Africa as far back as the mid-2000s, so an estimate of a million could stand reasonable enough for recent years. A major discrepancy between the two happens to be that heat the NBS data only accounted for workers who migrated to Africa with regards to contracted projects. The data failed to take into cognizance a lot of Chinese workers that initially migrated to Africa based on contracted projects then decided to stay over and start their own businesses in various African countries. In addition, some other Chinese entrepreneurs moved to Africa on their own volition without the acknowledgement of their home country.

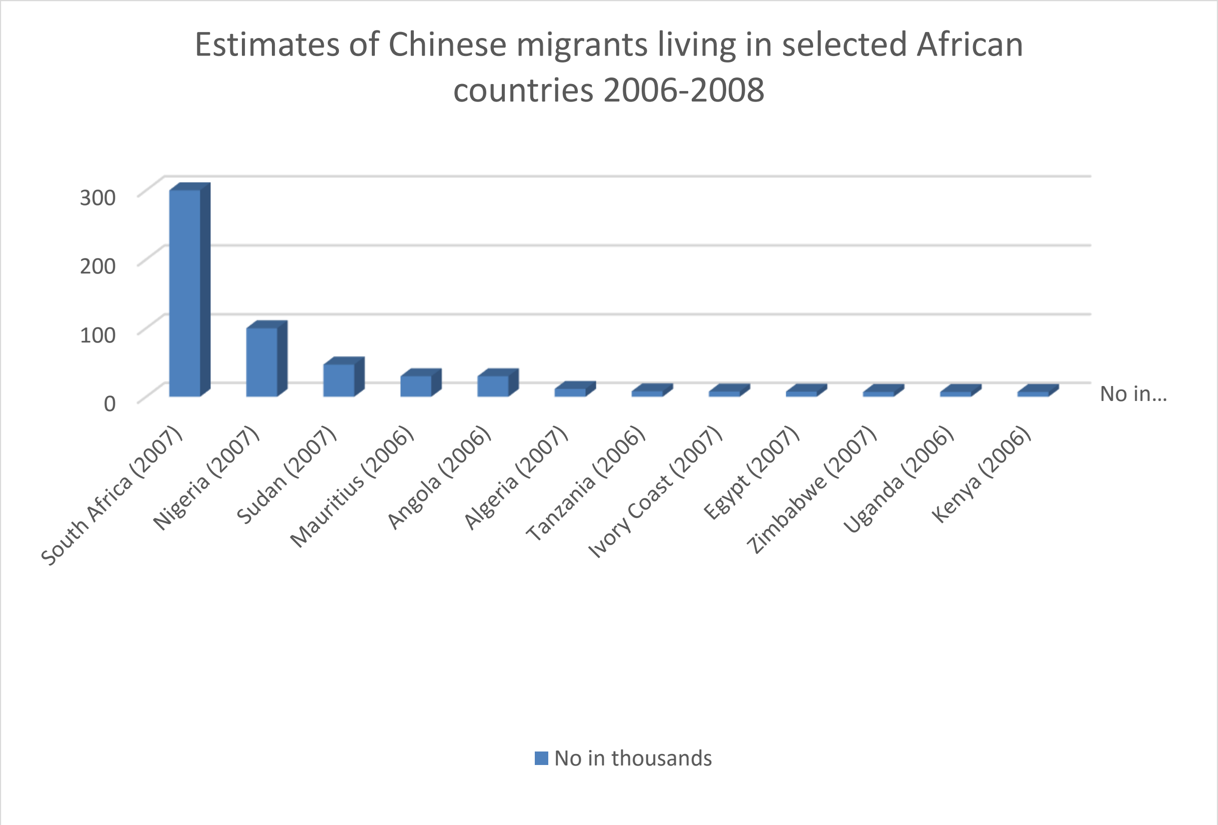

Figure 3. Estimate of Chinese migrants in selected African countries 2006-2008

Source: Park (2009, 4).

