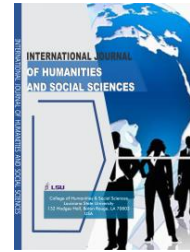


Chinese Economic Imperialism in Nigeria: An Analytical Overview

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Abstract

This paper is an analytical overview of Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria. The Chinese economic imperialism refers to the practice where China exerts gratuitous control over Nigeria's economy through its bilateral trade and investment relations, loans for infrastructural projects, and covert manipulations of Nigeria economic policies. Overtime, the Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria has promoted symmetrical relations between the two countries. This has been facilitated by the Chinese outreaching industrial base, huge market potential and expanding large corporate organizations that are exploiting Nigeria natural resources, leading to significant economic benefits for the China and stunting Nigeria development. The Paper argues that Chinese economic imperialism have gained significant leverage over Nigeria and has placed the country in perpetual powerlessness to check Chinese exploitations. The Paper finds that China's economic imperialism has impacted negatively on Nigeria economic development; that massive importation of Chinese goods and services has hindered the country's economic development; that Chinese massive loan has entrenched the country into deep economic crisis. The study recommendations: radical reorganization of the Nigeria external economic and financial relations to give local entrepreneurs access to credit facilities to procure industrial equipments to increase production capacity; to properly fund and restructure regulatory agencies to effectively check importation of substandard Chinese goods and services into the country; Nigeria government should encourage local manufacturing firms by subsidizing goods and services Chinese firms has comparative advantage. The Paper maintains that these measures would enable Nigeria to checkmate the destructive impacts of China's economic imperialism on the country.

Keywords: Asymmetric Relations, Chinese Economic Imperialism, Imperialism, Multinational Corporations, and Neocolonialism, Bilateral Trade and Investment Relations.

I. Introduction

Background of the Study

Nigeria has been of strategic importance to global economic powers and a centre of fierce rivalries among contending imperialist powers owing to its rich mineral resources. The deposit of strategic minerals and natural resources in the Nigeria define its potentials and strategic value in the global power matrix (Ojinnaka, 2016). Though China is a late arrival in the quest for world domination, the changing dynamics of the world economy as a result of globalization and the emergent of China as world economic super power made the Chinese one of the contending imperial powers in world geo-economic politics (Ojinnaka, 2016). China as a leading player in the world economy, and one of the largest providers of investment capital in the world, with unequalled foreign reserve and phenomenal economic growth rate has great economic influence in Nigeria.

Nigeria official relations with the People's Republic of China date back to February 10, 1971. Shortly after the Nigeria-Biafra war in 1970, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) formally established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since then, the two countries have maintained an ever-increasing trade and investment relations (Ojinnaka, et al, 2025). Since the 20th century, China and African countries have had very robust relations. Almost all West African countries have diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (Chibundu, 2000:3). However, the impacts of the Chinese relations with these West African countries including Nigeria has been consistently asymmetry and exploitative. The developments and innovations in science and

technology, particularly, in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ushered in fundamental changes in the international system and enhanced dissemination of information worldwide, while ensuring effective conduct of international relations across the globe, it has enhanced China's assertiveness in the international system, and weakened Nigeria position in the in the international division of labour and interdependent world (Ojinnaka, 2016; Asimiea and Ikunga, 2018).

This unprecedented developments and innovations in science and technology give credence to the large scale trade and investment activities between Nigeria and China, which has been strengthened by several bilateral and multilateral agreements, Memorandum of Understanding and technical co operations in the areas of construction industry, oil and gas, power and railway rejuvenation and other public infrastructures (Ojinnaka et al,2025).Nevertheless, the imperialist dimension of Chinese economic activities in Nigeria, and impacts of its unequal relations with Nigeria have negatively impacted on Nigeria sovereignty and constrained its development.

Needless to say, Chinese multidimensional engagements in the Nigeria are designed to get access Nigeria natural resources and export market. Fundamentally, Chinese activities in Nigeria are rooted on economic diplomacy.

Ojinnaka (2016:62) expressively outlined the following as the basis of Chinese economic imperialist calculations in Nigeria:

China has strategic and imperialist interests in Nigeria's rich minerals and natural resources, especially in oil and gas, and solid minerals. China has in the recent times been one of the largest importers of oil and gas in the world. This is to guarantee its future sources of supply.

China is investing heavily in the Nigeria oil sector. Because of its increasing energy requirements for industrial development, China has placed high priority on maintaining strong ties with Nigeria through investments and high level visits.

Nigeria is presently China's largest market in Africa. Though the Nigeria market is hitherto dominated by the Western nations, China has currently made a serious inroad into the Nigeria market. An estimated 25% of China's total oil requirement comes from Africa (The Economist, 2009), and more than half of this comes from Nigeria, and China has placed high priority on maintaining strong ties with its energy suppliers through investment, high level visits and strict policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of their oil suppliers.

Investment in Nigeria, Nigeria also provides huge market for Chinese goods. Also China see in Nigeria a trusted and secure ally for political support in international issues, for example, support for China's One China policy and isolation of Taiwan have been condition for attracting Chinese aid and investment.

China proactive engagement on peace and security in the Nigeria is to enable China to maintain peaceful and stable environment to protect its imperialist economic interests in the country to ensure its continued exploitation of minerals and natural resources of the country.

However, because of several political, economic and institutional weaknesses resulting from lack of domestic capacity, Nigeria have not fully gained from her bilateral trade and investment relations with China. Given the disparities and unequal capacities between the two countries, particularly in the areas of Information and Communication Technology, availability of investment capital and managerial expertise, China's economic, financial and trade relations have greatly undermined Nigeria economic development (Ojinnaka, 2016:62).

The Chinese rise as an economic power with Special Drawing Right (SDR) in International Monetary Fund (IMF) enhanced its full participation in the globalization process and in formulating policies that shape the content of globalization and to advance its interests in terms of its economic relations with Nigeria. Given the Chinese obvious advantage in its unequal relations with Nigeria, Nigeria is marginalized as the policies of trade liberalization, currency devaluation and other measures fostered on her by pro-western institutions of IMF, WTO and World Bank, results in underutilization of her productive capacity (Ojinnaka.2016). This contributed to the destruction of Nigeria local manufacturing firms, as its increasing dependence on imported capital and consumers goods and services from China has left their domestic economic sectors comatose (Taijudeen, 2013).

This asymmetry relations and increasing disparity between the two countries has been engendered by the impacts of globalization on Nigeria. One of the major impacts of Chinese economic imperialism on the Nigeria domestic economy is the increasing demand of the Chinese cheap goods by Nigerians. As a result, the trade balance between them has worsened, as their imports from China increased, while demand for locally produced goods falls because they are buying cheaper, but substandard Chinese goods (Ojinnaka , 2016:42). The trade index between the two countries shows that the volume of Nigeria's imports from China is far greater than China imports from Nigeria. This trade imbalance further deteriorated the nation's economy and made her subservient to Chinas trade and economic imperialism Consequently, as it were, Nigeria become a dumping ground for Chinese substandard goods and the competition from Chinese firms undermine the capacity of the Nigeria local manufacturing firms for competitive business environment (Tajudeen, 2013).

Though there have been increase in trade between Nigeria and China, the trade imbalance have been in favor of china because China exports more goods and services than imports from Nigeria, while Nigeria relies more on the importation of Chinese goods and services for domestic consumption. This calls for examine the structure of trade and economic relations between China and Nigeria. The constraints facing Nigeria exports to China and the constraints being faced by their entrepreneurs in responding to available international trade opportunities, (Tajudeen, 2013) is critical to responsive trade and economic relations between the two countries.

The impacts of this unhealthy Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria have been more pronounced since the era of globalization. And the current structure of the world economy which makes for asymmetry relations has reinforced Chinese economic imperialism in the country and has been a source of major concern among scholars, Policy makers and strategic economic thinkers; hence it is the focus of this study.

The critical factor is that the Nigeria subservient economic status has made it possible for China's economic might to have imperial stranglehold on the country, a situation that makes it possible for China to negotiate deals that take advantage of the Nigeria's weaknesses, and allow China to indulge in unsustainable environmental practices and displace the locals from their jobs (Ojinnaka, 2016).

Equally, the evolution, implications, and sustainability of Chinese loans to Nigeria have been a source of curious attention. For over two decades, China emerged as one of Nigeria's most significant bilateral creditors, providing concessional loans primarily for infrastructure development in sectors such as transportation, energy, and telecommunications (Ahmed & Osasenaga ,2025). However, the Chinese loan has led to an increased debt burden, raising concerns about fiscal sustainability, debt servicing capacity, and economic sovereignty (Ahmed & Osasenaga, 2025). The processes, terms, and conditions of Chinese loans and evaluates and its economic impacts, transparency, and risks of Nigeria dependency on China as source of project financing has worsened the nation's economic condition. This is because of the growing debt servicing obligations, coupled with a lack of transparency and over-reliance on external financing, poses challenges to Nigeria's long-term financial stability (Ahmed & Osasenaga, 2025) and underscores the need for policy strategies that balance the benefits of international financing with the imperatives of economic sovereignty and sustainable development (Ahmed & Osasenaga, 2025).

In spite of these contending issues and the professed concerns of Nigerians, Chinese imperialist economic activities in Nigeria has continued and its growing assertiveness in the country has made scholar and critical thinkers to conceptualize China's involvement in the country as imperialistic and overbearing. Indeed, the Chinese Nigeria policy, as part of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) foreign policy of the "Going Global Strategy", poses some serious questions about the role of China as a rising global power and its impacts on the current international system. The questions whether China is a revisionist power or a development partner to Nigeria needs answer (Chen 2016, p. 101; Reeves 2018; p. 990).

In reality, the activities of Chinese economic imperialism has weakened Nigeria's economic base, as her recent policies of rapid liberalization and the her recent currency swap deal with China has led to serious crisis, and decelerated the country's economic development, and make her unable to

face the challenges arising from its relations with China in the context of globalization (Ojinnaka, et al, 2025). This has manifested in the fast growing gap between the two countries and in the large differences in the distribution of gains and losses of the process of their bilateral trade and investment relation, indeed, globalization (Khor, 2001:10).

Globalization as an agent of economic imperialism is a subject of the imbalance in the Nigeria- China asymmetry bilateral trade and investment relation, a process has made China to continue to gain in term of its trade and investment relations with Nigeria (Ojinnaka, 2016:87). Nigerian has been drastically weakened due to weak social infrastructures, absence of domestic economic capacity, low commodity prices, debt crisis and burden of debt servicing, and major decline in terms of trade as well as gross economic mismanagement (Ojinnaka, 2016:87). The absence of these prime conditions for economic development as engineered by Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria brought great harm on the Nigeria economy and made the country ill-equipped to fully benefit from its engagements with China and other technologically developed and industrialized countries of the world (Ojinnaka, 2016:182).

