

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: EVIDENCE AND IMPLICATIONS FROM THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

Abstract

This article examines international collaboration in the Global South, with a focus on Nigeria's engagement in multilateral partnerships, South–South and triangular cooperation, and bilateral relations. Drawing on policy documents, public opinion surveys, and selected cooperative frameworks involving China, European Union member states, and international institutions, the study situates Nigeria as an active actor shaping development outcomes, institutional capacity, and global governance reforms. Using a qualitative, interpretive approach, the analysis engages broader debates on development cooperation, equity, and international relations. The findings highlight opportunities for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and inclusive development, alongside persistent challenges related to geopolitical asymmetries, domestic policy coherence, and structural inequalities characteristic of the Global South. The article concludes with policy recommendations to better align international collaboration with Nigeria's national development objectives.

Keywords: international collaboration; Global South; Nigeria; South–South cooperation; development cooperation; global governance.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a colaboração internacional no Sul Global, com foco no engajamento da Nigéria em parcerias multilaterais, na cooperação Sul–Sul e triangular, bem como em relações bilaterais. Com base em documentos de políticas públicas, pesquisas de opinião sobre cooperação global e em estruturas selecionadas de cooperação envolvendo a China, Estados membros da União Europeia e instituições internacionais, o estudo posiciona a Nigéria como um ator ativo na conformação de resultados de desenvolvimento, do fortalecimento da capacidade institucional e de reformas da governança global. A partir de uma abordagem qualitativa e interpretativa, a análise dialoga com debates mais amplos sobre cooperação para o desenvolvimento, equidade e relações internacionais. Os resultados destacam oportunidades de troca de conhecimentos, fortalecimento de capacidades e promoção do desenvolvimento inclusivo, ao mesmo tempo em que evidenciam desafios persistentes relacionados a assimetrias geopolíticas, à coerência das políticas domésticas e a desigualdades estruturais características do Sul Global. O artigo conclui com recomendações de políticas voltadas a alinhar de forma mais eficaz a colaboração internacional aos objetivos nacionais de desenvolvimento da Nigéria.

Palavras-chave: colaboração internacional; Sul Global; Nigéria; cooperação Sul–Sul; cooperação para o desenvolvimento; governança global.

Introduction

International collaboration has become central to development strategies in the twenty-first century, especially across the Global South, where countries confront deeply rooted

socioeconomic challenges that transcend national and international borders. In regions characterized by structural inequality, limited public resources, and persistent development gaps, collaborations—ranging from South–South cooperation to partnerships with multilateral organizations and traditional development actors—are widely seen as vital instruments for strengthening institutional capacity, facilitating technology transfer, and promoting more inclusive development.

Nigeria, as Africa’s most populous nation, is one of the Global South’s leading economies, offering a compelling picture of both the promise and the complexity of international collaboration. Its strategic relations and partnerships with China and Brazil, its participation in BRICS and BRICSpartner initiatives, and its bilateral cooperation with the European Union and other international actors demonstrate a conscious effort to expand its partnerships and leverage external knowledge, financial resources, and technical expertise to improve national development.

This article examines how international collaboration unfolds in the Nigerian context, highlighting the areas where such partnerships generate tangible development outcomes and exploring their broader implications for cooperation within the Global South. It argues that although Nigeria’s international collaborations have yielded important results, especially in technology transfer, capacity building, and institutional development, their long-term effectiveness depends on how well they match with domestic policy priorities. Given these challenges, international collaboration in Nigeria risks remaining partial and uneven, emphasizing the need for strategies that align global partnerships with national development agendas.

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory research design to analyze the shift in Nigeria’s international collaboration strategy within the Global South. Data was gathered through documentary research and secondary data analysis from official government reports, International Monetary Fund (IMF) world economic outlook and the World Bank and sources were selected based on relevance to South-South Cooperation(SSC) and Nigeria. The analysis was framed using dependency theory and multipolarity framework, by identifying trade patterns as either symmetric or asymmetric using IMF 2025/2026 projections to assess the sustainability of Nigeria’s “Look South” policy after which we integrated the quantitative GDP trends with qualitative diplomatic milestones to determine the implications for Nigeria’s economic situation.

