



Exploring Chinese Aid and Nigeria–China Relations

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ABSTRACT

China's developmental aid to Nigeria and its effects on Nigerian relations are examined in this thesis. The study examines China's diplomatic and economic interactions with Africa since the 1950s. The main goal is to understand how Chinese aid has affected Nigeria's foreign policy and economy. The research identifies three phases in China-Africa relations: diplomatic ties during the African independence movements, China's 1971 UN Security Council membership, and economic liberalization and growth after the Maoist era. Chinese aid to Africa, which began in the 1950s, has risen, making China a key international development player. Nigeria is used to examine how Chinese funding has affected development and bilateral relations. The paper examines Chinese aid to Nigeria, its intentions, and its effects on Nigeria-China relations. It also emphasizes Nigeria's strategic importance to China due to its large oil reserves and growing Chinese involvement in the oil industry. Chinese aid has improved Nigeria's infrastructure, economy, and diplomatic relations, according to the theory. The risk of neo-colonialism and the viability of aid-driven programs are additional issues. This study analyzes data from books, journal articles, and policy papers to summarize the China-Nigeria relationship. It helps international development and foreign aid discourse by revealing China's foreign policy processes and their effects on Africa. This research is important for international relations and development policymakers, academics, and stakeholders. They stress strategic collaborations and the need for African nations to use foreign aid for sustainable development. The thesis concludes with recommendations to maximize Chinese aid and minimize its hazards to support Nigeria's long-term development goals.



Keywords: Chinese aid, Nigeria–China relations, interdependence theory, South–South cooperation, foreign policy, development assistance, infrastructure diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, China's global rise has profoundly influenced the geopolitical and economic contours of Africa. The continent has witnessed a dramatic increase in Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI), concessional loans, and aid programs under the framework of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Nigeria, as Africa's largest economy and most populous state, has emerged as one of the primary beneficiaries—and critics—of Chinese engagement. Since the formal establishment of diplomatic relations in 1971, China has expanded its presence in Nigeria across multiple sectors, including infrastructure, manufacturing, education, energy, and technology. This partnership has evolved from ideological solidarity during the Cold War to pragmatic cooperation based on mutual economic interests.

The rationale behind China's aid to Nigeria is often interpreted through competing lenses. On one hand, Beijing frames its assistance as part of a South–South cooperation model built on equality and mutual benefit. On the other hand, Western scholars argue that China's engagement in Africa is strategically motivated by its search for resources and markets. Nigeria, endowed with vast oil reserves and serving as a gateway to West Africa, represents a crucial node in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its broader African policy. Consequently, the dynamics of Chinese aid to Nigeria are not merely developmental but are deeply embedded in China's foreign policy calculus.

This study interrogates how Chinese aid affects Nigeria's economic development, political sovereignty, and foreign policy orientation. It explores the question: how does Chinese assistance redefine Nigeria–China relations in terms of power, dependency, and reciprocity? The article contends that while China's developmental aid has enabled Nigeria to overcome infrastructure bottlenecks and foster technological transfer, it also creates new dependencies that risk undermining long-term autonomy. Understanding this duality is crucial for policymakers and scholars seeking to balance cooperation with caution.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

This study's purpose is to investigate the function that Chinese development assistance plays within the context of the recipient country, using Nigeria as an example. According to Rupp (2008), the amount of money that China donates to Africa has been growing, which means that African nations need to make sure they put that money to good use by cultivating better relations with China.

The challenges that have been brought about as a result of receiving aid from other countries have had a considerable influence on how states carry out their foreign policy and interact with one another. This is because help provided through foreign aid could be utilized as a tool to

conduct inter-state diplomatic behavior and foreign policy behavior in general, particularly for developing countries and Africa as a whole. It is most likely that China's official development assistance (ODA) will influence other countries' foreign policies and relations.

As a result, the purpose of this study is to understand the impact that China's assistance has had on its relations with Nigeria. The economy of Nigeria is primarily dependent on foreign aid and the substantial revenues generated by oil production and exploration, and it is struggling to keep up with mounting debt, just like the majority of other African republics. Since it gained its independence on October 1, 1960, Nigeria has been the recipient of a substantial amount of foreign aid and development support from Western donors as well as several international organizations.