II. Statement of the Problem

The Chinese renewed engagement in Nigeria, its growing assertiveness on the global stage has gained polarizing attention among Nigerian scholars and critiques who conceptualizes China's involvement in the country as imperialistic and overbearing. Since the era of globalization, particularly about three decades ago, China and Nigeria witnessed very robust and intense economic and diplomatic relations with outreaching and intense bilateral engagements in the areas of trade, scientific, cultural, technological, investment and education. All these activities have gone a long way to promote better understanding and provide way forward for the two sides to forge closer ties (Chidi, 2009).

Nevertheless, China have subtly carried out its economic imperialism activities in Nigeria and has significant alter the power dynamics between her and Nigeria without the overt use of military force, more due to erosive power of globalization which is an agent of economic imperialism. This has raised ethical and moral concerns about the exploitation of weaker nations and the role of powerful countries and corporations in perpetuating inequality on a global scale (Quickconomics, 2024). The direct result is that Chinese economic imperialism has led to Nigeria loss of sovereignty, as its economic policies and practices are been dictated by external entities like china which prioritizes its interests over the welfare of the Nigeria local population (Ojinnaka, 2016; Quickconomics, 2024).

Nigeria is blessed with both human and mineral resources, good arable land crisscrossed by rivers that flow directly into the Atlantic Ocean (Nkwor and Adiele, 2018). All these confirm Nigeria's potentials for socio-economic development. However, since Nigeria's political independence in 1960, her frantic search for a viable political economy, a sustainable national development that is economic oriented has been quite unachievable due to negligence of the education sector which is one of the critical sectors for development. Nigeria education sector has been unable to address the basic issues that are vital for her economic development (Ojinnaka, 2016:120). Though oil is the commanding height of the economy, and Nigeria relies heavily on Oil as its main source of foreign exchange earnings and government revenues, Oil-rich Nigeria has been shackled by inadequate power supply, lack of infrastructure, Legislative and executive corruption, delays in the passage of legislative bills, compromised judiciary, a slow and inefficient judicial system, restrictive trade policies, an inconsistent regulatory environment, and unreliable conflict resolution mechanism and insecurity (Ojinnaka,2016; Nkwor and Adiele, 2018).

However, in the face of these institutional weaknesses and Nigeria's incapacities, the implications of Chinese imperialist economic activities and its attendant inequality are profound. Chinese economic imperialism has exacerbated poverty, hindered Nigeria economic development, and lead to social unrest within the Nigeria nations. The surge in Sino economic activities in Nigeria, the Nigeria's increasing imports from China without corresponding increase in Nigeria's exports to China has made the country a dumping ground for Chinese goods and resulted in trade deficit against the country. Though Nigeria is currently China's largest trade partner in Africa, the negative impact of

Chinese unhealthy economic imperialist activities in the country, does not only undermine the Nigeria local manufacturing firms, but has resulted in underutilization of the country's productive capacity. The unfair trade practices by Chinese imperialist firms are a threat to the existence and operations of Nigeria local firms.

Consequently, as it is, the greatest challenge currently facing Nigeria economic development in terms of China's economic imperialism in Nigeria is the (massive) importations of substandard Chinese goods into the country. In addition to the non-competitiveness of Nigeria made goods, lack of stable power supply and lack of credit facilities to procure implements and industrial machines, multiple taxations among others are the factors that have made it difficult to protect local firms from ungodly and imperialistic competitions with Chinese firms, whose products are highly subsidized by their home government (Tajudeen, 2013).

In addition, the imperialist nature of the People's Republic of China, particularly in its foreign policies towards the Africa, indeed, Nigeria demonstrates some form of imperialist tendencies with hegemonic undertones. And this might hurt the Nigeria economic interests in the long-run, due to the ideological, political and economic underpinnings of China's African Policy (Chan, 2018), which calls for a cautious approach in understanding Chinese foreign policy in Africa as a whole, and its element in Nigeria (Ojinnaka, 2016).

In the same vein, recent decision of the Chinese government to push used vehicles to the Nigeria market as a strategy to shore up its income from automobile industry will not only kill local auto industry (at this time the local auto makers are still battling with the influx of used European and American auto brands), but would also retard the little progress made in the establishment of local auto policies in the country. The enacted Nigeria national auto policy by the former President Good Luck administration (Punch, 2019), has been under pressure by Chinese competitive economic imperialism. The Chinese policy of using the country as a dumping ground for all types of goods and services is imperialistic and neo-colonial in intent, and can cripple the Nigeria economy with massive job losses, (Ojinnaka, 2016), while helping the Chinese economy to grow and generate employment for their people and increase their Gross Domestic Product (Olawale, 2019). This is indeed an imperialist calculation of the Chinese government to dominate the Nigeria economy.

According to Ojinnaka (2016;64) available statistical data shows that for over 20 year the Nigeria has lost over \$45 billion (USD) as a result of undue Chinese economic influence and unfair trade and investment practices. And Sino-Nigeria bilateral trade and investment relations is a reflection of Master-servant relations, the growing Chinese imperialist economic influence in Nigeria, have had crippling impacts on the nation's economic development, as the phenomenal increase of Chinese large corporate organizations and their penetrating influence has the potential of wiping out local industrial enterprises in the country.

Against the background of the foregoing, China's economic imperialism in Nigeria has been viewed through three dimensions of thought: as a development partner, an economic competitor or as an imperialist power (Alden 2007, pp. 5-6). The critical issue is whether China represents a threat or an opportunity for the Nigeria (Ojinnaka, 2016; 223; Balasubramanyam 2015, 25).

In this light, this paper argues that this polarizing debate on China as an imperialist economic power or as an indisputable development partner, points to the growing uncertainty about China's rise as a great economic power and its implications for Nigeria and other developing countries that has bilateral trade and investment relations with them.

In the foreign policy circle, the pursuit of national interest within the framework of change and continuity is the hallmark of foreign policy making and derivation (Akinteriwa, 2004). But the issues are to what extent has Chinese imperialist economic influence undermined Nigeria's economic development? Again, why have the relevant regulatory authorities in Nigeria been unable to regulate the operations of Chinese firms? Nevertheless, our ability to address these questions will enable us to appreciate the impact of Chinese economic imperialism on Nigeria.

Thus, with the conceptual review of imperialism and the Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria, the paper intends to achieve the following objectives: to examine the extent Chinese economic imperialism has undermined Nigeria economic development, to examine the extent the Chinese trade and investment relations with Nigeria has led to the asymmetrical economic relations.

This will enable us to understand the extent China's imperialist economic activities have impacted on Nigeria economic development. The analysis, evaluation and understanding of the mechanisms and impacts of Chinese economic imperialism on Nigeria are crucial for promoting fair economic practices, sustaining long-term development, and fostering equitable relationships between the two countries (Quickconomics, 2024).

III. Conceptual Review

Conceptualizing Imperialism

Roy (2018) in his study "Imperialism, the 'old' and the 'new'," :The changing face of imperialism" explains that imperialism is a broad term, with "diverse theories" including: Imperialism conceived as intrinsic to systemic necessity of realizing unconsumed surplus at the core; imperialism as modes of reproducing unequal exchange; imperialism as territorial expansion for cheap resources, markets or avenues to invest where the rates of profit are relatively higher; imperialism as the political superstructure of monopoly capital and expanding finance, and also as an outcome of a terminal phase of capitalist cycle. Roy notes there is no single theory of imperialism which is applicable for all times in the post-competitive phase of capitalism, nor do we find an abstract rationale to favour one theory over the other.

In the same vein, Sophie Raine of Lancaster University defined imperialism as the domination of another country through either territorial acquisition, or by gaining economic and political power. Sophie states that the word imperialism is often used interchangeably with the term "colonialism," however the two are not synonymous (Sophie, 2024). Put simply, colonialism refers to the acquisition of another country (usually by force) and the economic exploitation of its resources, while imperialism is often achieved through colonization (Sophie, 2024).

Ojinnaka (2016) assert that imperialism is a policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonization, use of military force, economic subjugation, asymmetry relation or other subtle means. He notes that the struggle against imperialism is historical. Accordingly, Ojinnaka states that imperialism is a conscious policy of a nation that seeks to control and exploit the resources of other nations, mostly, the underdeveloped or developing nations, to its own advantage. The scholar argues that an imperialist country often has economic motives for access to resources in foreign lands. He posits that examples abound in history of countries that have either in the past or at the contemporary times, consciously adopted imperialism as a state policy. Ojinnaka argues that countries of Western Europe, United States of America, Japan, Russia and China, Korea, Ancient Greece Empire etc have at one time in history practiced imperialism as an officially state policy.

Ojinnaka (2016) contends that neocolonialism is a logical outcome of imperialism, which takes place when a nation is said to be independent but in reality, its policies, and economy are controlled by an external powers. The scholar argues that a state under the influence of imperialism is a satellite state, tactically controlled by an imperialist power, like the Soviet Union did to its satellite states in Eastern Europe during the Cold War period, the present day French to its former colonies in West Africa and elsewhere, Ojinnaka maintains that a state under the influence of imperialism is a dependent state, whereby its economic, socio-cultural and political development is influenced and conditioned by an imperialist power in a manner that makes the country incapable of auto-centric development .Example of this is the contemporary French engagement in the Francophone West African states. The scholar notes that dependency, underdevelopment, weak institutions, inordinate foreign influence, wide spread poverty, corrupt political leadership, political instability and policy inconsistency are basic characteristics of a country under imperialist influence, while their relations with the imperial power are exploitative, asymmetry, and hegemonic tendencies tinted in favour of the imperial powers.

John. A. Hobson, as a Eurocentric scholar in his book 'Imperialism: A Study provided historical trend of Western imperialism and characterized it into two categories based on two distinct time periods: old imperialism (1450–1650) and new imperialism (1870–1919). Hobson contends that apart from Europeans, specifically British imperialism; there have been imperialist nations outside of Europe, such as the US and Japan. Hobson maintains that Old imperialism is characterized by European trade agreements and the establishment of colonies in the Americas (known as "the New

World”), India, the East Indies, and South Africa. From the 1400s, new trade routes were established with the hopes of discovering new lands as well as resources. The scholar states that the aims of the early form of imperialism can be summed up in three words: gold, glory, God. He argued that the desire for economic prosperity, international renown, and the religious conversion of colonized countries is a commonality between old and new imperialism. He asserts that imperialism and colonialism began with Christopher Columbus’ “discovery” of the Americas, referred to as the “New World” and subsequent brutalization and enslavement of its people, in 1492 (Hobson, 2018).