International collaboration in development studies is often framed in terms of development cooperation, South–South cooperation, and triangular cooperation, each representing different ways in which states and non-state actors engage in joint actions aimed at sustainable development. Traditional North–South development models have been criticized for reproducing dependency and asymmetrical power relations. On the other hand, South–South Cooperation (SSC) emphasizes mutual benefit, shared challenges, and knowledge exchange among countries of the Global South. Nigeria’s participation in SSC mechanisms reflects these ideals, but with practical challenges of alignment and coordination. International collaborations can promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences, culture, skills, innovations, and methodologies. In this sense, international collaboration represents a mutually beneficial cooperative arrangement in which all participants benefit, as reflected in the definition proposed by Thomson et al. (2009):

[...] “Collaboration is a process in which autonomous or semi-autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiations, jointly creating rules and structures that govern their

relationships and ways of acting or deciding on the issues that brought them together; it is a process that involves shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions” (THOMSON et al., 2009, p. 3).

It is worth noting that when discussing the trajectory of the historical rationale for successful international collaboration, it must be supported by a set of rules and regulations, some type of structure or framework, and a set of shared challenges. Thus, we can accept that we are living through history embodied as a result of humanity’s political transformation in its search for answers within historical processes within this construct.

Understanding The Global South

The Global South can be understood as a group of countries located in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. In other words, the term has been used to refer to the so-called Third World countries. It is therefore often assumed that countries in the Global South are predominantly low-income, underdeveloped, or developing. However, the term “Global South” does not denote a strictly geographical location. Rather, it refers to countries that share common challenges related to socioeconomic conditions, environmental pressures, and limited access to resources, among other factors. Put differently, the concept transcends geography. Countries of the Global South are frequently characterized by similar structural constraints or face comparable development challenges. According to Jorge (2023), the term “Global South”:

[...] “appears to have been first used in 1969 by the political activist Carl Oglesby. Writing in the liberal Catholic magazine *Commonweal*, Oglesby argued that the Vietnam War represented the culmination of a history of ‘Northern dominance over the Global South.’ However, it was only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991—which marked the end of the so-called ‘Second World’—that the term gained wider currency” (JORGE, 2023, p. 1).

The debate dates back to before 1969, when countries in the Global South were commonly referred to as Third World countries, before the term gained greater prominence after 1991, following the Soviet period. The idea of South–South Cooperation has existed since the post World War II period. According to Jordaan (2021):

[...] “The origins of the South–South tradition of development cooperation can be traced back to the 1955 Bandung Conference. The Bandung Conference brought together 29 Asian and African countries (Latin America was not represented) and sought to promote economic cooperation”[...] (JORDAAN, 2021, p. 454).

Thus, it is necessary to demonstrate that the origins of the Global South can be traced back to the Bandung Conference and initially involved only Asian and African countries as pioneers, in contrast to the contemporary BRICS/Global South configuration, which includes Brazil—a country that gained prominence among many others under the leadership of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Furthermore, according to Gray and Gills (2016):

[...] “It conveyed the hope that development could be achieved by the poor themselves, through mutual assistance among them, and that the entire world order could be transformed to reflect their shared interests vis-à-vis the dominant Global North” [...] (GRAY& GILLS, 2016, p. 557).

Over the course of nearly a century, one of the central goals behind the emergence of the Global South was to enable countries to support each other in addressing shared challenges, while simultaneously reshaping the global order to reflect their interests, rather than solely those of the Global North. In other words, it can be argued that the idea of the Global South emerged in resistance to both capitalism and communism as structured and dominated by the Global North. In short, as countries of the Global South are largely former colonies, Dados and Connell (2012) explain that:

[...] “The term Global South functions as more than a metaphor for underdevelopment. It refers to an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change, through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy, and access to resources are maintained” [...] (DADOS& CONNELL, 2012, p. 13).

The argument for this assertion lies in establishing a clear link between colonialism and the historical formation of the Global South, since any analysis that overlooks colonial legacies risks being conceptually incomplete. The Global South did not emerge in a political or economic vacuum; rather, it took shape through long histories of domination, exploitation, and unequal integration into the global system. For this reason, the term Global South is frequently used not only as an analytical category, but also as a political expression of resistance to global hegemonic power. In this sense, it often represents a counterpoint to the Global North and a critique of neoliberal capitalism and its unequal structures of power.