However, throughout the course of the past two decades, China has significantly expanded the amount of foreign development aid it provides to Nigeria. As a result, this study's purpose is to determine whether or not this has resulted in an improvement in ties between China and Nigeria. The assistance provided by China is emerging as a new source of optimism for prospective development partners like Nigeria. These connections have seen a significant expansion over the past two decades, a circumstance that is partly attributable to the donor non-interference policy that has been upheld by China and the Asian countries in general.

China, like every other aid donor, uses foreign assistance to achieve its national objectives in international politics (Axel, Dreher, and Fuchs, 2011). When it comes to providing help to recipient countries, China asserts that it will not impose its political beliefs, ideas, or ideals on such nations. To be wary of neocolonialism and imperialism, one must understand how aid flows and support China-Nigeria relations. This can be done by making use of the data that is readily available to map out the change in the relationship and the increased Chinese aid to Nigeria. Additionally, one must be aware of how Nigeria's foreign policy and relations with China have changed over the course of the period from 1999 to 2015. Therefore, how does the increased flow of aid from China to Nigeria affect the way Nigeria and China interact in terms of their respective foreign policies?

The research has a hole in it regarding the question of how aid has impacted the relationship between Nigeria and China. Alternatively, can we say that the relationship between China and Nigeria has been unaffected in any way by this event? All of these questions have remained at the forefront of the conversation over China and Nigeria's bilateral relations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective and purpose of this study are to ascertain the fundamental roles and achievements of Chinese foreign aid in Africa and Nigeria, to achieve lasting peace in both regions. There have often been submissions that the intervention failed at many quarters, while others believe results were positive; therefore, the mediation was successful. Specifically, the following objectives will guide the study's conduct.

- To assess the historical origins of China's aid to Africa, Nigeria

- To consider the nature of the Chinese aid flow to Nigeria
- To achieve the objective, the following research questions have been formulated:
- To identify other reasons that have shaped the relationship between Nigeria and China

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that will guide this study include: The following questions will therefore be answered in this study: One of the objectives of this research is to compare the approaches taken in both China and Nigeria. Among them, the position of the Chinese foreign policy aid is particularly noteworthy.

- What, when, how, and why has China been assisting Nigeria?
- What is the type of Chinese aid flow to Nigeria?
- What is the role of Chinese aid in Nigeria-China Relations?
- What other factors account for Nigeria-China relations?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Most of the past research works focusing on China's assistance have provided more emphasis on Africa in a relatively broader context. More specifically, the authors of these earlier studies on China's assistance were mainly coming from the traditional donors' angle. These authors sought to demystify the veil of obscurity that characterized the escalation of China's aid to Africa. Consequently, the Western authors collectively condemned China's developmental assistance based on the following reasons. In light of the above findings, it is as a result of the findings of this research that the support which China offers Nigeria is an independent variable that impacts Nigeria. The Nigerian journey to democracy in 1999 brought with it new diplomatic and business relations with China.

The question of whether or not Chinese aid is tailored with the goal of exploiting African natural resources under the pretext of providing support for development has been the subject of discussion for some time now. However, the purpose of this study is to give data that shows the many stages of Chinese assistance to the continent in regard to a variety of issues, including but not limited to trade and foreign policy, in an effort to provide a more objective and balanced perspective on the topic.

The contemporary research on foreign policy and aid is still limited, and thus it is essential to fill the gap to effectively analyze the role of China's aid for the China-Nigeria relationship or as an actor that shapes the relationship between the two states. This is necessary in order to fully comprehend the role that China plays in influencing the relationship between the two states. China's aid to Africa has been steadily growing, and it allows China to have some level of influence in its dealings with the recipient states. This study aims to give information that can help policymakers and academics play a more active role in gaining a better understanding of the role that China's aid plays as an influential element on recipient state policies and relations toward China.

Through this study, students may get a better understanding of the extent of the actualization of China's assistance in the China-Nigeria relations, which may, in turn, be of benefit to the Nigerian parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and other policymakers in Nigeria. Thus, for the purpose of providing clearer understanding of how Chinese aid may be used as a tool to enhance the relation between states, Other social scientists and academics, focusing on the field of international relations or international political economy, may find China's developmental assistance, as a relatively new and evolving form of aid that potentially affects the relation between recipient governments, useful. As a result, this provides a platform for additional study and research on Chinese aid and its interaction with the states that are the recipients of that aid.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF AID

The concept of aid has largely been shaped by Western nations through bilateral and multilateral arrangements, mainly administered by the IMF, World Bank, and UN. Western countries use the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to disburse aid to developing nations, but the emergence of new donor powers, such as China, has altered this dynamic. China's economic growth has motivated it to expand internationally, providing financing for infrastructure and trade in Africa without conditions on governance or transparency, unlike traditional donors such as the IMF and World Bank (Aibanga & Brokow, 2010).

