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Chinese-Nigeria Foreign Relations 2011-2015: Implication for Socio-economic Development in Nigeria

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Abstract:

Nigeria and China established formal diplomatic ties on 10 February 1971 with an understanding to abide by a set of five principles, namely mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, sovereign equality, and peaceful co-existence. But while these principles stand, critical questions are raised as to how they have created a balance especially in the area of trade and investment and its attendant socio-economic implication for development. The paper generated data only through secondary sources like published and unpublished articles, textbooks and verified internet links. Through a qualitative analysis, using the Dependency Theory, the paper explained the lopsided foreign relations between both countries and the attendant socio-economic implications it has for development. The paper asserts that one effective means to tackle trade imbalances between both countries is to introduce a cooperative mechanism that would enable Nigeria increase its export of manufactured goods to China. This indeed will help to reinvigorate development socio-economically.

Keywords: Foreign Relations, Development

1. Introduction

The relevance and need for inter-state relations in the international system cannot be over stressed. This position is built on the very inter-connective nature of the international system or global space where socio-economic, political, cultural, technological and environmental needs beckon for urgent attention. While these imperatives must be addressed, it must be approached within certain guidelines and principles that would promote and advance existing global peace. To achieve this, states in the international system employ productive strategies and mediums to accelerate existing interest. In an international system where power and hegemony define inter-relationship, states deploy and project diplomatic means through certain instruments, that guarantees their place and relevance amongst other nations. Foreign policy has been identified and employed as that diplomatic instrument.

States in the international system such as China and Nigeria have in the past few decades also explored this instrument while they interact with each other. According to Adegbulu (2006:2), Nigeria and China established formal diplomatic ties on the 10th of February 1971 more than a decade after her independence with an understanding to abide by a set of five principles, namely mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, sovereign equality, and peaceful co-existence.

Both countries opened embassies in each other's capital within the year. The Chinese government has described this relationship as a "win-win" situation. Nigeria's establishment of diplomatic ties with China was in furtherance of efforts to promote and strengthen the objectives of the South-South Cooperation which, among other things, aimed at promoting cooperation among countries of the Southern Hemisphere in a wide range of areas such as trade, investment, technical cooperation, industrialization, energy, food and agriculture, and technology (Agbu, 1992:13). Thus, the renewed Nigeria relations with China have been a welcome development.

Nigeria and China share a lot in common from ethnic diversities to rich endowment of mineral and human resources. China is the largest single market in the world with a population of 1.3 billion, while Nigeria is the largest single market in Africa with a population of over 160 million people. Unlike Nigeria, China has been able to harness its vast demographic, human and material resources to build a strong and virile domestic economy which has impacted positively on its citizenry (Agbu 1992:215). These factors, among other things, predispose Nigeria and China to play prominent roles in the politics and security of their respective regions. They also constitute a common ground that should serve as a basis for nurturing close bilateral relations between the two countries, while fostering their collaboration in multilateral diplomacy on a wide range of issues of general international concern (Akinterinwa 1994:136).

China, one the fastest growing economies in the world today, is gradually overwhelming the economies of Europe and the United States. It is also a strong technological nation with proven expertise in iron ore, steel aluminum, petroleum, textiles, electronics, fertilizers, transport, toys, etc. The Chinese economic model, bolstered by the legendary visionary

leadership of modern China, has assisted the once communist nation to become a global power (Ziang 1984:9). Nigeria, on the other hand, is yet to translate its enormous natural endowment and demographic strength into economic buoyancy (Akinjide 2005; Bello 2005). Nigeria's image of China, as well as China's image of Nigeria played a prominent role in the initial effort to establish relationship between the two countries as it reflects in their foreign policies.

A country's image is an important factor in international relations and can contribute a great deal to the realization of certain foreign policy goals (Udeala 2008:254). China-Nigeria foreign relation as defined by their foreign policies has a great implication for bilateral trade. Drawing from this point, pundits of international relations have informed that Nigeria's intercourse with China in terms of trade is not incongruous with the prevailing terrain. But, contrary to the postulations prevalent among scholars on this relation that China's engagements with Nigeria has led to the rapid transformation of the economy and society of the latter, this partnership has made the Nigerian economy an import dependent economy, thereby hampering its continuous quest for self-reliance and economic independence.

China's interests in Nigeria and Africa at large are two folds: First is diplomatic and second economic. The Chinese people will not forget that it was due to strong support of vast number of developing countries including Nigeria that China successfully regained its lawful seat in the United Nation Security Council in 1971. Nigeria was in the forefront of the support for China right from the beginning. Nigeria voted in the United Nations General Assembly in support of China's admission to the United Nations. That was Nigeria's debut at the United Nations General Assembly with Mallam Aminu Kano representing Nigeria (Udeala, 2010:70).