However, Hobson (2018), Caliendo and McIlwain (2010), and Perlego (2024). Contends that imperialism has followed the same trend in history its development. Perlego (2024) states that this view has been criticized as a Eurocentric conception that assumes no important global developments existed before Christopher Columbus’ “discovery” of the Americas. This view is deliberate erasure of the contribution of non-European empires and civilizations to such developments, and emphasizes the rise of unique, and implicitly superior, modern European/Western societies (Perlego, 2024). Perlego assert that before the eighteenth century, many parts of Asia and the Middle East were more advanced than Western Europe, in Africa powerful Empires prevented European penetration and, in the Americas, the Spanish conquistadors encountered the Inca and Aztec Empires (Caliendo and McIlwain, 2010).

Sam King in his book ‘Imperialism and the development myth: How rich countries dominate in the twenty-first century’. gave historical approach to the understanding of the ideology of nineteenth-century imperialism, which still underpins the Western exploitation in poorer nations today, which are denigrated as “failed states inhabited by inferior or threatening peoples and regimes” (King, 2021). King contends that the belief in the inferiority and failed state status of the poor exploited countries is propagated by the West led by American and neoliberal political allies, which anchors on the argument that the only way for low-income nations to compete is to “catch up” with First World economic and industrial progress.

King states that because capitalism is exploitative and undermines the development of the developing countries, “there is no possibility of Third World catch-up under capitalism” (King, 2021). King argues that there are, however, some possibilities that imperialist oppression around the globe can be stopped, not through working within the capitalist system, but through a worker’s revolt. King further states that: Though there is every possibility that imperialist oppression and exploitation of the great mass of humanity living in the Third World – and also in the First World – may be capitalism’s undoing. He notes that imperialism in the twenty-first century is expanding the army of its own gravediggers, the world working class, far beyond any it could have previously imagined. The scholar forcefully states that neocolonialism is imperialism which fosters the continued oppression of developing nations through economic political and military dominance. Exploring the presence of imperialism in the modern world under capitalism, Sam King argues that despite carrying out a growing part of the world’s work, the poor countries are not breaking free of imperialist domination. Nor do any of them threaten to topple, replace, outcompete or overtake the imperialist states.

Hobson made critique of imperialism on economic and moral grounds. He contends that imperialist powers and their expansionism is a constant menace to peace and stability of the international system. Hobson posits that by furnishing continual temptations to further aggression upon lands occupied by lower races and by embroiling our nation with other nations of rival imperial ambitions it is a threat to international peace and stability (Hobson, 2018). However, Hobson’s racist remark in the use of the word ‘lands occupied by lower races’ underscore that imperialist mentality, white supremacy and unfounded belief that one race is superior to the other brought moral and humanistic questions over his intellectual contributions. Notwithstanding this racist imperial inclination, Hobson is against colonization irrespective of its enormous economic benefit to the metropolitan state. Hobson argues that in the practices of imperialism, the spirit, the policy, and the methods of Imperialism are hostile to the institutions of popular self-government, favoring forms of political tyranny and social authority which are the deadly enemies of effective liberty and equality. Hence, according to Hobson (2018) imperialism undermines liberalism which is root basis of western democracy. He maintains that the military and logistic cost of colonialism was a waste of money

needed for “internal reforms and for the cultivation of the arts of material and intellectual progress at home.

In the same vein, John Bright, a British anti-colonial element as cited in Porter (2007) articulated criticism of imperialism’s economic impact on Britain. Bright in a speech in 1858 posits, I am inclined to think that, with the exception of Australia, there is not a single dependency of the Crown which, if we come to reckon what it has cost in war and protection, would not be found to be a positive loss to the people of this country (Bright as cited in Porter, 2007).

Kolesnikov (2023), and Melvin (2022) states that for over two decades Russia under Vladimir Putin has been described as neo-imperialist and adopted imperialist ideology of expansionism. Noting that Russia occupies parts of neighboring countries and has engaged in expansionism, Mankoff, Jeffrey in an article paper "The War in Ukraine and Eurasia's New Imperial Moment" published in the Washington Quarterly highlights that in 2008 Russian invaded Georgia, in 2014 annexation of Crimea, and in 2022 Russian invaded Ukraine and annexation of its southeast territories. Mankoff contends that Russia has also established domination over Belarus (Mankoff 2022).

Oksamytna (2023) in his paper on Russia imperialism, supremacy and Russia invasion of Ukraine notes that Russians has asserted Russian "supremacy" and that "the behavior of Russian forces in Ukraine bore all hallmarks of imperial violence. Writing on the new face of modern imperialism in Russia, Grigas (2016) and Hirsh (2022) contends that the Putin regime has revived imperial ideas and concepts such as the “Russian world” and the ideology of Eurasianism. Grigas argues that as part of its imperial design, Russia has used misinformation and disinformation, and Russian Diaspora to undermine the sovereignty of other countries. Furthermore, Doboš et al (2024) accused Russia of neo-colonialism in Africa through the machinery activities of the Wagner Machinery Group and African Corps.

Against the background of the forgoing, Chinese imperialism is therefore, the expansion of political, economic, cultural, media, and military power or control by the People’s Republic of China outside its boundaries. Broadly speaking, it has also been used to refer to its territorial claims in the South China Sea (Wikipedia, 2026).

Langan (2017, pp. 95-96) in his prolific chapter “Emerging Powers and Neo-colonialism in Africa” in his edited book; Neocolonialism and poverty of development in Africa forcefully argued that Zambia under the presidency of Michael Sata represents a compelling case in point which illustrates the dangers of economic dependency for state sovereignty as decried by Nkrumah. According to Michael after winning the 2011, presidential elections in Zambia upon the labeling of Chinese businesses as neo-colonialists and the promise of stricter regulations of trade practices, Michael Sata was left powerless in face of increasing Chinese firms lobbying and threat of closing down crucial economic operations. This effectively resulted in the Sata government backing down on major tax reforms (Langan, 2017, pp. 95-96).

This kind of scenario was probably what Ojinnaka (2016) had in mind when he stated that imperialist powers has used blackmail, political pressure and economic terrorism to frustrate African governments from adopting strategies and policies of auto-centric and independent development which will free their states from perpetual powerlessness to check foreign exploitation. Both colonial and economic imperialism are rooted on economic exploitation, however, Ojinnaka (2016) highlights that both forms of imperialism involve control and exploitation by an imperialist power. While colonial imperialism is primarily based on direct political and military control over a territory, on the other hand, Economic imperialism exerts influence indirectly or subtly through economic means without direct territorial control. As in case of China with Nigeria, China as the dominant country manipulates its economic relationships with Nigeria for exploitation without the overt seizure of Nigerian land or governance (Quickconomics, 2024; Ojinnaka. 2016).

Conceptualizing Economic Imperialism

Fiveable (2026) posits that economic imperialism refers to the practice where one country exerts control over another country's economy through direct investment or by influencing economic policies. According to Fiveable this form of imperialism often involves Multinational Corporations or foreign governments seeking to exploit natural resources and establish markets for their goods,

leading to significant economic benefits for the imperial power while stunting local development. Fiveable maintains that economic imperialism gained prominence during the 19th and early 20th centuries as industrialized nations sought new markets and resources to fuel their economies. This form of imperialism often led to the establishment of monopolies where foreign companies controlled key sectors of the local economy. Fiveable notes that in many cases, economic imperialism results in significant infrastructure development, but this was typically aimed at extracting resources rather than benefiting local populations. It further stated that resistance to economic imperialism often led to nationalistic movements in colonized countries, as locals sought to reclaim control over their economies. Fiveable strongly argues that economic imperialism has modern implications, as many developing countries still grapple with the legacies of past exploitation and the ongoing influence of multinational corporations.

Quickonomics, (2024) states that economic imperialism is an observable fact and a phenomenon where one country exercises power and open influence over another through economic means rather than traditional military force. This can involve a dominant country exploiting the resources of a weaker nation, influencing its economic policies, or controlling its markets and production. This aptly captures Chinese economic activities in Nigeria and implications of its asymmetry relations.

Ojinnaka (2016) states that Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria, has for over three decades been pronounced in areas of finance, trade, investments in key infrastructure and general development. The scenario where China, an emerging economic power house and apostle of globalization extends massive loans to Nigeria with conditions of high-interest rates and stringent terms that which Nigeria cannot realistically meet. The scholar maintains that Chinese loans entrenched Nigeria in deep economic crisis as the struggles to repay its debt to China. This Chinese economic imperialist strategy is deliberately designed to gains significant leverage over Nigeria, its economic policy and other decisions making and has forced the country into situation of powerlessness to check Chinese continued imperialist exploitations by enacting policies that favorable to Chinese's interests.

Ojinnaka assert that the proponents of Sino-Nigeria relations view it in multi-dimensional perspectives. Some view Sino- Nigeria bilateral relations from more progressive perspectives while some see it from a negative lens. Those that view China-Nigeria bilateral relations from the positive perspectives understands the dynamics of these bilateral relationship in an age of globalization with emphasize on the benefits that could accrue to Nigeria from Chinese-Nigeria trade and investment relations; infrastructural development, Job creation and wider economic activities.

Swedlund (2017) also argues that those that view China-Nigeria bilateral trade and investment relations from the positive perspectives underscore that Chinese economic activities are more practical with less red tape due to its lack of concern for good governance and good practices. Thus China is only interested in its trade and investment with its host countries. Chan (2018) remarked that the Chinese investors are quick to get things done and deliver projects that would have taken much more time for Western investors to deliver; hence Pragmatism is of rigor when considering the African context in general, Nigeria in particular. Swedlund (2017:389) maintains that Chinese ever increasing economic activities and prompt delivery of infrastructural projects and economic aid in Nigeria and other African countries is why some scholars argues that China is eroding the bargaining power of traditional donors in Africa and colonizing economies of African countries.

Campbell 2008, as in Chan (2018). Writes that notwithstanding Chinese economic imperialist tendencies in Nigeria and its potential threat on Nigeria's political sovereignty, the proponents of Sino-Nigeria relations are influenced by Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes, which is the result of a general disillusionment after decades of Western developmental aid projects which resulted in the entrenched "underdevelopment" of Africa, indeed Nigeria. Wenjie et al (2015) and Thompson (2016) added that the West views the engagement of both the Chinese government and private companies guided by the government as much larger and more focused on natural resources than in the development of their host countries. The scholars notes that in reality, the Chinese government exploits the bad practices of African

governments such as corruption and lack of regulation as deciding factors in where it would be easiest to invest. This is more pronounced as China focuses on natural resources, with lack of concern toward bad governance.