Scholars have long debated China's motives for aid to Africa. Critics describe it as "old wine in a new bottle," suggesting it replicates Western patterns of influence but under a "Made in China" label (Jean-Pierre, 2010).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AID

Aid has been described variously as foreign aid (Stephen, 2008), international assistance, or international development cooperation (Degnbol-Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen, 1999). The modern concept of aid emerged in the 1950s, following George C. Marshall's 1947 plan to rebuild Europe after World War II—known as the *Marshall Plan*. President Truman's 1949 inaugural address also inspired global development assistance, emphasizing shared human responsibility (Browne, 2006).

Developmental assistance became a post-war global phenomenon, leading to the creation of multilateral and bilateral institutions for aid delivery (Jerker et al., 1997). Initially, U.S. aid reflected Cold War priorities of security and commercial interests. By the late 1950s and 1960s, aid was reframed as a moral duty to support developing economies (Degnbol-Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen, 1999).

Origin of Chinese Aid in Africa

The concept of aid expanded after World War II as new global institutions emerged (Carlos & Nicolas, 2010; Jerker, Gloria, & Nicolas, 1997). Sub-Saharan Africa became a major recipient

of official development assistance, largely tied to colonial legacies (Roger, 2007). Since the 1970s, other donors, including China, have begun competing with Western states (Efem & Ubi, 2014). China's rationale for aid draws on shared historical experiences of underdevelopment, aiming to help African countries replicate its economic success (Ubi, 2010). Tan-Mullins et al. (2010) trace China's aid history back to the Cold War, noting the country's shift from ideological to economic engagement. Giorgia and Marco (2014) identify three phases of Chinese aid: the Maoist period, the limited 1970s phase, and post-1990s expansion focused on mutual economic gains. As Kristian and Comte (2010) note, China's engagement is not new but a re-emergence reflecting decades of evolving diplomacy.

In 2006, China declared the "Year of Africa" and launched its *China–Africa Policy* (Kenneth, 2013). Nigeria established ties with China in 1960, deepened after China's 1971 entry into the UN (Xiaoyun, 2008). By 2002, under President Obasanjo, Chinese aid—mainly bilateral—rose sharply, particularly in the oil sector, reaching about USD 16 million annually (Xiaoyun, 2008). However, due to China's limited transparency, scholars argue that available figures are estimates and possibly inflated (David, 2008; Lum et al., 2009). Analysts contend that China's aid is driven by resource and diplomatic motives, which this study explores.

NATURE OF CHINESE AID TO NIGERIA

China's aid to Africa has evolved considerably over the past three decades (Brautigam, 2011). Beyond humanitarian goals, it increasingly supports economic and political interests (Paula, 1998).

Chinese aid to Nigeria has moved through three phases: (1) 1979–1994, dominated by interest-free loans and grants; (2) 1995–2004, marked by infrastructure and technical cooperation; and (3) post-2004, involving joint ventures and enhanced financial support. This structure reflects China's growing use of aid to advance investment and trade partnerships.

CHINESE AID TO THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

Chinese educational assistance in Africa has expanded in scope and mechanisms (Xianyun, 2006; Wan, 2015). Scholarships, teacher exchanges, and the construction of schools are key components. Kenneth King (2013) notes that China's education aid is intertwined with its policies on science, health, and culture. Confucius Institutes across Africa further promote Chinese language and culture, raising questions about whether this reflects cultural diplomacy or educational development.

James (2015) observes that Chinese aid packages now include higher education, vocational training, and partnerships with multilateral agencies like the EXIM Bank. Through FOCAC, China has institutionalized scholarship programs and capacity-building for African students (Adams, 2014). The cooperation in education has evolved through four phases since 1956, moving from early student exchanges to comprehensive educational collaboration in the 21st century (Hannusch, 2012; Ferdjani, 2012).