The Second is Nigeria's oil and gas which China desperately needs to sustain its 10 per cent annual economic growth. Africa now supplies 25 per cent of China's oil import. China is more acceptable in Africa and Nigeria partly because it is viewed with more credibility than Western Nations with their imperialist legacies (Akinjide 2005:18). As noted, China's main interest in economic front lines is securing supply lines for oil and minerals. China has only 2.3 per cent of the world's oil reserves and even less of gas (1%). Meanwhile, it consumes 6.7 million barrels per day, which is the second largest consumption after the United States. China thus relies on Africa and Nigeria for about one third of its oil supplies (Udeala, 2010:71). These two-fold level of interest is what shape and characterize China-Nigeria foreign policy relations. How these two states and their foreign policies react and relate with each other and their correlating implication on the socio-economic base of Nigeria informs the main thrust of this paper.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has since 1971 maintained diplomatic relations with China but it seems that the benefit accruing from the relations have always favoured China. In the area of trade, China exports more to Nigeria resulting in huge trade imbalances to its favour. For instance, China's total imports to Nigeria in 2010 were valued at US\$2.3 billion in contrast to Nigeria's export to China within that same year valued at US\$503.9 million with export of mineral fuel accounting for about 90% of total exports (World Integrated Trade Solution Database, 2017), in Bello (2009). Also, the expansion of Nigeria's economic interactions with China is constrained by the inadequacy of the industrial infrastructure for the promotion of relations (Cisse, 2012). Nigeria's underdeveloped infrastructure is often seen as one of the major impediments to economic development, and successive governments have made concerted efforts like diversification of the economy into agriculture, increasing the power supply to create a favorable environment for business, increasing the working force and increasing diplomatic ties with other nations to increase trade relations to rectify the situation but all these has been deterred by the increasing rate of insurgency in the north, high dependency on oil, corruption of public officials in the government and poor government policy and this has been the main issue why Nigeria has so much depended on the cordial relation with China (Bukarambe, 2015)). In view of this, a critical evaluation of China-Nigeria Foreign policy relation and its socio-economic implication for Nigeria's development is the preoccupation of this study.

2. Conceptual Clarification and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Foreign Policy (Relation)

For this paper, the concepts of foreign relation and foreign policy will be used interchangeably. This is because both concepts presuppose a plethora of interactions between states that is shaped and characterized by entrenched power relation that is segmented yet diffused. As a result, the instrumentality of foreign relation is known to be subsumed in foreign policy and its import in strategizing national interest at a global scale cannot be glossed over. Foreign relation thus, is defined by a network of relationship between two countries in a specified manner that imbue national interest. The reason states interact with each other is simply to achieve mutual political, economic, cultural and technological benefits. This relationship is carried out under the banner of 'foreign policy'. Foreign policy is one of the wheels with which the process of international politics operates. Foreign policy is not separate from the national policy, instead it is a part of it. It consists of national interests that are to be furthered in relation to other states. Almost all the states determine the course of their foreign policies within the limits of their strengths and the realities of the external environment. At all times, states need the active cooperation, even assistance, of other states in the international system to achieve their national objectives. Because of this, a state necessarily has to be in interaction with its external environment. It is the totality of this interaction that encompasses the concept of foreign policy.

The concept of foreign policy has been defined in a plethora of ways. According to Frankel (1967:1), foreign policy consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and others. For Keith and Morrison (1977:12), foreign policy may be defined as a set of explicit objectives with regard to the world beyond

the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives. It implies the perception of a need to influence the behaviour of other states or international organizations.

Modelski (1962:6) defines it as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment.

According to Gilbert and Thom-Otuya (2005:5-6), every foreign policy objective is aimed at achieving national security, promotion of economic interest, maintaining the integrity of the state, protection of national prestige, development of national power and maintenance of world peace.

Modelski, in his definition, has emphasized only those aspects of policy, which aim at the change in the existing behaviour of states, as the primary objectives of foreign policy. In fact, foreign policy includes both the change in the existing behaviour and continuation of the behaviour at different times. It is concerned both with the change and the status quo in so far as they serve the national interests (Modelski, 1962:6).

Foreign policy is that part of national policy which the states adopt in relation to other sovereign states. All these states are the components of the international system. They are sovereign, independent and to a large extent cling to the idea of nationalism. Thus, the sovereignty of the states, their inter-dependence, and their domestic and international circumstances are the three elements which generate and determines a foreign policy direction.

Gibson (1944:9) defines foreign policy as a well-rounded, comprehensive plan, based on knowledge and experience, for conducting the business of government with the rest of the world. It is aimed at promoting and protecting the interests of the nation. This calls for a clear understanding of what, whose interests are and how far we can help to go with the means at our disposal. Anything less than this falls short of being a national foreign policy.