Hegemonic power can be understood as follows:

[...] “Hegemonic power is the dominance of a particular nation-state in international relations (IR). This may mean dominance of the international system as a whole, of a specific region, or over other countries within a particular sphere of influence. The use of hegemony in IR should be distinguished from the concept of hegemony found in other social sciences, particularly the Gramscian concept, which will be discussed later. In traditional IR, the concept more closely resembles the original Greek term *hēgemonia*, meaning leadership. In IR, therefore, hegemony generally refers to the leadership or dominance of a specific state, either within the world system or among a group of states. When the terms hegemony and power are used together, they are most commonly associated with the realist position in IR” [...] (DOWDING, 2021, p. 307).

It is necessary to reiterate the theme that has been incorporated into the list of other themes; thus, hegemonic power refers to the capacity of certain countries to exercise decisive influence in the economic, political, military, and ideological spheres. Such dominance is rarely sustained solely by force; instead, it is maintained through a combination of coercion and consent. This understanding resonates strongly with Gramsci’s conception of hegemony, which emphasizes the subtle interaction between domination and legitimacy in sustaining global power relations.

The Role Of International Collaboration

The role of international collaboration in the Global South has been widely recognized. International collaboration is essential for the economic transformation and development of any country facilitating the transfer of knowledge and enhancing innovation and development policies. Okpu et al. (2014) argue that “when such policies are formulated through collaborative

efforts, it becomes easier to secure the necessary support for their implementation. This, in turn, leads to better national development” (Okpu et al., 2014, p. 6).

International collaborations have also helped to address some of the development challenges faced across multiple sectors in Nigeria and Africa, including agriculture, health, environment, economy, security, education, and emerging technologies. These partnerships bring together diverse resources and ideas that contribute to tackling these challenges. Examples can be found in Nigeria’s collaboration with BRICS countries and the European Union, which point to impactful growth and meaningful solutions.

Nigeria’s cooperation with China exemplifies an evolving bilateral engagement grounded in infrastructure development, economic diversification, and technological exchange. As reported in 2024, Nigeria and China are enhancing their comprehensive strategic partnership to support infrastructure projects, including the construction of roads, pipelines, railways, and digital networks, as well as deepening economic cooperation across multiple sectors. The government has highlighted mutual interests in poverty alleviation and the potential for expanded collaboration in fields such as artificial intelligence and financial technologies, demonstrating the multidimensional nature of these international partnerships. (Global Times, 2024)

The European Union (EU) has maintained cooperation agreements with Nigeria covering collaboration in education, and health system strengthening. For instance, the EU’s Global Gateway initiative signed a cooperation agreement with Nigeria in 2024 worth €18 million to boost research capacity, educational mobility, and development of local industries, emphasizing the role of international support in increasing domestic skills and preparing the future workforce. (European Commission, 2024)

Also working in collaboration with World Health Organization(WHO):

[...] “In August 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) initiated a partnership with the Private Sector Health Alliance of Nigeria (PSHAN), under the Adopt a Healthcare Facility Programme (ADHFP), with the aim of establishing a global-standard primary healthcare center (PHC) in each of Nigeria’s 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs)” [...] (ADIELE et al., 2024, p. 19).

These international collaborations have facilitated responses to some of the country’s multifaceted socioeconomic challenges.

Another impactful international collaboration is the Nigeria- Brazil partnership.Both countries members of BRICS-related cooperation frameworks, recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enable direct flights between the two countries. This is expected to facilitate business activities, increase investment, trade, and tourism, and ultimately promote economic growth. Another strategic collaboration can be seen in recent initiatives to sign new agreements in the areas of agriculture, trade, energy transition, and aviation during the visit of Nigeria’s President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to Brazil. Nigeria and Brazil have maintained bilateral relations for 65 years.

Furthermore, in agriculture, high-level Brazilian research institutions willpartner with Nigeria to improve livestock health and genetics, as well as best agriculturalpractices. Through the South-

South and Triangular Cooperation(SSTC)¹ framework, Nigeria has integrated advanced aquaculture and irrigation technologies that are better suited to its tropical climate. (Business Day, 2025). According to Agência Brasil (2025), “memoranda of understanding were also signed for the training of diplomats, political consultations on bilateral, regional, and international issues, as well as between the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) and the Bank of Agriculture of Nigeria (BOA) to promote trade and investment.” These initiatives are expected to increase food security, create jobs, increase exports, and generate numerous opportunities for Nigeria. Generally, Nigeria’s collaboration with Brazil and China has yielded measurable results. The partnership with BRICS has brought about trade diversification, financing and geopolitical voice to Nigeria.