ECONOMIC NATURE OF CHINESE AID

According to Nowak (2015), China's foreign aid, outlined in its *White Papers*, primarily targets Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific, integrating aid with investment and trade. The Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), launched in 2000, institutionalized these economic ties (Nowak, 2015). Dubosse (2010) emphasizes that China's 2006 *Africa Policy Paper* reinforced this economic approach, expanding aid into sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and debt relief. Bankole and Adewunyi (2008) highlight the rapid growth of China–Nigeria trade, tripling between 2002 and 2007. By 2009, China had provided USD 3 billion in preferential loans and USD 2 billion in buyer credits (Dubosse, 2010). While traditional Western partners remain key donors, their relationships have been criticized as exploitative (Bankole & Adewunyi, 2008). In contrast, China's engagement—though driven by strategic interests—offers Nigeria new investment avenues in technology, education, and health.

CHINA'S TECHNOLOGICAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL AID TO NIGERIA

Following Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, China became a leading partner in infrastructure and technology (Utomi, 2008). Many projects—roads, telecommunications, power, and transport—were undertaken by Chinese firms such as CCECC and ZTE. China also partnered with FAO to boost Nigeria's agricultural productivity through a USD 50 million initiative (FAO Report, 2013). China's contribution to Nigeria's space program, including the launch of *NigComSat-1* in 2004, symbolizes its broader technological cooperation (Okonkwo, 2015). These initiatives serve both Nigeria's development goals and China's strategic interests in securing resources and diplomatic partnerships.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several theories explain aid relations—classical realism, dependency, constructivism, and idealism—but this study applies Interdependence Theory by Keohane and Nye (2001), which views aid as part of global interconnectedness.

INTERDEPENDENCE THEORY

Originally proposed by Thibaut and Kelly (1959), interdependence theory examines how actors' decisions are influenced by mutual dependence. Keohane and Nye (2001) argue that globalization heightens such interdependence. The theory's key assumptions include:

1. States depend on one another for achieving outcomes.
2. Relationships are often asymmetrical.

In the China–Nigeria context, China relies on Nigeria for oil, while Nigeria depends on Chinese financing and technology (Keohane & Nye, 1997; Eureka, 2011). This mutual reliance illustrates an unequal but functional interdependence shaped by economic and political exchange. As Clarke (2006) notes, the theory helps explain how nations define relations through economic and policy ties.

SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed literature on the evolution, nature, and rationale of China's aid to Africa and Nigeria. While much research focuses on Africa broadly, fewer studies analyze how Chinese aid specifically influences Nigeria's foreign and economic policies. This review highlights that China's engagement is both developmental and strategic, shaped by interdependence between the two nations. The following chapter analyzes how Chinese aid operates as an instrument of influence within Nigeria–China relations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine the dynamics of Chinese aid in Nigeria. The qualitative component involves a historical analysis of the evolution of Chinese assistance using primary sources such as agreements, official documents, and diplomatic records. In addition, interviews with key stakeholders—government officials, diplomats, and scholars—offer contextual insights into the influence of Chinese aid on Nigeria–China relations (Ayinla and Folarin, 2019).

The quantitative component focuses on aid flow analysis, gathering data from financial reports, official aid databases, and interviews on the volume and nature of Chinese aid. Merging quantitative trends with qualitative narratives ensures a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of China–Nigeria relations (Omotoso et al., 2020).

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The historical analysis traces the development of Chinese aid to Nigeria through:

1. **Official Documents:** Examination of policy papers and government publications outlining the goals and frameworks of Chinese assistance (Uba and Katman, 2023).
2. **Agreements:** Review of bilateral treaties defining project types, funding mechanisms, and conditions (BENVEGNU, 2021).
3. **Diplomatic Records:** Analysis of correspondence and memos between China and Nigeria to understand the diplomatic context of aid (NWOKOLOBIA and IKENGA, 2023).
4. **Chronological Mapping:** Compilation of major milestones and turning points in Chinese aid to Nigeria (Uba and Katman, 2023).
5. **Stakeholder Perspectives:** Interviews with former officials and diplomats involved in aid processes.
6. **Contextualization:** Linking aid developments to broader historical, political, and economic trends (Wang et al., 2023).
7. **Challenges:** Identifying implementation difficulties and responses over time.

AID FLOW ANALYSIS

This stage quantitatively examines the scale and composition of Chinese aid to Nigeria.

- **Financial Records:** Review of official financial documents detailing transactions and allocations (Oyekan and Fayemi, 2023).

- **Aid Databases:** Use of national and international databases recording Chinese aid flows by sector and duration.
- **Interviews:** Engagement with aid officials and NGOs to complement quantitative data (Atsiya and Tenuche, 2019).