Foreign policy is that type of action taken by a state during interactions with state actors on the global arena in the course of achieving its objectives and goals Akingboye and Ottoh, (2009). Foreign policy is more or less a set of principles that guide a state's pursuit of its objectives in the international environment within the confines of its interactions with other international actors. State actors in the implementation of their foreign policy seek to preserve favourable aspects of the international arena while seeking to alter the undesirable aspects. According to Frankel (1972), the foreign policy of a state is the substance of foreign relations, whereas, diplomacy is viewed as the action of a state towards the external environment with the ultimate aim and objective of achieving specific goals towards the enhancement of national interest, which means that diplomacy is the process by which foreign policy is carried out. Policy is made by different persons and agencies but presumably on major matters in any state, whatever its form of government; it is made at the highest levels, though subject to different kinds of control. Then it is the purpose of diplomacy to provide the machinery and the personnel by which foreign policy is executed. One is substance; the other is method.

It is pertinent therefore, to note that diplomacy is the medium for the achievement of the specific foreign policy objectives of nation-states. Diplomacy is the central technique of foreign policy because other techniques of foreign policy revolve around it. The use of tactics plays a major role in this regard so as not to jeopardize the interests of these states (otherwise Known as National Interest). These interests have to be aggregated in order to cater for such areas as the welfare and prosperity of the citizens, the territorial integrity of the state, the prestige and reputation of the nation, cultivation of friendship, peace, understanding, good neighbourliness and cooperation amongst states and the practice of civilized standards in the conduct of intra and international relations of the nation (Kissinger, 1975).

This paper conceptualizes foreign policy as that complex and dynamic political course that a nation follows in relation to other states. The foreign policy of a nation is more than the sum total of its foreign policies (throughout courses of action to achieve using objectives), for it also includes its commitments, the current forms of its national interests and objectives and the principles of right conduct that it professes within the international system.

2.2. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the concept of a relationship between economic growth and the environment. The term was first used in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (also known as the Brundtland Commission for its chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland). In the commission's report, "Our Common Future," it defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).

Sustainable development is about integration: developing in a way that benefits the widest possible range of sectors, across borders and even between generations. In other words, our decisions should take into consideration potential impact on society, the environment and the economy, while keeping in mind that: our actions will have impacts elsewhere and our actions will have an impact on the future (Strange and Bayley, 2008:23).

The concept of sustainable development has been used to articulate several essential shifts of perspective in how we relate to the world around us and, consequently, how we expect governments to make policies that support that world view.

It might be useful, then, to see the advent of sustainable development as a significant change in how people and governments perceive their activities, their roles and responsibilities: from primary emphasis on increasing material wealth to a more complex, interconnected model of the human development process. Sustainable development is therefore: a conceptual framework: a way of changing the predominant world view to one that is more holistic and balanced; a process: a way of applying the principles of integration across space and time to all decisions; and an end goal: identifying and fixing the specific problems of resource depletion, health and the environment at large (Strange and Bayley, 2008:26).

The above premise is adduced to be a congruent rationale for why states in the international system seek to create a balance between formulated foreign policies the very tenets of sustainable development. While states interact, the motive is advancing national interest which is a reflection of the principles of sustainable development as posited above.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

2.3.1. Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory was developed in the late 1950's by Raul Prebisch, Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, as a reaction to modernization theory. He believed that the economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries (the First world) did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer countries (the Third World). Indeed, economic activity in the richer countries often led to severe economic problems in the poorer countries. As a field, development economics looks not only at traditional economic rubrics, such as GDP or per-capital income, but also looks at things like standard of living, health care, education, and equal rights opportunities.

Dependency theorists (Frank 1976; Sunkel 1979; Furtado 1964; Dos Santos 1970; Emmanuel 1972; Ake 1981; Onimode 1982), argue that the dependence of the South on the North is the main cause of the underdevelopment of the former. They hold that the present economic and socio-political conditions prevailing in the periphery are the result of a historical international process. This development emerged as a global historical phenomenon consequent on the formation, expansion, and consolidation of capitalist system, known as dependent capitalism. At the first level, many countries in the periphery have been incorporated into the world economy since the early days of capitalism. At the second level, many countries have become capitalist economies through incorporation into the world economy. At the third level, the world economy has led to metropolis-satellite chain in which the surplus generated at each level in the periphery is successively drawn off the centre as a result, the periphery is impoverished and the centre is enriched (Jhingon, 1966).

The relevance of the dependency theory and, to a large extent, to this study is that the defining features of the developing countries, which is their dependency and underdeveloped character. This is derived from the unequal manner in which they have been incorporated into the periphery of world capitalism. The relationship between periphery and the centre is sustained and perpetuated through certain structures, agencies and institutions. Since dependency is an organic feature of world capitalism, whenever there is a general crisis it spreads to its peripheries with varying degrees of intensity, depending on the extent of control the capitalists have over the peripheral economies (Mac-Ogonor 1999; Badejo 1990).