There is a growing recognition that the so-called Global South is gaining economic and geopolitical relevance, making it increasingly difficult for Western powers to ignore its influence. At the heart of this global reconfiguration is Nigeria, whose strategic importance has expanded along with the intensified cooperation between Global South and BRICS+ countries. These developments reflect a broader challenge to long-standing Western hegemony, particularly in the spheres of finance, trade, and global governance.

A significant manifestation of this shift can be observed in the consolidation of BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—and its expanding partnerships. The growing assertiveness of these countries represents an attempt to build alternatives to economic and political institutions dominated by the West. The recent G20 Summit illustrates this dynamic. After years of advocacy for recognition and inclusion, the BRICS countries achieved greater prominence within the forum, and for the first time an African country, South Africa, hosted the Summit. This event carried strong symbolic and political significance, signaling the growing visibility of the Global South in global decision-making arenas.

The reaction of the United States to this transformation has been marked by tension. The absence of the U.S. president at the Summit, accompanied by hostile rhetoric directed at South Africa, reflected discomfort with the country’s growing alignment with BRICS and the deepening of its ties with China. Officially, the boycott was justified by allegations about the killing of White South Africans, framed within a “Trumpist” discourse—here understood as adherence to “Trumpism”, an ideology characterized by nationalist, right-wing populism, an “America First” foreign policy, geared towards hegemonic dictatorial authoritarianism. However, this justification seems insufficient in the face of broader geopolitical developments, particularly South Africa’s strategic cooperation with China and its participation in initiatives that challenge U.S. financial dominance.

Indeed, South Africa and China recently launched the first BRICS loan denominated in Chinese yuan rather than U.S. dollars, reinforcing efforts to diversify global financial arrangements and

¹South-South Cooperation is guided by the principle of solidarity among developing countries, distinguishing itself from the traditional concept of charity. Triangular Cooperation, on the other hand, is a hybrid model involving a beneficiary (e.g., Nigeria), a pivotal partner (e.g., China), and a facilitating partner (e.g., United Nations). For further details, see: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (UNOSSC). About South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Available at: <https://unsouthsouth.org/about/about-sstc/?hl=en-US> Accessed on: Jan. 12, 2026.

reduce dependence on dollar-based systems (Global Times, 2025). Such initiatives are widely perceived as threats to U.S. economic hegemony, especially at a time when the dominance of the dollar—established since the 1970s—is increasingly being challenged by emerging economies.

Nigeria occupies a similarly strategic position within this global context. In recent years, the country has intensified economic cooperation with China, including expanding currency swap agreements throughout 2024. At the same time, Nigeria has taken steps perceived as acts of economic defiance, such as the revitalizing its domestic refining capacity in May 2023 through the Dangote Refinery, now the largest in Africa, a move that most African countries are also currently undertaking. Also, the signing of a major oil supply agreement with India as that country reduces its dependence on Russian energy amid U.S. tariffs (Leadership Paper, 2025). Shortly after these developments, Nigeria was designated by the United States as a “country of particular concern” regarding religious freedom.

This designation was followed by explicit threats of military intervention, ostensibly justified as efforts to protect Christians in northern Nigeria. However, the violence in Nigeria is complex and multifaceted, affecting both Muslim and Christian populations alike. It cannot be credibly reduced to a narrative of Christian genocide. Furthermore, incidents of community and insurgent violence are concentrated primarily in the Middle Belt region, not in the northwestern areas where the U.S. subsequently conducted military operations.

On December 25, 2025, the United States carried out an airstrike in Sokoto State, in northwestern Nigeria, claiming to target an alleged Islamic State (ISIS) foothold—despite the absence of prior evidence confirming an established ISIS presence in the area (Financial Times, 2025). The operation occurred without authorization from the United Nations Security Council, raising serious concerns regarding international law and state sovereignty. Notably, the bombing site is located in a resource-rich region and in near the Sahel states of Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali—countries that have increasingly adopted anti-Western² positions.