Parameters: Key variables include total aid volume, sectoral distribution (infrastructure, health, education), and aid modalities (grants or concessional loans).
Verification: Data triangulated across multiple sources to enhance validity.
Limitations: Restricted data transparency and possible bias in official sources (Blair et al., 2022).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Data Validity and Reliability

Data integrity is maintained through cross-verification of multiple sources to ensure consistency and accuracy. This method minimizes bias and strengthens reliability, ensuring findings genuinely reflect the dynamics of Chinese aid in Nigeria (Zwanbin, 2020).

LIMITATIONS

Generalization

Findings are context-specific and should not be generalized beyond the study's time frame, given the evolving nature of international aid and political dynamics (Xiao and Liu, 2021).

Data Access

Access to sensitive diplomatic records may be restricted for confidentiality or security reasons, limiting detailed analysis. To mitigate this, publicly available data, official statements, and interviews are utilized. Nonetheless, restricted access may affect the study's comprehensiveness (Oyekan and Fayemi, 2023).

By acknowledging these constraints, the study maintains transparency and credibility, ensuring results are interpreted within a well-defined scope.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of findings from the study on the reasons for Chinese aid and the dynamics of Nigeria–China relations. It draws from both quantitative and qualitative data collected from primary and secondary sources. The results are discussed under key themes, including Chinese aid, trade, and investment, as well as their implications for Nigeria's socio-economic development. The discussion also integrates findings from literature and stakeholder interviews to provide a balanced understanding of how Chinese engagement influences Nigeria's development trajectory.

CHINESE AID TO NIGERIA

Chinese aid has become a central aspect of Nigeria–China relations, positioning China among Nigeria's top bilateral donors. According to Amusan (2024), China's aid to Nigeria has increased significantly over the last decade, mainly targeting infrastructure, agriculture, and

education. Much of this aid is provided through concessional or soft loans, raising concerns about debt sustainability and the potential overexploitation of Nigeria's natural resources (Cheng, 2023).

A considerable portion of Chinese aid has been directed towards landmark infrastructure projects such as the Lagos–Ibadan Expressway, Abuja–Kaduna Railway, airport modernization, and ICT infrastructure (Amusan, 2025). Nigerian authorities, including the Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, have publicly commended China's role, describing Chinese firms as central to Nigeria's infrastructure renaissance (Amusan, 2024).

However, several challenges have been observed. Chinese aid agreements often contain confidentiality clauses that limit public access to information, making monitoring and accountability difficult (AidData, n.d.). Critics argue that this lack of transparency could foster corruption and hinder the sustainability of aid outcomes (Cheng, 2023). Moreover, the predominance of Chinese contractors in aid projects limits local job creation and capacity development.

Despite these concerns, the overall impact of Chinese aid remains visible in Nigeria's infrastructural transformation and agricultural development. It has also strengthened Nigeria's diplomatic and economic ties with China, making the Asian giant a crucial development partner (Amusan, 2024).

NIGERIA–CHINA TRADE RELATIONS

Trade relations between Nigeria and China have experienced rapid growth, making China Nigeria's largest trading partner. Data from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2021) shows that trade between both countries reached ₦2.9 trillion (US\$7.1 billion) in the first half of 2021, representing 13.2% of Nigeria's total trade volume. Nigeria exported goods worth N442.3 billion (US\$1.1 billion) to China, while imports from China stood at N2.4 trillion (US\$5.9 billion), indicating an unfavorable trade balance (NBS, 2021).

Nigeria primarily exports crude oil and other raw materials, while China exports finished goods such as electronics, machinery, and textiles. This imbalance has raised concerns among economists who warn that such dependency on imports could harm Nigeria's domestic industries. Nonetheless, China's trade involvement has also led to significant infrastructural and industrial growth in Nigeria through investments linked to trade (China–Aid, n.d.).

Chinese construction companies, notably CCECC, have implemented key infrastructure projects such as the Abuja–Kaduna and Lagos–Ibadan railways. These projects have improved transportation efficiency, job creation, and economic activity. Similarly, China's investments in power, manufacturing, and construction sectors have helped bridge critical infrastructure gaps in Nigeria.

Additionally, China has supported Nigeria through grants, soft loans, and technical assistance programs. For instance, in 2014, China provided a US\$20 million grant under the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) to boost Nigeria's agricultural productivity (Xinhua,

2014). However, there are growing concerns about the lack of transparency and the conditionality attached to these aids, which sometimes favor Chinese companies (China–Aid, n.d.).