As a corollary to the above and according to Olasupo (2015:6), the trend of relations between Nigeria and China, sees China's drive to condition Nigeria's development through imbalance of trade, seemingly harmless loans, poor quality manufactured goods, and lopsided labor relations. Dependency theory is a social science tool of explanation that was predicated on the notion that resources flow from a periphery of poor and underdeveloped states to a core of wealthy states enriching the latter at the expense of the former. Nigeria has continually remained a trade-zone for China's expanding market. The socio-economic implication of this lopsided foreign relationship is the perpetual state of dependency that characterize the economic system in Nigeria.

3. An Historical Overview of China and Nigeria Foreign Policy Relation

Nigeria's first official contact with the People's Republic of China came in 1960 when China was invited to Nigeria's independence celebrations. China's delegation delivered congratulatory messages from Zhou Enlai and the late Vice - Premier, Marshall Chen Yi. In their message, the Chinese leaders acclaimed "the great victory won by the Nigerian people in their struggle against colonialism". The delegation then toured parts of the country before returning to China. Nigeria reciprocated this gesture when, on gaining admission to the United Nations Organization (UNO) later that year, she supported China's membership in the world body. This she did by voting against the anti - China American procedural motion on 8th October 1960 (Owoeye, 1986).

Despite the foregoing development, it was obvious that the government of Prime Minister Tafawa Belewa had no plans then to open diplomatic relations with China or any country of the Eastern bloc. The reason for this is not really far-fetched. At independence, Nigeria political leadership was not only pro-west but also anti-communist. The resultant effect of this was diplomatic isolation between Nigeria and communist or socialist states of which China was one. Moreover, the Belewa regime got power from the colonialists on a platter of gold hence they had no grudge whatsoever against the British or their Western allies. Besides, by education and social disposition, Belewa and members of his government shared world views and ideologies similar to that of the erstwhile colonial masters (Chidi, 2017:128). This is why according to Owoeye (1986), the Chinese posture as a vanguard of the proletarian nations against the bourgeois/imperialist nations made no impression on the conservative regime in Lagos.

However, immediately after the Chinese cultural revolution and her admission into the security council of United nations in 1971, Nigeria and many other African countries responded to these developments by recognizing China as a major world power and accordingly entered into diplomatic relations with her (China) in the spirit of non - alignment. China and Nigeria formally established diplomatic relations on February 10th, 1971. China opened its embassy in Lagos on 6th April, 1971 while Nigeria reciprocated in October of that year. Thus, a mutually, reinforcing and rewarding relationship between both countries began in earnest (Chidi, 2017:128).

Nigeria has since become an important source of oil and petroleum for China's rapidly growing economy and Nigeria is looking to China for help in achieving high economic growth. However, the diplomatic relations between the demographic giants of Asia and Africa produced little of economic consequence. While China was transforming into an

economic power, for Nigeria the 1980s and 1990s were marked by a series of military coups) It should be noted, however, that General Sani Abacha (in power from 1993 to 1998) initiated contact with the Chinese government early in his rule. The Nigerian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1992) It was not until the return of democratic rule in Nigeria that economic relations began to develop in earnest.

Olusegun Obasanjo's election in 1999 coincided with the start of a new Chinese orientation toward Africa in 2000. During Obasanjo's second term (2003-2007), both China's President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Nigeria, and Obasanjo made two official visits to Beijing. Various other ministerial-level visits conducted during this time allowed the two countries to develop and intensify mutual friendship and familiarity. In 2001, the two countries signed agreements on the establishment of a Nigeria trade office in China and a China Investment Development and Trade Promotion Centre in Nigeria. The intergovernmental Nigeria-China Investment Forum was then founded in 2006 (Olasupo, 2015:8).

At the end of 2010 after the death of President Musa Yar'Adua in May, China declared its new plan for a strategic partnership with Nigeria, featuring political equality, mutual trust, economic win-win co-operation and cultural exchange. When Jonathan stood for election in April, 2011, the Lagos newspaper the Punch, reported that 119 tons of electoral materials, including ballot papers, were made in China. The Chinese President sent special envoy and Minister of Railways Cheng Guangzu to attend Jonathan's inauguration, during which they reaffirmed the friendship between the two countries and vowed to increase the involvement of Chinese enterprises in railway and other infrastructural improvements as well as in Nigeria's overall economic development (Olasupo, 2015:9).