According to Mary Madeleine Edel WAN YAN CHAN of La Trobe University, the asymmetry power contradictions between China and African states do not only undermine the sovereignty of these countries in their both domestic and foreign policies, it brought to light the Nkrumah treaties on the dangers of neo-colonialism and imperialism which conceptualizes the shrinking of African states' sovereignty through asymmetric economic relations and inequitable trade and investment. Chan contends that Chinese massive trade and investment in the Africa has been effectively used to co-opt these states through their policy elites and governments into abiding to and advancing Chinese mercantilist interests and for the protection of Chinese businesses at the expense of African people's social and environmental concerns (Chan, 2018).

Ojinnaka (2016) writes on the differences between economic imperialism and traditional forms of imperialism, its primary goals. Ojinnaka states that economic imperialism focus on controlling another country's economy rather than its political structure with the primary goals been to gain access to natural resources, gain access to markets for goods and maximize profits for the imperialist power. Thus, while traditional imperialism involves direct governance and territorial control, economic imperialism allowed engenders exploitation without the needs for formal political control and domination.

Ojinnaka maintains that the impacts of Chinese economic imperialism on the Nigeria economy are profound. Though Nigeria-China bilateral trade and investment relations have led to infrastructure development in Nigeria; Roads, rails and Airports and other infrastructure has been upgraded to facilitate resource extraction for Chinese imperial interests. Ojinnaka notes that Nigeria economy has become dependent on export of cash crops and raw materials to China, a situation that has disoriented Nigeria industrial and agricultural sector and created severe economic disruptions. The scholar argues that Chinese economic engagement in Nigeria limits opportunities for economic growth and development, creates unequal power dynamics in the economic relationships between the two countries, as Chinese multinational corporations and other Chinese business organizations develop unhindered access to Nigeria natural resources and profits generated are flown to China for the development of the Chinese economy, leading to economic imperialism. The consequences of the Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria has manifested in form of Nigeria debt dependency to China, Chinese endless exploitation of Nigeria resource, and lack access to viable technology and limited access to Chinese markets, while China have limitless access to Nigeria market. All these has made Nigeria an underdog in contemporary global economic structures, hence China has acquired full control over Nigeria economy

Evaluating Chinese Economic Imperialist Activities in Nigeria

China is an emergent economic super power whose foreign policy in is founded on historical narratives of struggle against western imperialism and the Chinese strict adherence to the pursuit of its national interests as evidence on its policy of "Great Rejuvenation" (Langan 2017, p. 90). The Chinese- Nigeria relations have endured for decades and has been part of its overall foreign policy emphasis on South-South development cooperation and it common interests with African people on the struggle against imperialism and socio-economic exploitation (Reeves 2018; 91).

Nevertheless, the changing dynamics of global economic structure have made China a modern imperial power and have emboldened Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria. Nigeria' dependence on imported goods and technologies from China potentially undermines its sovereignty and economic growth, fostering a trade imbalance skewed in favor of China (Abubakar, 2025). Nigeria bilateral trade and investment relations with China are, largely asymmetrical in nature, has been observed to deliver disproportionate advantages to China, with Nigeria receiving minimal infrastructural support (Abubakar, 2025). This imbalance limits the Nigeria's initiative's capacity to catalyze substantial economic activities, while facilitating expanded access for China's surplus goods and services (Abubakar, 2025).. Nonetheless, challenges including underutilization, regional disparities, and regulatory barriers impede the full realization of these benefits. And strengthening

indigenous capacities to enhance Nigeria's role in domestic and international markets (Abubakar, 2025).

This highlights some of the factors that are causing greater inequality in China- Nigeria relations, at the same time deter investment and slow down Nigeria economic growth and development. These phenomenon of uneven development between Nigeria and China have shown that Nigeria bilateral trade and investment relations mainly benefit the China. Nigeria bilateral trade and investment relations benefits accruing only to China, due to internal economic dynamics. Nigeria economic reforms and rapid trade liberalization creates more harm for the economy and undermines its bargain powers (Ojinnaka, 2016:149). Because Nigeria is a debt burdened country, and a recipient of Chinese aid, her negotiating and barging power in the international system is diminished and drained, hence, globalization has enhances China's economic imperialism in Nigeria and furthered its dominate interests in its relations with Nigeria (Ojinnaka,2016:149). China's activities in and out of Nigeria are a pointer to this fact.

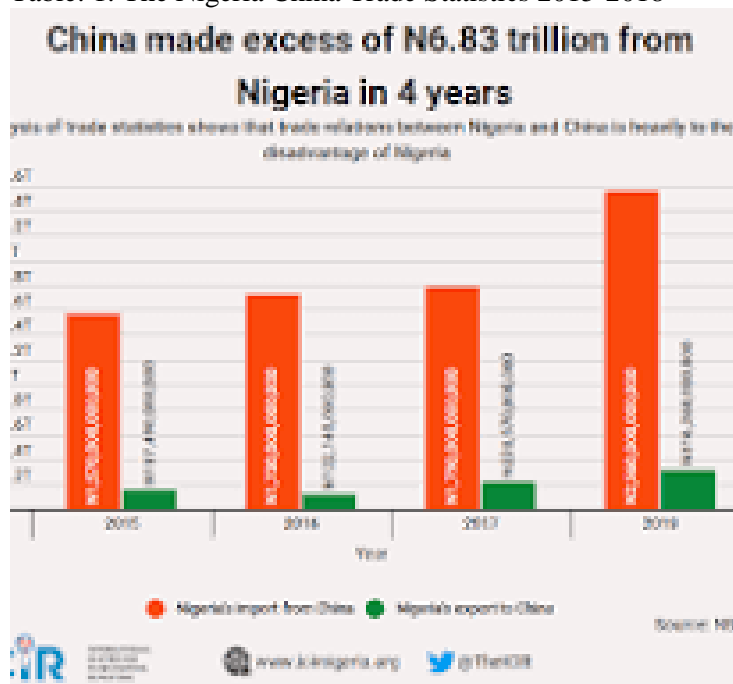
It is ironic that China, a country that has been a victim of Western imperialism with its monopoly of flirting Communist-Market ideology and investment capital has gained world leadership status (Ojinnaka, 2016). China's influence has considerable impacts on Nigeria key economic sectors: railway and oil exploration, transportation and other key infrastructures. China's influence is prominent in Nigeria in foreign investments with lucrative infrastructures like telecom. Thus China has gradually taken over Nigeria most economic trade centers (The Economist, 2009:46). Hence, Sino economic imperialism has further deepened Nigeria's dependence status.

China has been granted access to Nigeria Oil and Gas, and other natural resources. In 2009, the Nigeria National petroleum corporation (NNPC) signed an agreement with SINOPEC, a Chinese oil company to develop Oil Mining Lease (OML) 64 and 66 located in the waters of the Niger Delta (Nabine, 2009). Prior to this, in 2007 Chinese government signed five years oil supply deal with Nigerian government; in the terms of the Agreement China is expected to purchase 80,000 barrel of crude oil daily from Nigeria (which would cost \$800 million dollars). China also won license to operate 4 Oil blocks in Nigeria as an incentive for them to build hydropower station in the country (Nabine, 2009). In addition, China's launching of Nigeria first space station has greatly enhanced its commanding influence not only in Nigeria but also in Africa (Ojinnaka, 2016). This made it possible for China to exert imperialist economic control over Nigeria without direct political or military intervention, which is a characteristic of economic imperialism taking disadvantage of Nigeria through trade and other subtle practices that that undermines Nigeria local business capacities. These scenarios clearly illustrate China's ability to diminution the sovereignty of the Nigeria State, influence its domestic and foreign policies to its advantage.

As we have seen, the Modern examples of economic imperialism can be seen in cases where China or its multinational corporations exert undue influence over the Nigeria economy through debt, trade agreements, and investment practices that disproportionately benefit her (Quickconomics, 2024; Ojinnaka,2016). The imperialist practices of some of the Chinese multinational financial corporations are similar to the imperialist practices of international financial institutions that impose strict austerity measures on indebted countries. Viewed From political economy perspectives, this form of economic imperialism, do prioritize debt repayment over social and economic welfare of the people.

Ojinnaka, et al (2025) contends that since 1993, the volume of trade between Nigeria and China has increased tremendously following Nigeria massive importation of goods and services from China and Chinese importation of Nigeria crude oil and gas. Though, notwithstanding the significant increase in these economic engagements and trade relations, the pattern of trade, mostly in the era of globalization have exhibited heavily imbalance against Nigeria, as the benefits of trade have accrued to China at the expense of Nigeria.

Table: 1: The Nigeria China Trade Statistics 2015-2018



Source: International Center for Investment Reporting (ICIR)

Available statistics as indicate in Table 1 shows that from 2009 to 2018 the volume and value of trade between Nigeria and China reach \$7.3 billion in 2009 and \$7.7 billion in 2010 (Ojinnaka, 2016:123). In the same period, China’s exports to Nigeria represent 87.5% of the total bilateral trade in 2010, 88.6% in 2014 and 2018. With this level of bilateral trade engagement, Nigeria is now China’s important trade partner in Africa (Tajudeen, 2013; Ojinnaka, et al, 2025). In 2023, China is Nigeria’s largest trading partner, with bilateral trade valued at \$13.6 billion.

Nigeria is currently, undergoing sever economic crisis in its asymmetry trade and investment relations with China due to Chinese imperialist economic activities in the country. The Nigeria economic problems centers on macro-economic issues resulting from foreign exchange (forex) drain. Evidently, imports from China have been a major foreign exchange (forex) drain on Nigeria’s economy. Even the forex restriction for importation of certain products that could be produced locally could not ease the forex burden being exerted on the economy by importers of China’s goods (Abbah, 2019; Ojinnaka, 2024; Ojinaka, et al, 2025).

According to Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019) In Nigeria’s trade with China, between 2013 and 2016, Nigeria had a trade deficit of about N6 trillion. NBS report indicates that out of Nigeria’s total imports bill of N29.91 trillion within the same period, China accounted for N6.41 trillion. The gap is huge compared to N714.97 billion worth of goods Nigeria exported to China between 2015 to 2018 (four-year period). Data from Table 1 shows that the difference between Nigeria’s total exports and imports from China, there is a disproportionate trade and investment relations heavily to the advantage of China.