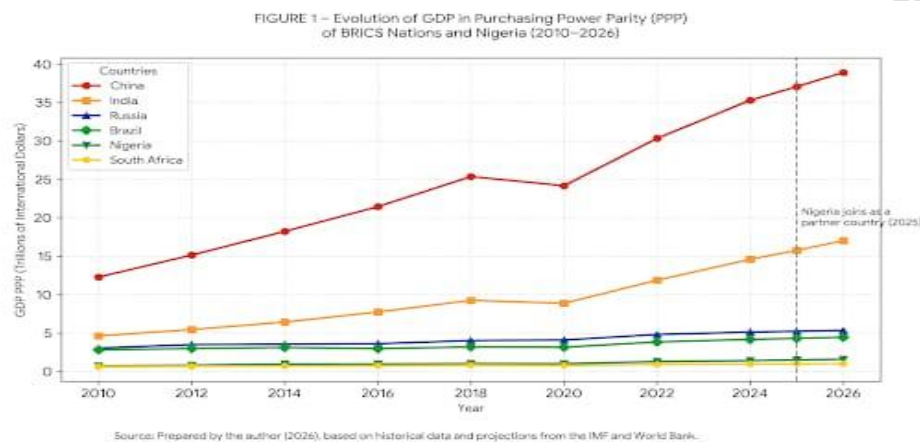
A similar pattern can be observed in U.S. actions regarding Venezuela. After prolonged sanctions and explicit regime-change rhetoric, the United States bombed Venezuela on January 3, 2026, forcibly removed President Nicolás Maduro and First Lady Cilia Flores, and declared temporary control over the country and its oil resources. This intervention must be understood within a broader geopolitical strategy aimed at reasserting control over Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in light of Brazil’s alignment with BRICS and President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s critical stance toward U.S. foreign policy.

Taken together, these developments suggest a consistent pattern in which humanitarian or security-based justifications are mobilized to legitimize interventions in resource-rich, strategically important regions that are increasingly aligned with non-Western powers. From this perspective, U.S. actions in Nigeria, Venezuela, and its overall stance toward BRICS+ countries can be interpreted as efforts to contain the growing influence of the Global South and deter challenges to the dollar hegemony.

²“anti - Western” refers to a stance in opposition to Western (US, EU, NATO) political, financial and cultural systems.

Within the field of Social Work, these influxes add to geopolitical irrationalism in the regions and the response—or lack thereof—of the United Nations Security Council to these events will be decisive in determining the continued relevance of the UN Charter and the credibility of the international system it underpins. As more developing countries turn to China as a stable trading partner—often engaging in agreements denominated in Chinese currency—the geopolitical balance continues to shift. U.S. tariffs, sanctions, and coercive diplomacy may paradoxically accelerate this realignment, reinforcing the emergence of alternative global economic and political orders led by the Global South. To better put these analyses into perspective, the graph below represents the evolution of BRICS+ growth, including Nigeria using GDP in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) as an indicator of economic weight from 2010 to 2026.

Figure 1: Evolution of GDP in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) of BRICS Nations and Nigeria (2010-2026)

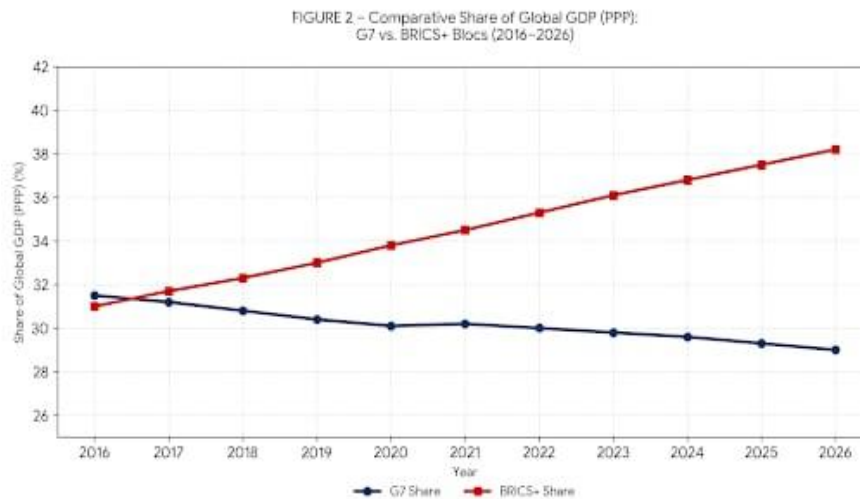


Source: Prepared by the author (2026), based on historical data and projections from IMF and World Bank.