3.5. Wages and exchange rates

The wide-held notion that large amounts of manufacturing factors are migrating from China to Africa while it may seem farfetched is seriously starting to happen, if not of the much-insinuated large scale. This has led to investigating the movement from two distinct perspectives. Firstly, as labour-intensive manufacturing elements migrate out of China to Africa, the movement would only be of a sizeable nature as Africa is perceived to be under-industrialized. Also, African countries like Ethiopia are embarking on a conscious move to push for moves that would improve their investment climate in such ways that it would attract labour-intensive manufacturing elements from most especially China (Stahl 2011). It is pertinent to point out at this juncture the factors that have held back the industrialization of Africa. The major factor is a weak investment climate, coupled with poor infrastructure and institutions. Aside these, the wage structure in Africa have always been so low that it remains unattractive to the outside labour forces.

The African continent has more than enough agricultural resources per capita to keep its wages relatively standard, which is a good thing in itself. The continent has enough agricultural and mining resources per capita to keep wages relatively high, which is a good thing in itself. For a very long time, China had a lower wage structure than Africa, thereby making the Asian powerhouse securely positioned as a manufacturing powerhouse of labour-intensive commodities. But in recent times, a variety of growth in productivity, as well as changing demographics, has led to a steady increase in wages in China. Also worthy of note is the fact that as at 2012, Chinese wages were significantly higher than major industrialized countries in Africa such as Ethiopia and Uganda even though these African countries have richer resources in comparison to China (Howard 2014). Chinese wages have been on a rapid increase thereby creating opportunities for low-wage African countries in as much as such countries can establish some form of the reasonable and supportive investment environment.

Most experts have agreed that China's currency was undervalued in the mid-2000s with China pegging its currency exchange with the US dollar at the rate of 8.3:1at the start of 1994 (Zanger 2000). This occurred to be a reasonable development for a low-income country such as China and it really worked well as this was a time the US dollar was appreciating against other currencies between 1994 and 2000. China's currency, too, followed suit during this period, which was appropriate for a country experiencing rapid economic growth. Immediately after the year 2000, the US currency started to depreciate, and the Chinese currency too followed the same trend despite still experiencing productivity growth.

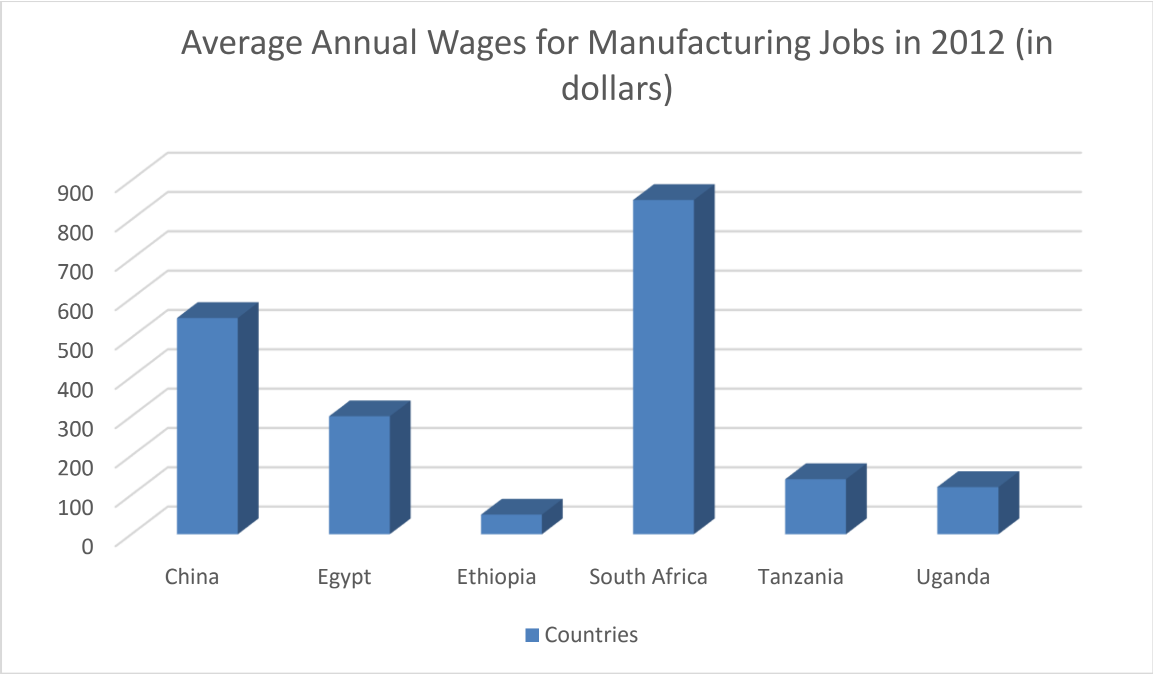

Figure 4. Average wages for manufacturing jobs in 2012 (in US dollars)
Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2016).