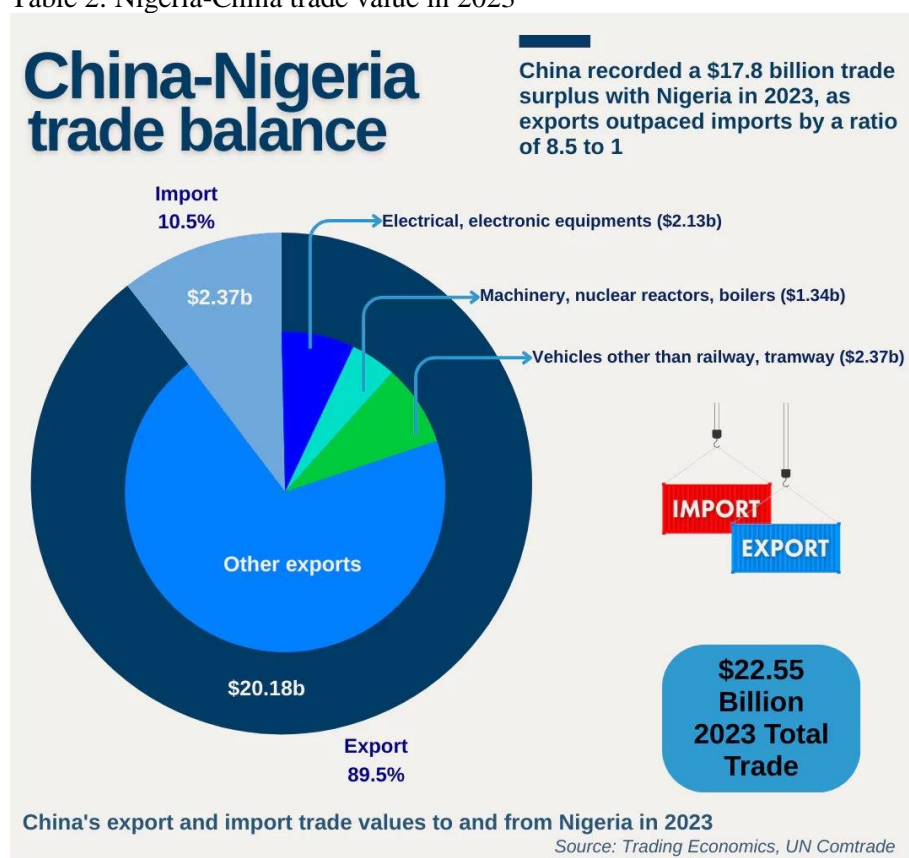
The statistical analysis of Nigeria-China trade (as in Table 1) shows clear disparity in Nigeria-China trade and investment relations. Statistical facts points that between 2015 and 2018, Nigeria had N6.83 trillion worth of trade deficit with China, and at the same time Nigeria imported goods worth N7.65 trillion from China and exported N818.46 billion worth of goods to China, resulting in a trade imbalance of N818.46 billion (National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, 2019). Also in 2015, Nigeria imported goods valued at N1.57 trillion from China and exported goods valued N157.49 billion to China, leading to a trade deficit of N1.41 trillion (International Center for Investment Reporting, ICIR, 2019).

In 2016, Nigeria’s imports from China rose, while export to China slumped, further widening the trade imbalance. With a trade deficit of N1.61 trillion in 2016, Nigeria’s export rose to N1.73 trillion, while import slumped to N122.14 billion compared to 2015 (Ojinnaka, et al, 2025). In the

same vein, in 2017, Nigeria’s import and export to China leapt, leaving Nigeria with a trade deficit of N1.57 trillion as a result of N1.79 trillion spent on imports as against N220.57 billion received from exports to China (Abbah, 2019), Ojinnaka (2024) as cited in (Ojinnaka, et al, 2025).

Available statistical data from National Bureau of Statistics (2019), and International Center for Investment Reporting (ICIR, 2019) points that Nigeria recorded the highest trade deficit with China in the last four years, 2014-2018, with a trade imbalance of N2.24 trillion. In 2018, Nigeria exported goods worth N318.26 billion to China and imported N2.56 trillion goods from China (Abbah, 2019, Ojinnaka, 2024). This shows that within this period Nigeria has a trade deficit of N5.70 trillion in favor of China. This is a statistical evidence of Chinese unfair economic imperialist practices that has sustained asymmetry relations with Nigeria and kept Nigeria in position of powerlessness to check its exploitation. Its undermined Nigeria development, helped to sustain bad governance, weakened democratic institution and other institutions of modern government. In reality the Chinese economic imperialism has deepened Nigeria underdevelopment.

Table 2: Nigeria-China trade value in 2023



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Source: UN Comtrade, Trading Economics (2025)

A source from the UN Comtrade (2025) and Trading Economics (2025) as in Table2 indicates that China recorded a \$17.8 billion trade surplus with Nigeria in 2023, as the value of its exports to Nigeria is far more its imports by a ratio of 8.5 to 1. According to the UN Comtrade statistics in 2023; Chinese total exports to Nigeria was \$20.18 billion, while its imports from Nigeria was \$2.37 billion. China’s trade surplus with Nigeria was \$17.8 billion. In the same vein, Intelpoint.co (2025) records that China exported goods and services worth \$20.18 billion to Nigeria, which is 89.5% of the total volume of Nigeria-China bilateral trade in 2023, while, Nigeria exported only \$2.37 billion to China, just 10.5% of the total trade value. Ojinnaka, et al, 2025) contends that the trade imbalance underscores Nigeria’s strong and unhealthy dependence on Chinese goods and industrial inputs. Thus for every \$1 Nigeria exports to China, it imports \$8.50 worth of Chinese products (Intelpoint.co, 2025). It is this uneven trade relation between the two countries that have made it possible for Chinese

economic imperialism to dominate the life wire of the Nigeria economy. This significant trade imbalance in favors of China sustains the asymmetry China-Nigeria relations and constitutes serious constraint to the Nigeria indigenous capacity for development (Ojinnaka, et al, 2025). Thus the China and Nigeria trade dynamics have shown severe disparity in China-Nigeria trade relations, which have negatively affected Nigeria economic development and furthered its underdevelopment (Ojinnaka, et al, 2025).

This disparity has been due to Nigeria's uncritical reliance on Chinese-manufactured products, machinery, finance, and consumer goods and services, while mostly supplying raw materials and other natural resources to China. A flow in Nigeria imports from China without corresponding increase in China's import from Nigeria has undermined Nigeria economy and results in trade deficit in favor of China. If the trade imbalance between the two countries is unchecked and unregulated, it may increase to an unprecedented level due to the increasing demand for Chinese goods and services by Nigerians without reciprocal increase in demand of made in Nigeria goods by the Chinese (Ojinnaka, et al, 2025).

The Chinese economic imperialist activities have undermined the capacity of the Nigeria state and Nigeria government to regulate the activities of Chinese Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. The Nigeria regulatory institutions like NAFDAC, SON are weakened in the face disparate Nigeria-China trade relation and its monstrous consequences on Nigeria economic development. These regulatory bodies have failed in their statutory responsibility and have been compromised in the discharge of their duties. The direct impacts of Chinese economic imperialism on Nigeria economy finds expression on many Nigeria firms that have been put out business as a result of their competition with better funded, better equipped and better managed Chinese firms. Accordingly, the growing Chinese influence and assertiveness on Nigeria economy ally with the warning of Kwame Nkrumah, Walter Rodney, Julius Mwalimu Nyerere, on the danger of economic imperialism and forces of underdevelopment. These scholars/statesmen in their intellectual orientations share several fundamental assumptions in their seminal ideas of imperialism (Ojinnaka, 2001) and made self-conscious assertion about the nature of imperialism/neo-colonialism and external manipulations in Africa. The contemporary Nigeria experience of Chinese economic imperialism have made Kwame Nkrumah, Nkrumah (1974) Walter Rodney, Rodney(1972), Julius Mwalimu Nyerere views to gained wider acceptance in the contemporary Nigeria context {Mazuri, 1984}.

In another development, the Chinese companies are sponsoring terrorism in the Northern Nigeria through its illegal mining proceeds. The reports by five US Congressmen sponsored bill titled "Nigeria Religious Freedom and Accountability Act of 2026, Chinese nationals involved in "illegal mining" operations is paying terrorists for protection. The bill linked Chinese illegal mining to terrorism funding in Nigeria. According to the five US Congressmen sponsoring the bill, the bill is aimed at addressing religious persecution and mass atrocities in Nigeria against Christians. The bill at the United States House of Representatives proposed that the country's Secretary of State works with the Nigeria government to counteract and thwart hostile foreign exploitation of Chinese illegal mining operations and their destabilizing practice of paying protection money to Fulani terrorist militias. The lawmakers that sponsored the bill are: Riley Moore of West Virginia, Chris Smith (New Jersey), Bill Huizenga (Michigan), Brian Mast (Florida), and Mario Diaz-Balart (Florida) (<https://www.google.com/search?ved=1t:60882&q=Riley+Moore+West+Virginia+Congressman&bbid=1543267998804304197&bpid=5872175040774708015>).

The Chinese companies are funding the radical Islamic groups and ethnic militias to protect its mining interests by paying protection money to Fulani terrorist militias are a clear point of Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria. Nigerians express firm opposition and strong dissatisfaction to the nefarious Chinese economic imperialist activities. The Chinese nationals do not abide by the Nigerian mining regulations, as the overwhelming majority of Chinese mining companies in Nigeria have set record of illegality and non-compliance with Nigerian laws and regulations. Equally, these Chinese companies do not protect the natural environment, do not support local economic development and creation of employment opportunities, hence, most Chinese companies never give back to their host communities, nor discharge their social responsibilities to them. An investigative research conducted by SBM Intelligence, a research consultancy and strategic intelligence firm revealed how Chinese

companies in the North-West Nigeria ,bribed terrorist groups and pay “rent to them in other to gain access to mining sites (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/chinese-bribed-nigerian-militants-for-access-to-vast-mineral-reserves-wlghq7d2j>).