In order to build investors' confidence, the two countries signed the following Agreement and MoUs. These are:

- The bilateral trade agreement signed on 27th August, 2001;
- Memorandum of Understanding on Investment Cooperation between the Ministry of Commerce of both countries signed on 28th February, 2006 and
- Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation Agreement between Nigeria and Guandong Xinguang International Group of China on 15th March, 2006.
- Nigeria and China signed Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) in 2001. It was ratified on 31st December, 2002.
- Memorandum of Understanding between Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Asia and Africa International Investment Company on investment in automobile, exhibition centres, construction of industrial zone and Eco-Agriculture zone signed on 11th July, 2013. *Sourced: Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Nigeria, 2014.*

While some scholars admit that both countries depend on each other for the achievement of their goals at the international arena (Ekedegwa, 2010). Others believe that it is triggering dependency for the Nigerian economy (Naid, 2007). China needs the support of Nigeria in the United Nations and Nigeria has supported the return of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China (Ekedegwa, 2010). Equally, China supports Nigeria in her quest to secure a permanent seat in an expanded Security Council of the United Nations

4. Chinese-Nigeria Foreign Policy 2011-2015: Implication for Socio-Economic Development

The period under review is chosen as a consequence of a peak in GDP of 6.9% in 2011 and a recode low of -2.3% in 2016. The period is relevance to the study as the differential in oil prices between the years 2011 – 2015; 2011 – year high -113.39, 2012-109.39, 2013-110.62, 2014 – 107.95, 2015 – 61.42 (<http://www.cie.com> 2019). Again, according to China's official website, (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t230615.htm>), China's Nigeria policy is hinged on a lot of advantageous and mutually agreeable indices. As noted by the government, enhancing solidarity and cooperation with African countries has always been an important component of China's independent foreign policy of peace. China says it would unswervingly carry forward the tradition of China – Nigeria friendship, and proceeding from the fundamental interests of both the Chinese and African people, establish and develop a new type of strategic partnership with Nigeria, featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange (Chidi, 2017:131). As corollary to the above stated foreign policy dynamics between China and Nigeria, Ezirim (2007: 60 – 61), gave four general principles and objectives of China's Nigerian foreign policy. These as follows:

- *Sincerity, Friendship and Equality:* China adheres to the five principles of peaceful coexistence (sincerity, friendship, equality, mutual benefit and common development), respects Nigeria's independent choice of the road of development and supports Nigeria's efforts to grow stronger through unity.
- *Mutual Benefit, Reciprocity and Common Prosperity:* China supports Nigeria's endeavour for economic development and nation building, carries out cooperation in various forms in the economic and social development, and promotes common prosperity of China and Nigeria.
- *Mutual Support and Close Coordination:* China will strengthen cooperation with Nigeria in the UN and other multilateral systems by supporting each other's just demand and reasonable propositions and continue to appeal to the international community to give more attention to questions concerning peace and development in Nigeria.
- *Learning from each other and seeking Common Development:* China and Nigeria will learn from and draw upon each other's experience and cooperation in education, science, culture and health. Supporting Nigeria's efforts to enhance capacity building, China will work together with Nigeria in the exploration of the road of sustainable development.

According to Onuoha (2008: 300 – 301), the basis of China-Nigeria relationship can best be summarized in a speech at the Organization of African Unity, by the former Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, when he announced that: "China

is willing to consolidate and develop a long – term stable cooperation relationship with African countries in the 21st century, under the five principles of peaceful coexistence (principle of sincerity, friendship, equality, mutual benefit and common development)”. He expressed the Chinese people’s sincere and decisive attitude towards deepening their friendship with the African people, and stated that the Chinese government will continue its economic and trade cooperation with Africa on the principles of equality and mutual benefit, diversified forms, efficiency and common development.

On the nature or dimensions of cooperation between the two countries, Chinese Minister Shi Guangsheng has identified four major areas of cooperation during the “Forum on China-Africa Cooperation” launched in 2000. These areas are:

- To promote trade, investment, economic and technical cooperation, while enhancing the scale and level of cooperation.
- To strengthen communication and collaboration in information technology and electronic commerce.
- To intensify dialogue and consultation mechanism between Chinese and African governments, so as to address problems occurring during cooperation, enhance communication, draw upon each other’s experiences and make common progress.
- To consolidate coordination and cooperation in international and regional economic organizations, and endeavour to achieve economic prosperity and development of China and Africa, and safeguarding the interest of developing countries (Onuoha, 2008: 301).

Drawing from the above explication of the Chinese-Nigeria foreign policy relation, Chidi (2017:132) aver that whatever foreign policy relation Nigeria is having with China contemporarily revolves around these cardinal areas. While these dynamic areas of foreign policy relation exist, its socio-economic implication for development cannot be glossed over. These implications as this study will be unveiling span through 2011 to 2015.