Conclusively, the rise in wages in China coupled with the high value of its currency has created basic opportunities for African countries to attract some of the labour-intensive manufacturing that is already moving out of China. While in the times past, a lot of the manufacturing often move to Vietnam of other nearby countries with low wages, presently Africa seem to be attracting more Chinese manufacturing presence as well (Ling 2010). On this note, Ethiopia's experience comes to view. The east African nation is already making deliberate efforts to attract Chinese manufacturing by establishing industrialised zones that are equipped with reliable infrastructure and a more reliable investment climate. Ethiopia recently received a World Bank loan to assist in developing the Bole Lemi Special Economic Zone outside of Addis Ababa as well as a new industrial hub located at Kilinito, some 30 kilometres south of the capital (World Bank 2016).

3.6. Chinese Infrastructure Finance in Nigeria

China's relationship with Nigeria has been on a rather slow pace over the years. But in the last decade, it has really gathered momentum. In 1972 when the then Military head of state of Nigeria, General Yakubu Gowon first paid a visit to China shortly after the end of the civil war. Another memorable visit of a Nigerian leader to China was during the regime of General

Abacha who as a result of international criticism and isolation decided to go to China to seek for support in the wake of the Tiananmen Square issue that also led to the international isolation of China too. It is important to note at this juncture that in 1977, Chinese Premier; Li Peng visited Nigeria in order to boost China's trade interest in Africa which was already on a decline. Between 1980 and 1985, Nigeria's trade with China reduced from $53 million to a paltry $7 million (Bransletter 2001). The next 5 years witnessed an upturn as the figure steadily improved again to $35 million as at 1989. Since then, it has been on a monumental increase which reached as much as $327 million by 1997. It is currently estimated at $13 billion.

The erstwhile Nigerian President also visited China with the highlight of his visit being the signing of a $1.5 billion loan agreement for the development of infrastructure in Nigeria, including but not limited to the expansion of four airports in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kano and Abuja. This visit to China is very significant as it undermines China's growing economic relations with Nigeria. A closer economic tie with China has become imperative from Nigeria's point of view. And the $1.5 billion infrastructure loan brings to total nearly $15 billion Chinese investment to Nigeria including the newly refurbished Lagos-Kano rail line valued at $2.5 billion. The Nigeria's share of China's investment in Africa has reached more than 30%. And China seems to have the highest commitment in Nigeria, eclipsing both the IMF and World Bank. This shows that African countries are increasingly turning to China as an alternative source for Infrastructure loans which the region is in need of badly.

Both Nigeria and China realised the importance of engaging in a lasting economic alliance. China, being the most populous country in the world with the fastest economic growth rate has become a leading player in the global economy. The national economy of China has succeeded in dwarfing that of Japan or the EU countries combined. And to say that China achieved a feat that has no precedence in the history of economic development by lifting more than 300 million of its citizens out of poverty (Daniels 2013).

Nigeria, on the other hand, is the most populous country in Africa with a vast reserve of crude oil needs China's financial and technical assistance in order to develop its decaying infrastructure. China needs Nigeria's oil to fuel its growing industry. Nigeria also happens to be the largest market for Chinese goods in Africa with estimates showing that Nigeria accounts for one-third of total Chinese goods in West Africa.

3.7. China's policy towards peace and security in Africa

China's expansion interests in Africa which started with a two-way trade and a multilateral diplomatic engagement is increasingly being threatened by an array of security obstacles (UNCTAD 2012). These obstacles include but not limited to the protection of economic interests in unstable and lawless conditions that range from attacks on Chinese workers to arbitrary hostile acts against Chinese firms during fallouts of change in regimes across Africa. This coupled with the growing pressure from global sources to play a much deeper role in multilateral initiatives that are aimed at tackling the problems of insecurity, conflicts and wars in Africa. China's reaction to these pressures initially was temporal, with China selectively involved in the mediation process of the Sudanese conflict as well as peacekeeping engagements in Liberia during the Liberian crisis in the mid-2000s while trying as much as possible to steer clear of war-ridden regions in Africa.