The Chinese government and its companies do not respected Nigeria’s sovereignty or supports Nigeria’s efforts to strengthen mining governance in accordance with law and regulations. These Chinese companies have consistently supported and cooperate with the terrorist groups in the Northern Nigeria against the Nigerian government’s efforts to safeguard Nigeria national security (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/chinese-bribed-nigerian-militants-for-access-to-vast-mineral-reserves-wlghq7d2j>). Evidence are bound of how Chinese-affiliated miners bribed the terror faction of Dogo Gide to gain access to mining sites in the Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State, as the militant leaders boast how powerful they had become, so that Chinese miners working in their strongholds had to pay rent (WikkiTimes,2026; <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/chinese-bribed-nigerian-militants-for-access-to-vast-mineral-reserves-wlghq7d2j>).

The Chinese illegal mining activities have emboldened the terrorist and militant groups who have been engaged in organized attacks on civilian communities, particularly in the Middle Belt region and Southeast Nigeria (Biafraland).Thus Chinese illegal mining operations are fueling religious violence and have resulted in the death of thousands of Christians in the country. The Fulani militia terrorist movement has conducted attacks involving targeted killings, hostage-taking, hijackings, armed assaults, massacres of civilians, destruction of property, and forced displacement of the local population (Premium Times, 2026). A situation that has made the United States government under President Donald Trump to designate Nigeria as Country of Particular Concern (CPC) (Beloved, 2026). It is irony that Nigeria as a country cannot stop Chinese economic imperialism and exploitation of Nigeria resources and use of proceeds from Nigeria resources to fund terrorism in Nigeria. The Chinese Economic imperialism has compromised the Nigerian State and the Nigerian authorities cannot assert the nation’s interests, especially when it is in contest with the Chinese economic imperialist interests.

China has in the recent times pursued aggressive and imperial policies in Nigeria, which is expressed in its ideals of “Great Rejuvenation” and the “Chinese Dream”. The Chinese hegemonic, ideological, and imperial drive for world domination has raised moral questions about its so called national effort to reclaim back its rightful place as a great power within the comity of nations (Zheng, 2013, p. 9). For proper understanding of Chinese economic imperialist activities in Nigeria one needs to understand policy and strategies linked to its growing assertiveness in Nigeria. Apparently, China economic imperialism is in sharp competition with western imperialism in Nigeria. According to some authoritative sources Chinese investment in Nigeria accounts for only 30 percent of Nigeria total foreign direct investment (FDI) (Ojinnaka, 2016; World Bank Report, 2009).

Nigeria, as a country rich in extractive resources receive Chinese foreign investment in natural resource. China as an imperialist power is not altruistic. Chinese engagement in Nigeria like any other imperial power is motivated by desire for Nigeria’s natural resources, needed for the development of their home industries. Evidently, there is a correlation between Chinese investment in Nigeria and Nigeria domestic market size, indicating that market size matters to China in the same way as it does to other Western imperialist nations (Wenjie et al, 2015). The economic rationality of an imperialist power like China is not, and cannot be for the development of Nigeria. China’s bilateral trade and investment relations with Nigeria are propelled by their business wisdom for profit and benefits from their investment. This is why China always lobbies for positively political stability, as an enabling environment for their business and economic operations without hindrances.

Chinese trade and investment relations in with Nigeria driven by desire to ensure continued or uninterrupted access to abundance Nigeria natural resources. The continued and uninterrupted supply of Oil and minerals is very strategic to China’s continued economic growth (Ncube, 2012, 22). Nigeria is an important market for China export manufactured goods and represents long-term financial investment (Okolo & Akwu 2016; Ojinnaka, 2016). To achieve its strategic objective of open access to Nigeria market and continued supply of oil and mineral resources China evolved a policy of development aid assistance to Nigeria as an approach of its soft power diplomacy. Zen Wang in his 2013 article : the Chinese Dream , Concept and Context published in the Journal of

Chinese Political Science contends that China soft power diplomacy is motivated by the desire to secure the support of other states in its competition with the west and providing an alternative development model to the Washington Consensus. Thus China evolved economic diplomacy to ensure its economic security through continued supply of strategic raw materials from Nigeria, hence the country is considered strategic to China economic imperialism and its policy of resource diplomacy.

China’s economic imperialism in Nigeria can best be seen in terms of power asymmetry relations between the two countries. China is an economic super power with great diplomatic leverage, while Nigeria politically and economically vulnerable to the shocks of Chinese economic imperialism. Chinese engagements in Nigeria is obvious a hallmark of unequal trade and investment relations, while Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its propaganda machineries have been deceived their willing audience with the concept of equal partnership. The contradictions inherent the asymmetry power relations between Nigeria and China do not only undermine Nigeria sovereignty, manipulates Nigeria both domestic and foreign policies, it brought to light the Nkrumah treaties on neo-colonialism and imperialism which conceptualizes the shrinking of African states’ sovereignty through asymmetric economic relations and inequitable trade and investment.

In line with the views of Mary Madeleine Edel Wan Yan Chan of La Trobe University, Chinese massive trade and investment in the Africa, particularly in Nigeria has been effectively used to co-opt the Nigeria policy elites and governments into abiding to and advancing Chinese mercantilist interests and for the protection of Chinese businesses at the expense of Nigeria people’s social and environmental concerns (Chan, 2018). Balasubramanyam (2015) in his thought provoking Paper: China and India’s economic relations with African Countries- neocolonialism, Eastern Style. Published in the Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies, highlights that China uses the combination of trade, financial investment, and aid to facilitate export of raw materials to China as resembling the extractive and exploitive colonial systems of the “Old Powers”. Chinese economic pragmatism dogma coupled with low concerns for welfare of their host country’s population and human rights abuses, and its closeness to political elites do raise some legitimate questions upon the imperialist nature of Sino-Nigeria engagement (Chan,2018).

Table 3. Chinese loans to Nigeria (USD billions)

ANOUNT	PURPOSE	LOAN GRANTING INSTITUTIO AND DATE
\$157 million	Construction of Abuja Light Rail	CHEXIM, 2019
\$629 million	the development of the Lekki Deep Water Port	China Development Bank CDB-2019
\$973 Million	Lagos-Kano railway (1400km), Kaduna-Kano section (200km)	Export-Import Bank of the Republic of China (CHEXIM)
208.9 million	Incremental expansion of four airport terminals.	CHEXIM bank-2019
\$1.3 Billion	modernization of Lagos-Ibadan railway Project 2	Export-Import Bank of the Republic of China (CHEXIM) -2019
\$254.76-million	construction of a 203-k/m standard; gauge railway Kano and Kaduna,	China Development Bank
\$1.3 billion	the modernization of the Lagos-Ibadan railway line.	CHEXIM---in 2017
\$845 Million	Lafia bypass road and dualization of 9th mile (Enugu) – Otukpo – Makurdi road (268.5km)	China Development Bank
\$460.8 Million	Abuja-Keffi-Makurdi road,	CHEXIM in -2017.

	rehabilitation and upgrade (227km)	
\$500 Million	Airport expansion (4 Terminals)	China Development Bank-In 2013 Export-Import Bank of the Republic of China (CHEXIM.) in 2012,
\$500 Million	Revolutionizing of Abuja Light Rail Project (78km)	
\$500 Million	Railway modernization of du – Kaduna, project 1 (187km)	China Development Bank -2010
\$2 billion	Energy, Sectors for new super grid	October 7, 2025
Total\$9,419 776,208.9		

Source: (Ojinnaka, 2025)

Table 3 shows that China have in the recent times emerged as one of Nigeria's most significant bilateral creditors, providing concessional loans primarily for infrastructure development in sectors such as transportation, energy, and telecommunications. Nigeria joined China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2018. And China has lent multiple billion dollar Loan to Nigeria for infrastructural development. Chinese loans are currently driving Nigeria's key infrastructure: transportation system, power sector, Maritime and Telecommunication (Moritus, 2025). Nigeria's over-reliance on external financing for infrastructural development poses serious challenge to the nation's development. According to Chibike Amaechi, the Nigeria former Minister for Transportation under Buhari administration, these Chinese loans will be paid back in 20 years. The two major Chinese loan granting institutions are Export-Import Bank of the Republic of China (CHEXIM) and China Development Bank.

Table 3 shows that between 2010 to 2019 , Nigeria borrowed total sum of \$7,419 776,208.9 (Seven Billion, four hundred and nineteen Million, two hundred and Eight thousand, Nine Dollars) for infrastructure projects: Railway modernization, Airport Terminals expansion, road rehabilitation, road and road dualization, and the development of the Lekki Deep Sea Water Port. These projects are very critical to Nigeria economic development (Premium Times. 2019). However, the location and construction of these projects, particularly the standard gauge railway projects in Northern and Western Nigeria and the deliberate exclusion of the Eastern part of the country have raise questions of social justice and democratic inclusion in the allocation of values in Nigeria. The Nigeria's inefficient acquisition and utilization of these loans from China, and the unfavorable Chinese conditions attached therein, especially, as the railway is being built by China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (Oluwatomisin,2025) created unequal relations between Nigeria and China (Uchenna ,2024). Nigeria international indebted status was taken to another level by the Tinubu administration as he obtained \$2 billion China loan for new power super grid in 2025 (Akintaro, 2025).

Though Chinese loans have been instrumental in bridging Nigeria's critical infrastructure gaps and fostering economic growth, the growing debt servicing obligations, coupled with a lack of transparency and over-reliance on external financing, poses challenges to Nigeria's long-term financial stability (Ahmed & Osasenaga , 2025). The non- diversification of Nigeria foreign debt sources have exacerbated the risks associated with Chinese loans. It has jeopardized transparency, and undermined debt management frameworks. This calls for Nigeria policy makers to re-strategies on ways to balance the gains of international financing with the view to mitigate the macro-economic consequence associated with foreign loans and indebtedness (Ojinnaka, 2016).

Thus, the Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria, have for over three decades been pronounced in areas of finance, trade and investments in key infrastructure and general development. The scenario where China, an emerging economic power house and apostle of globalization extends massive loans to Nigeria with conditions of high-interest rates and stringent terms that Nigeria cannot realistically meet (Ojinnaka,2016; Quickonomics, 2024). In this vein, Chinese loans entrenched Nigeria in deep economic crisis, as the country struggles to repay its debt to China. This Chinese economic imperialist strategy is deliberately designed to gains significant leverage over Nigeria

economic weakness and has forced the country into situation of powerlessness to check Chinese continued imperialist exploitations of Nigeria resources.

In another hand, a critical evaluation of the sustainability of Chinese loans to Nigeria points to the fact that Chinese loans have led to an increased debt burden for Nigeria, raising concerns about fiscal sustainability, debt servicing capacity, and Nigeria's economic sovereignty (Ahmed & Osasenaga ,2025). Equally, there is no doubt that Chinese loans have contributed significantly to Nigeria's infrastructure development. However, the processes, terms, and conditions of the loans, its economic impact, transparency, and risks of dependency has led to the growing debt servicing obligations, coupled with a lack of transparency and over-reliance on external financing poses challenge to Nigeria's long-term financial stability (Ahmed & Osasenaga ,2025). It underscores the need for policy re-strategy to balance the benefits of international financing with the imperatives of economic sovereignty and sustainable development (Ahmed & Osasenaga, 2025).