The graph shows the accelerated rise of the Asian economies, particularly China, leading the bloc in terms of total economic volume, while also presenting the consistent growth trajectory of Africa's largest economy, Nigeria in line with its recent admission as a BRICS partner country in January 2025 (Times Of India, 2025) - marked by the dashed line in the graph to indicate the timing of Nigeria's entry.

Consequently, we are witnessing a global order in transition, a shift in power dynamics due to the BRICS+ bloc and for the first time in centuries we are not in a western dominated world. It is no surprise because while the West controlled the world system, development could not occur in the former colonies- the Global South, since, naturally, colonizers are not interested in the development of their colonies, only in their control and exploitation. Thus, the rise of the BRICS was a necessity for the survival of the Global South. To better visualize the rise of the BRICS, and its impact on the Global North- G7, the below graph illustrates a comparative analysis of global economic influence between G7- Global North and the BRICS+ from 2016 to 2026.

311 **Figure 2: Comparative share of Global GDP (PPP): G7 vs BRICS+ Blocs (2016-2026)**



312
313 **Source:** Author’s compilation based on historical data and projections from the IMF and Statista.

314 The graph illustrate a significant historical shift from 2016 when the G7 held a higher share of
315 Global GDP (PPP) to 2017-2018 when BRICS+ surpassed the G7. The BRICS+ maintained an
316 accelerated upward trend as seen in the graph, and is projected to exceed 38% by 2026, while the
317 gradual decline of the G7’s Global GDP share is expected to reach approximately 29% by 2026.(
318 IMF, 2024, 2025; WORLD BANK 2024; and STATISTA, 2024). Lastly, the “scissors effect”
319 formed by the graph highlights the continuous transition of economic weight from the Global
320 North -G7 to the Global South - BRICS+.

321 Despite the optimism, particularly in the case of Nigeria, it is important to recognize that several
322 challenges continue to affect international collaborations in the Global South. One of such
323 challenge is the uneven distribution of growth among member states due to divergent national
324 interests. In other words, the development envisioned collectively by Global South countries
325 tends to be concentrated in certain regions more than others. For example, among Global South
326 countries, higher levels of economic growth are recorded in some regions compared to Nigeria,
327 which can be seen in Figure 1.

328 In the words of Hopewell K. (2013):

329 [...] “At the same time, parts of the developing world—particularly the so-called large emerging
330 economies such as China, India, and Brazil—have experienced tremendous economic expansion.
331 China is the most striking example of this transformation, having emerged as the world’s largest
332 exporter of manufactured goods and the second-largest economy. India has become one of the
333 world’s leading exporters of services, particularly in the areas of information technology (IT) and
334 IT-enabled services. Brazil is now one of the world’s leading agro-industrial exporters.” [...]
335 (HOPEWELL., 2013, p. 6)

336 Questions have been raised about the genuineness of the pursuit of collective progress by the
337 countries of the Global South/BRICS, as reflected in the words of Gray and Gills (2016):

[...] “For example, it has been argued that by mobilizing a discourse of social justice and North–South politics, Brazil acted as a key advocate of free-market globalization—a stance driven by the rise of its highly competitive, export-oriented agribusiness sector, rather than by genuine solidarity with developing countries.” (GRAY& GILLS, 2016, p. 560)

Here, Gray and Gills argue that individual interests prevail among Global South/BRICS countries, suggesting that their motivations are rooted in national self-interest rather than genuine solidarity aimed at achieving collective goals. This diversity within the Global South/BRICS is further illustrated by another example cited by the authors:

[...] “The BRICS countries did not even support each other’s bids for permanent seats on the UN Security Council. China has shown little commitment to India’s bid for permanent membership, while Russia has been largely unreceptive to any expansion of the UN Security Council.” (GRAY& GILLS, 2016, p. 561)

From the positions articulated by Hopewell and by Gray and Gills, it can be inferred that political conflicts of interest and divisions among Global South countries, with personal agendas being prioritized over the interests of the less developed countries within the BRICS/Global South. This division can be explained, as observed by Jyrki Kakonen (2013) that a prerequisite for an organization to be effective is cohesion” (Jyrki Kakonen, 2013, p. 5).