As earlier stated, China frames its engagement with Nigeria on mutual benefits, shared values and win-win co-operation. Consequently, between 2011 and 2015, China has invested heavily in Africa; China is Africa’s largest trading partner surpassing traditional partners, Europe and the United States of America (USA). Two-way trade between Africa as a whole and China has grown from US\$10.6 billion in 2011 to more than US\$ 200 billion in 2012 (Taylor, 2012; Moyo, 2014) and is forecast to reach US\$ 300 billion by the end of 2015 (China Daily, 2015). The trend is also the same for China-Nigeria trade, which has seen growth from US\$17.7 billion in 2010 () to US\$ 23.5 billion by first quarter of 2015 (Okafor, 2015). Similarly, levels of Chinese Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Nigeria are the second-highest in Africa after South Africa (Egbula and Zheng, 2011: 6) and by 2010 Nigeria was China’s fourth biggest African trading partner and second largest Chinese export destination in Africa (Egbula and Zheng, 2011: 6).

Again, as stated earlier, Chinese-Nigeria foreign policy relation centres more around trade and investment which has its attendant socio-economic effect on the development of Nigeria. According to Umejei (2015:56), the structure of trade and investment between the two countries is marked by differences in exports; China exports a diversified range of manufactured goods such as machinery, textiles and equipment to Nigeria, while Nigeria’s exports to China are oil and gas products. In 2014, petroleum products and natural resources comprised 57 per cent of Nigeria’s export to China while China’s export to Nigeria comprises majorly of textile materials and machineries. Similarly, China’s textile export to Nigeria jumped by 222 per cent from 2010 to 2014.

The export of cheap Chinese textiles to Nigeria has also adversely affected local textile manufacturers in Nigeria (Eneji et al, 2012: 133), a position recognized by Sanusi Lamido, Nigeria’s former Central Bank Governor (CBN), who argued that Nigeria, with a population of 160 million, spends vast resources importing Chinese consumer goods which would benefit the local economy if they were produced locally (Sanusi, 2013).

In the 1980s, Nigeria had about 175 textile plants with a total of 250,000 employees, but the import of cheap Chinese textiles left only 26 of them in operation as of October 2007, employing only 24 000 people (Obiorah, Kew & Tanko, 2008:280). The collapse of textile manufacturing sector in Nigeria has resulted in closure of many textile companies, accompanied with rising unemployment in the country. Consequently, Kola Jamodu, former president of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) emphasized that the incursion of the Chinese nationals into small and medium enterprises such as retail trading, textiles and electronics is problematic and urged the federal government to call the Chinese to order (Umejei, 2014: 26).

On the other hand, the trade deficit in China-Nigeria trade has been a recurring pattern since Nigeria signed an open-ended economic and technical co-operation with China in 1972 (Ogunsanwo, 2008: 194). Consequently, Nigeria’s trade deficit with China has continued to rise on a disproportionate scale reaching more than 180 per cent from 2012 to 2014. Despite trade imbalance between China and Nigeria, cheap Chinese products continue to meet the needs of many average Nigerian homes that are unable to afford quality products (Obiorah, 2006). Consequently, China is an opportunist when the importation of cheap Chinese textiles and machineries result in the collapse of local companies in Nigeria but it provides for opportunities to the satisfaction of consumer needs in Nigeria (Umejei, 2015:57).

Away, from the above, and besides the traditional bilateral diplomatic co-operation between Nigeria and China, the two nations, in 2012, further established a strategic partnership designed to develop the enabling framework and mechanism through which they would engage more intimately. According to the statistics of the General Administration of Customs of China as cited the Guardian Newspaper of 8th April, 2016, a total bilateral trade volume between China and Nigeria, from 2004 to 2015, recorded at 101 billion dollars. The major commodities imported by Nigeria from China are electrical machinery equipment, machinery and mechanical appliances and vehicles. The major commodities exported by Nigeria to China are mineral resources; wood, agricultural produce such as cotton, palm oil seeds and cashew nuts, among

others. A large number of projects have been completed or are being implemented in Nigeria with Chinese funds, advanced technologies and services. Those projects create more than 20,000 jobs for local people.

While the above cooperation between both countries stands, scholars, commentators and pundits of international relations have been critical in their evaluation of the character and socio-economic implication such relationship has on the development of Nigeria.

4.1. A Critical Evaluation of China-Nigeria Foreign Policy Relation and its Socio-economic Implication for Development from 2011-2015

Peter (2013:34) in his study titled "Trade gap between Nigeria and China", identified a pitfall in which Nigeria has to watch very closely in her seemingly win-win relationship with China. There is a chronic and growing trade imbalance between the two countries in favour of China. Nigeria should seek to reduce this vast trade imbalance by increasing its non-oil exports to China. China's exports to Nigeria are currently estimated at 3 billion US dollars, while Nigeria's exports are estimated at only 1 billion US dollars, a trade gap of 2 billion US dollars. This trade deficit, a concern to Nigerian leaders and its private sector, is being discussed by the Nigeria-China Joint Planning Commission.