Nearly all the viable areas in Nigeria economic and social sectors have seen expression interests from Chinese investors. Chinese firms has taken control of major infrastructure projects in Nigeria with an estimated 65% market shares in road constructions, airports, water system, power generation, housing and health care Centers (Ojinnaka,2000).Presently, the Chinese are making in-road in Nigeria Education sector.

In the pursuit of its imperialist economic interests, China has ingloriously aided bad governance in Nigeria. Due to its domestic human rights records, China have never condemned human rights violation in Nigeria, but have actively and effectively empowered illiberal and corrupt political leaders in Nigeria, by giving them loans without recourse to transparency and accountability. The no strings attachment of Chinese loans and aid programmes to Nigeria gave China economic and political advantage and diplomatic leverage over Nigeria. Since 2019, Chinese duplicity and fraudulent grant of massive loans to Nigeria governments have helped to sustain dictatorship and bad governance in the country. The mismanagement of Chinese loan under Buhari administration and its continuation by the Tinubu administration has been a major factor in sustaining Nigeria economic crisis. The Chinese loans and financial investments in building, mining, rails, roads and telecommunications infrastructures, while keeping the Nigeria economy and the regime afloat, have worsen the material condition of Nigerians due to corruption and micro-economic distortions. It is therefore on record that the Chinese effective use of monetary and economic leverages, as diplomatic instruments against Nigeria has imperialized Nigeria economy and weakened her political institution. Thus the impacts of Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria have erosive influence on Nigeria foreign policies and sovereignty.

While the Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria is generally viewed negatively due to its exploitative nature, some scholars of political economy who do not doubt the hegemony of Chinese imperialism argue that Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria can bring about infrastructure development, technology transfer, and access to international markets for Nigeria goods. However, scholars who doubt the hegemony of Chinese imperialism posits that these benefits are often overshadowed by the negative impacts, such as economic dependency, loss of sovereignty, and the perpetuation of inequality (Ojinnaka, 2016; Quickconomics, 2024).

Expressively, Sino-Nigeria relations are complex, multi-layered and has imperialistic flavor. A cautious approach is needed when evaluating the polarizing debate on China as an imperialist power devoted to resource-grabbing and exploitation. The peculiar preference of Beijing for bilateral agreements with other states is legitimately seen as a showdown of power politics where China ensures its economic leverage over less powerful states. China does exhibit some neo-colonial tendencies and its activities in Nigeria have undermined Nigeria sovereignty. Nevertheless, Nigeria has to some extent gained from China's programme of economic and infrastructural development. Chinese growing and persuasive soft power diplomacy in Nigeria have inevitably been advanced through the geopolitical and geo-economic game of maximizing its own national interests, at the expense of Nigeria. In this regard, like otter imperial powers, Chinese engagement in Nigeria is ultimately designed to protect its national development by ensuring secure sources for raw materials for its domestic industries.

In a nutshell, the main characteristics of Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria includes the exploitation of Nigeria resources, economic dependence of Nigeria on China designed to ensure the Chinese continued dominant position in its relations with Nigeria. Nigeria as a the weaker partner in its bilateral trade and investment relations with China do not have the capacity for autonomous development and are unable to checkmate Chinese economic manipulations. At the same time, China as a major global economic power has its Multinational Corporations dominating the all viable sectors of Nigeria economy. The result is the oxygen of Nigeria economy is under the manipulative control of Chinese economic imperialism.

In the final analysis, Nigeria’s evasive trade deficit is the direct result of Chinese economic imperialism and its long time strategy to exercises power, manipulative control and open influence over Nigeria through economic means. In this case, China, a modern imperialist country is exploiting Nigeria resources by influencing Nigeria economic policies, controlling its markets and production (Quickonomics, 2024). This aptly captures Chinese imperialist economic activities in Nigeria and implications of its asymmetry relations.

Analytical Overview of Chinese Economic Imperialism in Nigeria

Nigeria and China have for decades had very robust and sustained economic relations. China as an emerging world economic power with rich ancient civilization has tremendous investment interests in Nigeria. The Nigeria government Officials, business men and non-profit sector individuals and scholars had hoped that Nigeria bilateral engagement with the Peoples Republic of China will bring mutual cooperation that would ensure meaningful and beneficial relations between them. However, contrary to these expectations, the negative impacts of Chinese economic imperialism have significantly undermined Nigeria economic development and have created huge disparity between the two countries.

The Chinese- Nigerian trade, investment and economic relations can best be described as neo-colonial or imperialist relations. A look at the above statistical table (4) showing Nigeria trade relations with China between 2009 to 2018, indicates that China has dominated the Nigeria economy through unequal trade relations, and have effectively adopted Nigeria’s elites into abiding to and advancing Chinese mercantilists interests, and for the protection of Chinese business at the expense of Nigeria people’s concerns. The table shows the unfavorable balance of trade against Nigeria and in favor of China.

Table 4: 2009-2018 (Trade volume in Million USD)

Year	China’s Imports from Nigeria (Nigeria’s Export to China)	China’s Exports to Nigeria (Nigeria’s Imports from China)
2009	896.53	5,475.59
2010	1,071.62	6,696.84
2011	1,583.68	9,205.59
2012	1,273.79	9,296.31
2013	1,546.60	12,042.61
2014	2,658.35	15,393.56
2015	1,240.70	13,701.24
2016	907.01	9,713.91
2017	1,624.04	12,153.16
2018	1,861.78	13,409.33

Source: UNCOM Trade Data (2009-2018). EINNO Project Nigeria Report (2023).

Nigeria is marginalized in terms of its trade relations with China as the policies of trade liberalization, currency swap agreement, currency devaluation and other measures fostered on her by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) and World Bank results in underutilization of Nigeria’s productive capacity (Ojinnaka, 2016). This has contributed to the weakening of Nigeria’s local manufacturing firms, as increasing dependence on imported capital and consumer goods and services from China has left the country’s domestic economic sectors comatose, hence the root of Sino-Nigeria asymmetric economic relations is Nigeria’s dependence status (Ojinnaka, 2016).

The above table further shows that in 2009, Nigeria imported goods worth \$5,475.59 million from China in 2009, while China imported only \$896.530 worth of goods from Nigeria (World Bank Report, 2009). This pattern of trade relations continued all over the years as Nigeria imports from China increased to \$15,393.56 million in 2014, and \$13,409.33 in 2018, while China only imported goods worth of \$1,546.60m from Nigeria in 2014, and \$1,861.78m in 2018 (EINNO PROJECT NIGERIA Report, 2023). The table shows that the Chinese concept of ‘‘Soft Power diplomacy’’ is an economic imperialist approach that has made Nigeria a dumping ground for Chinese goods and services. China has dominated Nigeria domestic economy and its trade and investment relations is unequal relations and only beneficial to China.

The table shows an increasing demand of the Chinese cheap goods by Nigerians without corresponding demand of Nigeria made goods by Chinese. As a result, the Nigeria trade balance has over the years worsened, her imports from China increased, while demand for locally produced goods falls. Nigerians are buying cheaper, but inferior Chinese goods. A situation that has made Nigeria to become a dumping ground for Chinese substandard goods, and the competition from Chinese firms undermine the capacity of Nigeria’s local manufacturing firms for competitive business environment (Ojinnaka, 2016).

According to the UNCOM (2019), trade report, ‘‘the volume of trade between Nigeria and China since 2009 increased by more than 100%’’. The trade imbalance have been in favor of china because China exports more goods than it imports from Nigeria, while Nigeria relies more on the importation of Chinese goods for domestic consumption. This calls for re-examination of the structure of tariff and non-tariff barriers facing Nigeria’s exports to China, and the constraints being faced by Nigerian entrepreneurs in responding to available international trade opportunities. (Ojinnaka, 2016; p.68).

The impact of the Chinese imperialist economic engagement in Nigerian has been more pronounced for over two decades, an indication that China is presently having an imperialist stranglehold on Nigeria’s economy .This has made it possible for China to negotiate deals that take advantage of Nigeria’s weaknesses, indulge in an unsustainable environmental practices and unfair trade practices against Nigeria (Ojinnaka, 2016, p.68). Also China’s development assistance in form of its comprehensive financial incentives, trade and investment, and limited military cooperation is translated into effective diplomacy, and provides an alternative development model to the Washington consensus. The Chinese consensus has not helped Nigeria, rather the dependence nature of the Nigeria economy has been sustained through Sino-Nigeria asymmetry relations. Consequently as it were, the Chinese drive for world political and economic ascendancy has found cold expressions in its engagements in Nigeria (Ojinnaka, 2016, p.68).

Table 5. 14 Major Chinese companies in Nigeria

Companies	Sector of activities	Assets(USD billions) ///	Employees
Sinopec	Oil and gas	152.80	373,375
CNPC	Oil and gas	470.80 (80,000)	1.67million foreigners)
SEPCO	Electric power construction	38.60	19,756
CCECC	Construction	2.17	70,000
CSCEC	Construction , Real Estate	58.90	121,500
CNOON	Offshore Oil and gas	13.8	21,000
Sinoma	Cement , Engineering, Construction	2.9	9000
CGC	Construction	0.30	Data unknown
Huawei	Telecom	25.00	51,000
ZTE	Telecom	13.00	85,232

Source: www.tralac.org

The above table 5 shows there are 14 major Chinese companies in Nigeria with 778, 27 Billion US Dollar worth of Assets. However with this expanding private sector economy and its great international trade opportunities (Ojinnaka,2016, 42) the presence of these Chinese firms and their investments in Nigeria have not had meaningful impact on Nigeria's economic development. Though China has gained considerable proportion of Nigeria production sector and market share, with considerable impact of the key sectors of Nigeria economy e.g Telecom, Oil and gas, Power, Construction, Electricity and Real Estate, education and transportation.