Kakonen explained the importance of cohesion among members of an organization in order to achieve collective progress. At the same time, however, he argued that although cohesion is necessary, it does not mean that progress cannot be achieved if members are economically and politically complementary. As he stated: “On the other hand, an organization can be useful to its members if they complement each other in some political and economic way” (Jyrki Kakonen, 2013, p. 5).

Nevertheless, the effects of interest-driven politics among the more powerful Global South countries are felt by weaker countries, as they are affected in different ways. As aptly stated by Amitav Acharya (2014):

[...] “But the G-20 is a remarkably unrepresentative group of developing nations. It is dominated by the West, with many European members and limited representation from the developing world. And while it is presented as an effort to reduce the North–South divide, it creates a new polarization within the South: between the Powerful South and the Poor South. There are growing disparities within the South caused by the rise of some emerging countries, resulting in what now exists as ‘a “South” in the North and a “North” in the South’ (United Nations Development Programme, 2013:2).” (AMITAV, 2014, p. 654)

This is detailed in the words of Clapham (1996), who states: “International politics affects these states and peoples in ways that often differ considerably from how it affects the peoples and governments of more powerful states” (Clapham, 1996, p. 3).

The prioritization of narrow national or personal agendas over shared collective interests has been a significant barrier to deeper progress across the Global South. Meaningful cooperation

requires a shift toward collective goals, mutual trust, and coordinated action. Only by placing common interests at the center of regional and international collaboration can countries of the

378 Global South promote inclusive growth, strengthen solidarity, and advance pathways toward
379 sustainable development.

380 Notably, Nigeria needs to be cautious because over the years, its international collaborations
381 have always been characterized by a vertical relationship with the West, as trade was mostly,
382 exploitative and extractive and development depended largely on aid. Therefore, Nigeria must
383 avoid falling in to such a trap again. The country must avoid a situation of “asymmetric South-
384 South Trade”³, where it is used as an extractive outpost to China’s industrial machine. To avoid
385 repeating the extractive traps of the past, Nigeria must transition from being an exporter of
386 primary commodities to a hub of domestic value added products. It must ensure bilateral deals are
387 based on reciprocity, technology transfer, and local job creation. As well as leverage its status as
388 Africa’s largest economy to negotiate from a position of sovereign agency.

389 Another challenge is Nigeria’s excessive dependence on oil exports, coupled with weak
390 production capacity and low export competitiveness, among other factors. This dependence leads
391 the Nigerian economy to exhaustion, making it deindustrialized and, in the worst cases, forced to
392 surrender its raw materials for almost nothing. Nigeria, for too long has relied heavily on the oil
393 sector for revenue, when it should have diversified into other sectors of the economy. If
394 collaboration remains limited to oil and gas exports, Nigeria will fail to industrialize, and
395 industrialization is essential for its economic development.

396 Insecurity and infrastructure gaps are also key factors hindering international collaborations in
397 the country. Security challenges in regions like the North, coupled with the high cost of running
398 a business does not create a favorable environment for investment even for the most risk-
399 tolerant investors in the Global South.

400 Nigeria, as the focal country, requires greater international collaboration with Global South
401 countries to foster its growth. Sectors such as trade, agriculture, transport, health, energy and
402 education, would benefit enormously from increased international collaboration thereby
403 facilitating sustainable economic development. Furthermore, collaboration between Nigeria and
404 other Global South countries should foster local manufacturing rather than consumption, to
405 enhance the value of exports. This would increase Nigeria’s export products and export value,
406 expand markets, and ultimately promote long term sustainable economic development and an
407 improved quality of life for the population.

408 Therefore, to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria and Africa, international collaboration
409 is essential and imperative, since most of these challenges cannot be addressed solely through
410 social or public policies. Although, Africa remains captured by the global hegemonic class, as
411 seen in recent happenings between the West and Africa (Global South), just as during the colonial
412 period, the continent has remained dependent on whiteness and its metamorphoses. Therefore, it
413 continues to suffer from the arbitrary and uncontrolled extraction of its natural and human
414 resources, while its own children receive only crumbs from the West. At this juncture, it is

³Asymmetric South-South trade refers to a structural imbalance where the exchange between two developing nations mimics the traditional, unequal “North-South” model, often characterized by deindustrialization, “value-added gap”- exporting raw materials and importing finished goods- and “Tied aid” - foreign investments from Southern giant countries tied to the use of their own companies, labor and materials- thereby limiting the multiplying effect of the investment for the local economy.