The willingness if China to actively pursue multilateral peacekeeping operations in various countries in Africa has demonstrated that while there seem to be obstacles such as official commitment to non-interference in its foreign policy (Stahle 2008), China has shown that it is not averse to maintaining a greater involvement in this complexity. And despite the fact that Chinese investments and loans have always played a notable role in the economies of conflict-ridden states in Africa, the provision of a rapid outlay of finance and reconstruction of vital infrastructure have always been China's perspective to helping out African countries that have just gotten out of the crisis. A look from South Sudan to the Congo DR will reveal the pressures that China enforces on the local environment to make sure they take active steps to take recovery steps.

It is against this backdrop that China has continually occupied itself with devising an approach towards post-conflict states to negotiate various economic recovery programs. But as noted by Oliviera (2011), this has often taken the form of word of mouth as evidence abound that China's lack of any reasonable post-conflict policy is creating a vacuum between the Chinese government and some African countries. While China's engagement in some fragile African states is continually being expanded, it has also been noticed that China's multilateral intervention in countries just recovering from the throes of war has been waxing stronger over the past decade. And China seems to always look for the root cause of the conflict while embarking on economic transformation through market liberalism, this being the major thing that sets China apart from previous UN peace-keeping operations (Berdal 2009).

Boutros-Ghali, the former UN Secretary-General, laid out a framework for a deeper form of international engagement in post-conflict countries with the publication of his famous Agenda for Peace paper in 1992. He went on to elaborate:

The object of peacebuilding is to involve hostile parties in mutually beneficial undertakings which not only contribute to economic and social development but also reinforce the confidence necessary for the creation of lasting peace. Peacebuilding begins with practical measures to restore the civil society, reinvigorate its economy, repair the land and restore its productivity, repatriate and resettle displaced people and refugees; it also entails reducing the levels of arms in society, as a component of the volatility that induces violence.

China has taken the position of a footnote when the focus is being directed at the international attention towards post-conflict reconstruction and peace building (Chesterman 2004). China has mostly been categorised by western scholars as a political counter-current that resists the efforts to render state sovereignty conditional on human rights (Zaum 2007). This has led critics to define China's involvement on the African continent as delving more towards s mercantilist ideology at best while devoid of any moral content at worst (Naim 2007). This position is supported by China's official record regarding a post-conflict engagement that has primarily played out in the context of the Chinese government's policy positions on African issues. It is worthy of note that China has constantly been in support of peace and development in Africa, with a major part of its projection coming in form of a benevolent power engaging in peaceful development. (Bijian 2005). For instance, the era of Hu Jintao heralded what was called 'the harmonious world doctrine'. The Chinese government publicly promotes while also trying to offer his own perspective on how best this peacebuilding can be embarked upon. It does not stop there; China is seen as always affirming its intent to enhance the peacebuilding process in various areas. During the 2009 UN Security Council debate centred on peacebuilding, the Chinese Ambassador cited a major milestone in the development of a collective security system termed 'Agenda for peace' while stressing a strong stand against a one model approach to global peacebuilding.

As it has been noted, post-conflict engagement is now an important ingredient of China's cooperation with Africa in the area of security and peaceful coexistence. This is the bedrock on which the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FORAC) process is laid, which involves ministerial engagements that serve as the diplomatic cornerstone of ties between Africa and China. The issue of peacebuilding was first introduced into the strategic action plan in a 2006 FORAC meeting which stated that China has decided to actively be in support of post-conflict rebuilding in relevant African countries (FORAC 2009).

In the next meeting three years later which happens to be the fourth ministerial meeting of FORAC, the Chinese government made a declaration that it had decided to strengthen its cooperation with African countries that are concerned with the UN Peacebuilding Commission as well as provide adequate support for countries in their post-war reconstruction processes? In a development aimed at confirming this stance, the 5th ministerial meeting of FORAC in 2012, it was agreed that a China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security forum should be established, with post-conflict rebuilding being the major theme of the much-expanded engagement. While the agenda of the 5th FORAC meeting was committed to building a harmonious world spiced with durable peace and a shared common prosperity, consideration was not really made on how they intend to realize this significant objective. Despite the introduction of this seemingly awesome policy, achieving such goals looks vague and takes on an outlook of just mere aspirations.