Overall, while the Nigeria–China trade relationship remains asymmetric, it continues to play a significant role in promoting Nigeria’s economic and infrastructural development (Onyeji, 2021).

CHINESE INVESTMENT IN NIGERIA

Chinese investment in Nigeria has expanded considerably, making China one of the largest foreign investors. According to the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), China invested approximately US\$3.1 billion in 2019, accounting for 5.5% of Nigeria’s total foreign investment. The sectors that benefit most include infrastructure, manufacturing, and oil and gas. In the infrastructure sector, major Chinese projects include the Abuja–Kaduna Railway, Lagos–Ibadan Expressway, and the Lekki Deep Seaport. These projects have not only enhanced connectivity and trade but also created employment opportunities for Nigerians (Cheng, 2023). Chinese companies have also established factories in Nigeria’s manufacturing sector, particularly in textiles, engineering, and automotive industries, contributing to industrialization. In the oil and gas sector, Chinese firms such as CNPC and Sinopec have made significant investments in exploration and production, motivated by Nigeria’s vast energy resources and strategic location in West Africa. However, some scholars caution that these investments could reinforce Nigeria’s dependence on extractive industries and reduce incentives for diversification (Zhang, 2022).

Critics also argue that Chinese investments may undermine local entrepreneurship due to Chinese firms’ access to low-cost financing and state support (Shen, 2020). Despite these concerns, Chinese investments have played a substantial role in Nigeria’s development by improving infrastructure, creating jobs, and facilitating technology transfer.

DISCUSSION

The study’s findings reveal that Chinese aid and investment in Nigeria have produced both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, they have contributed significantly to infrastructure development, improved agricultural productivity, and supported education (Cheng, 2023; Liu, 2022). Chinese engagement has helped fill Nigeria’s infrastructure gap and accelerated economic growth.

However, the findings also point to several challenges, including limited transparency, governance issues, and fears of economic dependency (Deborah, 2011; Zheng, 2016; Naohiro & Yukinori, 2014). Stakeholder interviews and surveys show that Chinese aid is driven by economic, geopolitical, and strategic interests (Lyman, 2005; Aden, 2008). This dual nature of Chinese assistance—combining development and strategic motives—creates both opportunities and risks for Nigeria.

While infrastructure development has been substantial, overreliance on Chinese loans may create debt burdens and limit policy independence. Scholars such as Brautigam (2011) and Armstrong (2013) argue that Chinese aid, though beneficial, often prioritizes donor interests. Furthermore, Chinese dominance in project implementation reduces opportunities for Nigerian contractors and workers (Wenran, 2008; Zhang, 2022).

The findings align with earlier literature emphasizing that while Chinese aid fosters economic growth, it should be carefully managed to ensure sustainability and mutual benefit (Onyeji, 2021). Effective institutional mechanisms and transparent governance are necessary to ensure that aid and investment align with Nigeria's national development goals.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that Chinese aid, trade, and investment have become integral to Nigeria's development and foreign relations. China's engagement has contributed to infrastructure development, industrialization, and economic expansion. However, issues such as debt sustainability, lack of transparency, and dependency risks must be addressed (Deborah, 2010; Wenran, 2008).

Recommendations:

1. Promote Transparency and Accountability: Both Nigeria and China should disclose aid and loan terms and ensure open monitoring of project implementation.
2. Strengthen Local Capacity: Encourage joint ventures and skill transfer to enhance local participation in Chinese-funded projects.
3. Align Aid with National Priorities: Ensure that aid and investment projects complement Nigeria's long-term development strategies, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing, and education.
4. Address Trade Imbalances: Develop policies that promote Nigerian exports and reduce reliance on Chinese imports.
5. Enhance Institutional Oversight: Strengthen governance mechanisms to ensure aid utilization is transparent and corruption-free.
6. Encourage Further Research: More comparative studies are needed to assess the long-term developmental effects of Chinese aid in other African contexts (Alden, 2008; Brautigam, 2011).

In conclusion, the Nigeria–China relationship has evolved into a multifaceted partnership that offers significant opportunities for growth and cooperation. Nonetheless, to ensure that this relationship remains mutually beneficial, both nations must work towards achieving transparency, balanced trade, and sustainable development outcomes.

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