necessary to warn those who trade Africa's resources for personal gain and for the benefit of the colonizer to pay the utmost attention. In contemporary times, African leaders still allow subservience to whiteness in exchange for misery and precariousness for Black populations within their own countries and throughout Africa in the twenty-first century. African leaders, particularly Nigerian leaders need to stop their cowardice and put the country's interest at heart. Nigeria as a great nation and Africa's largest economy should not be in the weak situation it finds itself in, where more than half of its population are living in poverty and the politicians keep lining their pockets with the loot that they take to the West to keep after being stolen in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government must cease to be a government of "Black skin, white masks" (Frantz Fanon, 2020), distribute wealth equitably to the general population, and recognize that "the fundamental characteristic of contemporary research seems to consist in achieving a certain exhaustiveness. But one must not lose sight of reality" (Fanon, 2020, p. 99). "Misgovernance" in African countries represents the continuation of a neo-liberal project in favor of imperialism, with neocolonialism persisting across much of Africa, including Nigeria.

Final Considerations

Nigeria finds itself at a crucial crossroads. As the geopolitical landscape shifts, the country is increasingly positioning itself at the heart of Global South collaboration. By leveraging its role within BRICS and deepening bilateral ties with neighboring Southern nations, Nigeria is laying the groundwork for a more resilient economic system. However, international partnerships are not a panacea; for these alliances to translate into long-term prosperity, the focus must shift inward aiming at domestic value creation. Nigeria must move beyond being a passive participant in global trade, ensuring that each deal signed serves its sovereign growth rather than perpetuating historical disadvantages.

For Nigeria to realize its potential within the Global South, it must go beyond the merely adopting foreign systems and embrace the philosophy of governance adaptation. Nigeria can learn from the meteoric rise of China. In just four decades, China went from a burgeoning economy to a global superpower, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. This success was not achieved by replicating Western liberal frameworks, but by meticulously tailoring a governance model to its specific cultural, historical, and socioeconomic realities. For too long, Nigeria, and much of Africa, has operated under administrative models largely inherited from or imposed by a colonial past. The persistent stagnation in several sectors suggests that these Western "copy-and-paste" models are fundamentally misaligned with the unique complexities of the Nigerian landscape. Sustainable development requires institutional fit. If Nigeria intends to progress, it must learn from the Chinese example—not by blindly imitating Beijing, but by adopting Chinese spirit of pragmatic adaptability. The goal is to develop a governance system that responds to the Nigerian people's needs rather than the expectations of distant observers.

Similarly, economic resilience cannot be imported; it must be cultivated. While international collaborations provide the framework for growth, they require a stable domestic base to flourish. This necessitates a radical transformation of the Nigerian investment climate. To encourage sustainable industrialization, the government must aggressively confront the "four horsemen" of domestic instability; systemic corruption, insecurity, resources mismanagement and the

prioritization of nepotistic, selfish political interests. The true test of Nigeria's development lies in the management of its inherent wealth. Even the most successful international collaborations or trade agreements will fail to generate a lasting impact if the benefits remain sequestered by the hegemonic political elite. Sustainable development is not merely an economic metric; it is a moral and administrative obligation to ensure the equitable distribution of resources.

Africa, and Nigeria specifically, possesses the intrinsic wealth necessary to sustain its population. What is currently lacking is not capital, but the genuine political and administrative will to manage it transparently. Transparency and accountability are not optional luxuries; they are the prerequisite for a functional state where resources benefit the collective instead of a group who serve the West and deny the citizens the right to share in the country's natural resources, because the goal of international collaboration is to facilitate holistic development and development is an empty concept without equity. For Nigeria to achieve genuine sustainable development, its leaders must recognize that political emancipation is inextricably linked to human emancipation. By fostering an environment where resources are shared fairly and governance is transparent, Nigeria can transform its international partnerships into a powerful engine for national renewal. For Nigeria and the African continent as a whole, the path to genuine sovereignty lies in the courage to innovate institutionally. By prioritizing adaptability and domestic relevance, Nigeria can move from being a recipient of global "best practices" to a pioneering its own development path. The time for this transformation is not on the horizon—it is now.

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