4. CHINA'S NON-INTERFERENCE POLICY IN AFRICA

China and Africa have been engaged in a longstanding relationship that has been shaped by struggles against colonialism from 1955 to 1994. China was known to be among the countries that provided support for the African struggle for independence and further dismantlement of apartheid. This shared experience seems to have provided a foundation aimed at developing a closer relationship between China and African countries.

A further opportunity to cement bilateral relations came during the time China was campaigning to secure a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Africa unanimously supported the campaign. China's decision not to interfere in the internal affairs of African countries is an initiative that aims to promote peace, security and stability. The choice of non-interference by China was based on the consideration of the international order that existed between 1950 and 1995 (Duffield 2001). During this period, the majority of the western powers were known to constantly interfere in the internal affairs of weaker African countries as well as those of Asia and South & Central America.

This interference in the case of Africa took on the form of change in regimes and deployment of mercenaries. The Africa continent as a whole was against this interference but was not strong enough to counter it until China entered the frame. The Chinese successive governments while seeking for solidarity with newly emerging developing countries, tried as much as possible to distance itself from the interference policies of its western counterparts (Zaum 2007). Its determination not to get involved in it stems from the stance that the only way forward was to avoid for the world at large is for countries to restrain themselves from doing anything that would amount to influencing the internal affairs of other countries. This led China to become an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement as well as other forums that stood against the old-world order. By doing this, China won the hearts of numerous African countries.

4.1. The Challenges Ahead

China’s non-interference policy is subject to an ever-changing global conditionality. The same way the non-interference ideology emerged as a result of a change in the international perspective, changes to that policy is also likely to be created by changes in the global environment. The world is changing, thereby enforcing more demands on the global superpowers to act in a certain manner (Howard 2014). China cannot, therefore, afford to be idle and negligent to these changes. Notwithstanding this limitation, the study suggests that, China subsequently needs to adapt its non-interference policy in a way that it would respond to emerging global changes.

China’s global status as a superpower comes with responsibilities. It is genuinely unlikely that China will continue to sustain this non-interference policy in its original form. As an emerging superpower, China’s new obligations and responsibilities will more than ever include but not limited to protection of lives, poverty reduction, peace and security preservation and protection of the global environment, among other things.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Undoubtedly, the bilateral relationship between China and Africa will be of immense benefit to both parties, if well pursued. Using the dependency theory, it has been considerably debated that the imbalances in the Nigeria-China relationship requires deepening governmental policies on both sides in the area of trade and investment to advance a win-win situation. Also, considering that it would be impossible for China to consciously reverse the Chinese-driven bilateral relations, Nigeria (and Africa at large) needs to confront the various capacity building opportunities in order to bridge the gap that is detrimental to the partnership.

The research has also shown that Nigeria's major priority lies on the move to develop the capacity to manage its own policies in engaging with China. Africa needs to realise that China's engagement with the continent would continue to favour the Asians if there is no conscious effort on the part of African countries to expand its development and also establish a workable strategy that would address the long-term benefits rather than leaning on China for the supposed short-term benefits.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that Nigeria and by extension Africa should place more focus on ways they can harness China's engagement in Africa to fit into the broader global engagement. Nigeria, in particular, has all the potentials to diversify its development by maintaining a balance between Chinese assistance and that of its Western counterparts. For this balance to happen, the Nigerian economic policy makers have to understand how each type of aid from each power bloc can be of benefit, and to which particular sectors to be able to implement a successful strategy. In particular, Nigeria can take a cue from China in the area of curbing corruption while also looking towards the USA's commitment to human rights and transparency, in the area of rule of law.

This thesis argued that while FDI has a lot of advantages including the fact that it augments the domestic capital, technology transfer, knowledge and skills, and at the same time enhancing the performance of import, it also needs to be weighed against some other equally important issues such as the incidence of anti-competitive and unethical business practices, tax avoidances, volatile flow of investment-related payments that affects balance of payments.

Finally, a reasonable approach to tackle any imbalance in the relations would require that Nigeria takes a cue from the successes and failures of some other countries that had in times past related to China and their respective policies towards development. Nigeria and Africa as a whole should embark on a thorough comprehension of China's economic dynamics and philosophy in order to ascertain policies that have actually been of benefit in the long run and which areas need to be improved upon. African countries will require thoughtful examination of USA's relations with China and as much as possible replicate the successful policies.

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