Nigeria should be wary of being used by China as a dumping ground for cheap Chinese exports, particularly textiles, as this will increase the existing trade imbalance between the two countries in favour of China and lead to more job losses for Nigeria. Nigeria trade Unions have been reported as blaming Chinese imports for the loss of 350,000 Nigerian manufacturing jobs, chiefly in the textile sector (John:2012). It is true that China's relationship with Nigeria has helped the country infrastructure-wise, but it is clearly evident that the relationship has been purely and majorly a mercantile transaction between business elites and politicians. There is no doubt that the terms of trade still unfortunately favoured China, whose exports represented 73% of the bilateral trade total in 2012 and 68% of the total in 2014 (Agumabah (2014:35).

In much of Nigeria, likewise Africa in general, the Chinese have set up huge operations. They have also built infrastructure. But, with exceptions, they have done so using equipment and labour imported from home (China), without transferring skills to local communities. So, China takes our primary goods and sells us manufactured ones, which means that this relationship equips the Chinese with more technological skills and left us with none. This was also the essence of colonialism. The British came to Nigeria to secure raw materials and markets. Nigeria is now willingly opening itself up to a new form of imperialism (Sino-imperialism) (Agumabah (2014:40).

The days of the Non-Aligned Movement that united us after colonialism are over and gone. China is no longer a fellow underdeveloped economy-let us not deceive ourselves-it is the world's second biggest economy capable of the same forms of exploitation as the West. With the trend of relationship between the two countries at present, we can confidently say that China is rather a significant contributor to Nigeria's de-industrialization and underdevelopment. This Nigeria's love of China is founded on a vision of seeing the country as a saviour, a partner, a fellow third non-aligned member and a model. We cannot blame the Chinese, or any other foreign power for our country's problems. We must blame ourselves for our fuel subsidy scams, for oil theft in the Niger Delta, for our neglect of agriculture and education, and for our limitless tolerance of incompetence. That said, it is a critical precondition for development in Nigeria and the rest of Africa that we remove the rose-tinted glasses through which we view China (Umujei, 2015:47).

Chinese companies are known for being "closed" that is they hardly employ local experts and the conditions of employment of Nigerians in Chinese firms do not seem to conform to either the Nigerian Labour Law or the International Labour Organization. As a corollary, Chinese firms have a knack of maltreating their workers, which would work against the capacity building of employees. China is involved in Human rights violation against Nigeria. Many Nigerians are in Chinese prisons or detention camps charged with offences like drug and fraud as well as "minor" immigration breaches. In July 2010, a group of Africans demonstrated in Guangzhou against the killing of a Nigerian who died from the assault of Chinese law enforcement officers (Iortin, 2011).

Finally, the issue of the huge Chinese loan and investment (18 billion US Dollars (Daily Trust, 2013)) which Nigeria owes mean that the country has precariously mortgaged both her present and future into the clutch of the Chinese. The socio-economic implication for development of this lopsided relationship is clear in the very fact that the citizens who are at the receiving end, will have to independently create other alternatives to building a viable socio-economic base. There is no doubt that Nigeria and China bilateral relationship will be of immense benefit to both countries if well pursued. Using the dependency theory, Agumabah (2014:68) argued that the imbalances in Nigeria-China relation especially in the area of trade must be corrected so as to match the rhetoric win-win situation by which the contact between the countries are being described.

4.2. Challenges Facing China-Nigeria Foreign Policy Relation

China-Nigeria foreign policy relation is mostly shaped or characterized by economic relation. According to Udeala (2013:76), the expansion of Nigeria's economic interactions with China is constrained by a number of factors. These include the imbalance in the structure of level of their trade, the inadequacy of the industrial infrastructure for promotion of relations, the incidence of flooding of the Nigerian market with substandard goods from China and inability to implement various bilateral agreements between the two countries among other problems.

The trade between Nigeria and China has largely followed a classical pattern of trade disequilibrium between the developing and the developed economies (Jumbo 2007:56). The structure of trade between Nigeria and China reflects the difference in the level of development of the two partners as well as high degree of complementarities that exist between their economies. Since the establishment of bilateral diplomatic links, there has been a substantial expansion in Chinese

exports, essentially conditioned by the demands of the economy and requirements to keep up economic growth. In consonance with this need, China devised economic policy strategies to penetrate the markets of the South. China's rapidly expanding industrial base has provided impetus for its expanded economic penetration of Nigeria, a relatively large market with immense purchasing power (Udeala, 2013:77).