The Chinese multinational corporations have taken advantage of bad governance and weak political institutions in Nigeria to establish monopolies, undermine local businesses, and to prioritize their profits over Nigeria local economic development. By the reason of their monopoly of investible capital, technology and market ideology, the big Chinese corporate organizations in Nigeria like: Sinopec in Oil and gas, CNPC in Oil and gas, SEPCO in Electric power construction, CCECC in Construction, CSCEC in Construction and Real Estate, CNOON in Offshore Oil and gas, Sinoma Cement in Engineering, Construction, CGC in Construction, Huawei in Telecom and ZTE in Telecom. These Chinese Corporate Organizations operating in Nigeria have massively exploited local labor, prevents the growth of local businesses by monopolizing the market, or export the country's resources while contributing little to Nigeria economy (Ojinnaka, 2016).

Owing to its obvious advantage of monopoly of investment resources, technology and managerial expertise China's relations with Nigeria is often detrimental to Nigeria's national interests. Due to this uneven capacity and disparity between the two countries, Sino-Nigeria relations are like Master-Servant relations. China has employed its might and economic influence to dominate Nigeria's domestic economy. The activities of Chinese economic imperialism are more pronounced in the key economic sectors like oil, Information and Communication Technology, Manufacturing, and commerce. China's domineering imperialist influence on these sectors of Nigeria domestic economy is as a result of its sudden rise as big commodity importer and exporter and major Nigeria bilateral partner. It is on record that for over three decades China accounts for more than 50% rise in Nigeria's imports and exports (World Bank Report,2009; Ojinnaka, 2016, 42). The Chinese manufacturing firms' subject Nigeria's local manufacturing firms to unhealthy competitions. Their low cost manufacturing exports to Nigeria market have undercut Nigeria's local manufacturing firms and put many of them out of business (Ojinnaka, 2016, 42). The most affected are firms that manufacture footwear, fabrics and other clothing in Aba, auto spare parts manufacturing firms in Nnewi and firms producing building materials in Onitsha. All of which are in the South East Nigeria (Biafra Land). This has almost crippled indigenous industrial development in Nigeria and results in massive job losses, as the Nigeria government has failed to put measures in place to protect local firms from the unhealthy and unequal competition from the Chinese firms.

Against the background of the foregoing analysis, the greatest problem facing Nigeria's economic development is China economic imperialism that has manipulated Nigeria to ensure the continued massive importation of Chinese substandard goods into the country .The increasing demand for Chinese cheap goods by Nigerians have not only worsened Nigeria's trade deficit in favor of China, but enabled China to gain comparative trade advantage over Nigeria. Because Nigeria is heavily indebted to bilateral and multilateral loan Organizations some of which are of Chinese origin, the country has weak economic base and lack institutional capacity, and is incapable of taking on the challenges arising from its relations with China (Ojinnaka, 2016, 42).

Also the international financial elite's organizations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization have through their policies of trade liberalization, currency devaluation and other economic measures foisted on Nigeria created problem of underutilization of Nigeria's productive capacity. These international institutions has aided Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria and made it possible for China to use its capacity as a world economic power to influence the policies of these institutions: the World Bank, IMF and WTO to its advantage at the determinate of Nigeria. It is these same institutions that shape the direction of the world economy to the advantages of the developed and industrial powers like China.

Again, China cannot be said to be altruistic in its dealings with Nigeria. Its development assistance and comprehensive financial incentives to Nigeria represents its bold strategy to advance its

national interests and entrench its economic imperialist influence in Nigeria. For instance, Chinese policy of economic rejuvenation or what is aptly called “The Chinese Dream” is an extension of its “Soft Power” concept aimed at providing alternative development model to Washington consensus. Nigeria's oil deal with China is a testing ground for Chinese evolving “Resources Diplomacy” aimed at ensuring long term economic security for its people, and influence in Nigeria (Ojinnaka, 2016, 42). Chinese neo-colonial and imperialist tendencies in Nigeria is obvious, as she has demonstrated this through its ambition and has made frantic moves to replace Nigeria's dependency on Western nations, with dependence on China.

To say the least, in spite of the negative impacts of Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria resulting from their numerous bilateral and multilateral engagements in the areas of science and technology, human resources development, Medicare, agriculture and Information and Communication Technology the two countries needs each other. Since we live in complex interdependent world of enmeshed globalization, Nigeria and China needs each other for mutual beneficial, peaceful and stable international system.

IV. Conclusion

China like other modern day imperial powers are not altruistic, and not in Nigeria to develop Nigeria for Nigerians. Its interests is pure economic. Its engagements in Nigeria are a testing ground for its evolving resources diplomacy and its efforts to ensure long term economic security for its domestic industries and secure markets for its produce. Because of several political, economic and institutional weaknesses resulting from lack of domestic capacity, Nigeria authorities is unable checkmate Chinese economic imperialism in the country. Given the disparities and unequal capacities between the two countries, particularly in the areas of Information and Communication Technology, availability of investment capital and managerial expertise, China's economic, financial and trade relations have greatly undermined Nigeria's economic development.

Ojinnaka (2016, 42). contends that Since 1960, Nigeria gained political independence from Great Britain, Nigeria has been economically vulnerable due to the economic foundation of her foreign policy has been weak. The emergent Nigerian political leadership was unable to carry out radical reorganization of Nigeria's economic system and financial relationship. Hence no solid economic foundation was laid or measures taken to address the structural and institutional inadequacies for possible economic development of the country. Owing to these institutional and structural weaknesses, China has systematically exerted great economic influence on Nigeria, and has created great disparity and widened economic gap between the two countries. Thus Sino-Nigeria economic relations have been to the advantage of China. The Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria is better explained by the scenario where China exports finished products to Nigeria, while Nigeria exports raw materials to China. Also, Low commodity prices, in addition to being heavily indebted to Chinese loan organizations have made Nigeria unable to reap the full benefits of her relations with China and kept the country under the perpetual grip of Chinese economic imperialism (Ojinnaka, 2016, 42).

Equally, the monopolization of Nigeria economic resources by Chinese Multinational Corporations and Financial Institutions, made possible the great portion of Nigeria market: manufactures, commodities and services to be controlled and dominated by China. Accordingly, the disparity in the availability of economic resources and level of development between Nigeria and People's Republic of China means that Nigeria is losing out marginalized and its trade relations with China is often detrimental to its national interests. This has made Nigeria to relate with China from position of weakness and stunted development. The economic disparity between China and Nigeria has enabled China to dominate Nigeria's domestic economy. China has taken advantage of Nigeria's weak economic status to negotiate unfair deals, and practice what American President, (Donald Trump) in trade war with China, recently, called "Chinese unfair trade practices (Ojinnaka, 2025).

Wholly, Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria has eroded the economic foundation of Nigeria's development. China has translated its comprehensive financial incentives, trade and investment aid into instrument of effective diplomacy for Nigeria domination. Nigeria is at the receiving end in its economic relations with China, as the country has been reduced to a mere

dumping ground for Chinese goods. This has undermined the ability of Nigeria's local firms to function to full productive capacity, and resulted in massive job displacement of the locals. The problems created by Chinese evasive and imperialist economic activities in Nigeria can be better appreciated by the number of Nigerian firms that have either gone bankrupt or crippled by the stiff competition from Chinese firms whose products, though often substandard, are highly subsidized by their home government. Worst still, the Nigeria's regulatory agencies have proved itself incompetent, corrupt, institutionally weak and unable to regulate the activities of Chinese "corporate monsters" whose influence have virtually eroded Nigeria's hope for indigenous industrial development (Ojinnaka, 2016).

In the other hand, almost all the key sectors of Nigeria's economy have attracted Chinese investors. Chinese investor have made serious in road in the Nigeria's oil sector, agriculture, information and Communication Technology and hydro power station. Particularly, the Nigeria National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC) not too long ago reached agreement with SINOPEC, a Chinese oil firm to develop Oil Mining Lease (OML) 66 and 64 located in the Niger Delta. The agreement that gave China 25% of its daily oil needs from Nigeria has strengthened Chinese economic imperialism in Nigeria. The deal made China to placed high priority on maintaining strong relations with Nigeria to secure uninterrupted oil supply for its domestic use. Chinese hegemonic and imperialist approach in its relations with Nigeria has robbed the country the benefits of economic development and nation building.

Against the background of the foregoing analysis, the major problem of China's economic imperialism in Nigeria is Chinese exploitation and asymmetry relations with Nigeria. The contemporary Chinese economic imperialism is the factors responsible for Nigeria underdevelopment. The Chinese economic imperialism has taken over from western imperialism and finishing what the western consensus started. Today, the commanding issue is how to ensure that Nigeria and China bilateral trade and investment relations are equitable, mutual beneficial and none-exploitative. This will free Nigeria from the iron grip of Chinese economic imperialism.

V. Recommendations

Against the background of the foregoing, the paper makes the following recommendations:

The paper recommends for radical reorganization of the foundation of Nigeria external economic and financial relations. This will end the nation's institutional and structural deficiencies and its dependence on imported foreign capital, and give local entrepreneurs access to credit facilities to procure industrial machines and equipment needed to step up their production capacity. This will also encourage local manufacturing firms to improve the quality of their products and to function in a highly competitive business environment.

The Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON), NAFDAC and other regulatory agencies should be properly funded, re-structured, re-organized, and institutionally empowered to enhance the performance of their functions and statutory responsibilities. The relevant regulatory agencies in Nigeria need to stem the importation of substandard Chinese goods and services. Also, the relevant environmental regulatory agencies should be proactive in protecting the Nigeria's environment from the unhealthy environmental practices of Chinese firms.

The paper recommends that Nigeria needs to redefine and reassert its economic relations with the Peoples' Republic of China. A situation where Nigeria exports only mere raw materials to China, while China floods Nigeria market with all types of goods and services is unrealistic and unacceptable. To stem the widening trade imbalance between the two countries and to checkmate Chinese economic imperialism, the paper recommends the following measures:

The Nigeria government should diversify exports base and ensure that only goods that are not produced in Nigeria are imported from China.

The Nigeria government should encourage local manufacturing firms by subsidizing goods that China has comparative advantages over Nigeria's local producers. This will go a long way to encourage the local producing firms and protecting them from Chinese unfair trade practices and unhealthy competitions.

Again, Nigeria should not allow the Chinese to have a stranglehold on Nigeria economy. It is evident that Chinese imperialist economic strategy is working to displace the West from Nigeria and to establish hegemonic control and influence over the country's economy. The paper recommends Nigeria should rather strike a balance in her diplomatic and economic relations with both the Western countries and China in the order to learn from their respective development experiences.

The paper recommends diversification of Nigeria external debt sources, enhanced transparency, and strengthened debt management frameworks to mitigate risks associated with Chinese loans and its unhealthy influence in Nigeria. It underscores the needs for policy strategies that balance the benefits of international financing with the imperatives of economic sovereignty and sustainable development.

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