Over the years, Nigeria has served as market outlet for Chinese products. The immediate problem posed for Nigeria is the negative role which the big Chinese companies have played and are likely to continue to play in Nigeria and Africa, and its consequences for the fulfilment of the aspirations and goals of the Nigerian people. Nigeria's bilateral trade relationship with China after several years shows that the most discernible pattern in this bilateral relationship is still lopsided. It is observed from the trade data that this unequal economic relation is in great disequilibrium and to China's advantage. It means that despite the increase in trade volume between the two countries, the bilateral economic relations have favoured China, thus creating a feeling of lopsided distribution of the benefits from the bilateral trade (Bukarambe 2005, Olisa, 2006, Micheal, 2006) cited in (Udeala, 2013:78).

Another area of concern to African scholars, commentators and human rights communities is China's value for human rights and democratic principles. It is now well known that China does not have a good human rights records, and this is why she does business with many African nations, irrespective of their poor human rights, in the name of "non - interference in domestic affairs". Chinese leaders say human rights are relative and each country should be allowed their own definition of them, and timetable for reaching them. The Chinese perspective is that, unlike the United States and European countries, they do not mix business with politics. In fact, China has argued that attempts by foreign nations to discuss democracy and human rights, violates the rights of a sovereign country. It is in the light of the above that many experts are worried about Chinese interest and motivation in Nigeria. Is it part of the continuation of ideological warfare, active neo-colonization of Nigeria, or do they see Nigeria and other African countries as an avenue to sell their surplus goods? (Onuoha, 2008: 308) in (Chidi, 2017:137).

On the hand, and on its part, China also has some complains over doing business in Nigeria. One, the problem of insecurity arising from armed robbery and pronounced social proclivity towards violence and lawlessness. And two, the high cost of operations due to inadequate power and water supply; the bad state of telecommunications and infrastructure; poor police work such as when reported crime investigations do not yield any results and corruption. These are however familiar views of typical investors seeking a share of the local market in a weak recipient state (Bukarambe, 2005) in (Chidi, 2017:138).

5. Conclusion

The paper examined China-Nigeria foreign policy relation. China's relations and increasing presence in Nigeria has spurred speculation and debate about the nature of the emerging partnership model. This has to do with China's seemingly high-pitched quest to dominate the Nigerian market and economy. Accordingly, scholars and commentators alike have expressed various opinions on the issue. While some view the relationship as beneficial to China and detrimental to the development of Nigeria, others see it as the spring post or opportunity that Nigeria needs to develop and compete favourably in the world market.

Contemporarily, there exist a synergy between Chinese and Ghana to improve power supply in Ghana while they exchange technology for oil in Angola. All these are the leveraging in question. According to Chidi (2017:132), Nigeria does not have this kind of arrangement or understanding with China. The country therefore, need and should have it. It is in this direction that Nigeria needs to develop a comprehensive and long - term development strategy that will effectively leverage on the Chinese success and by so doing create a plan for sustainable development that resonates with Nigerian citizens. Our position therefore remains that for Nigeria to being to shake off underdevelopment and poverty, it must do more than sell oil to China and the world or depend on them for trade guarantees.

6. Recommendations

Drawing from the critical evaluation provided by the paper, it puts forward the following recommendations.

- There is a need for the two countries to coordinate their foreign policy approaches in order to facilitate international response to pressing international economic issues such as globalization, regional integration and global economic crisis. There is need for continuous exchange of visits at the highest level to be strengthened.
- It is very important that Nigeria's relationship with China should be structured on profound understanding that her fundamental national objectives are long-term. Our policy now and in the near future, must be informed by our ultimate national interests. Nigeria has the responsibility to protect its economy from domination by foreign enterprises which are interested not in the local economies, but in the economies of the advance world.
- An effective means to tackle trade imbalances between both countries is to introduce a cooperative mechanism that would enable Nigeria increase its export of manufactured goods to China. In addition, Chinese companies in Nigeria should diversify their economic activities. Rather than restricting themselves to merely importing finished goods from China for sale in Nigeria, they should invest in the productive sectors of the Nigerian economy and thereby gain from the export of such Nigerian- made goods.
- Nigeria should learn from Chinese socio-economic transformation. As Nigeria rallies to industrialize its economy, it will not be out of place if it copies the Chinese model that is relevant to our local environment. But more than anything else, the Nigerian government should encourage Nigerians to effectively adopt technology

that has kept China at the cutting-edge of global economy. For example, Nigeria has a lot to gain from having access to China's low-cost technologies, because they are easily exportable and transferrable because of their adaptability and simplicity.

- There is the need for the Nigerian government to create the enabling environment by providing the needed infrastructure such as transport, telecommunication, electricity etc. as this will encourage the Chinese investors to diversify.
- There is the need for the Nigerian government to get a firm commitment from to the Chinese government to stop the importation of substandard products. But rather the need for transfer of technological skills to reinvigorate business and economic advancement from the Chinese productive industry to Nigerian.

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