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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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

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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.

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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 BRICS partner 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 political economy approach- dependency theory and multi-polarity framework, to evaluate how Nigeria's diplomatic alignment with BRICS+ creates new pathways for trade diversification and infrastructure financing, 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. 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 effective 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 will partner with Nigeria to improve livestock health and genetics, as well as best agricultural practices. 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

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.

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 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.

Following the designation of Nigeria as a "Country of Particular Concern" by the United States, based on allegations of insufficient protection of specific religious groups (UN, 2026), U.S. policymakers publicly raised the possibility of military action. This framing was linked to claims of targeted violence against Christians, despite Nigerian government statements that insecurity affects communities across religious affiliations and regions (UN, 2026). Islamist extremist groups such as Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have been active in northern Nigeria, but the dynamics of violence are complex and multifaceted, covering kidnappings, banditry, and communal conflict affecting both Muslim and Christian populations. On 25 December 2025, the United States conducted airstrikes in Sokoto State, northwestern Nigeria, asserting that the operations targeted Islamic State-affiliated militants (BBC, 2025). Independent analysis suggests that Sokoto has not been a primary locus of established Islamic State presence, and that Islamist violence remains concentrated in northeastern regions of the country (Did the US military strikes in Nigeria hit the right target?). The conduct of air operations without prior authorization from the United Nations Security Council raises questions about compliance with international law and state sovereignty.

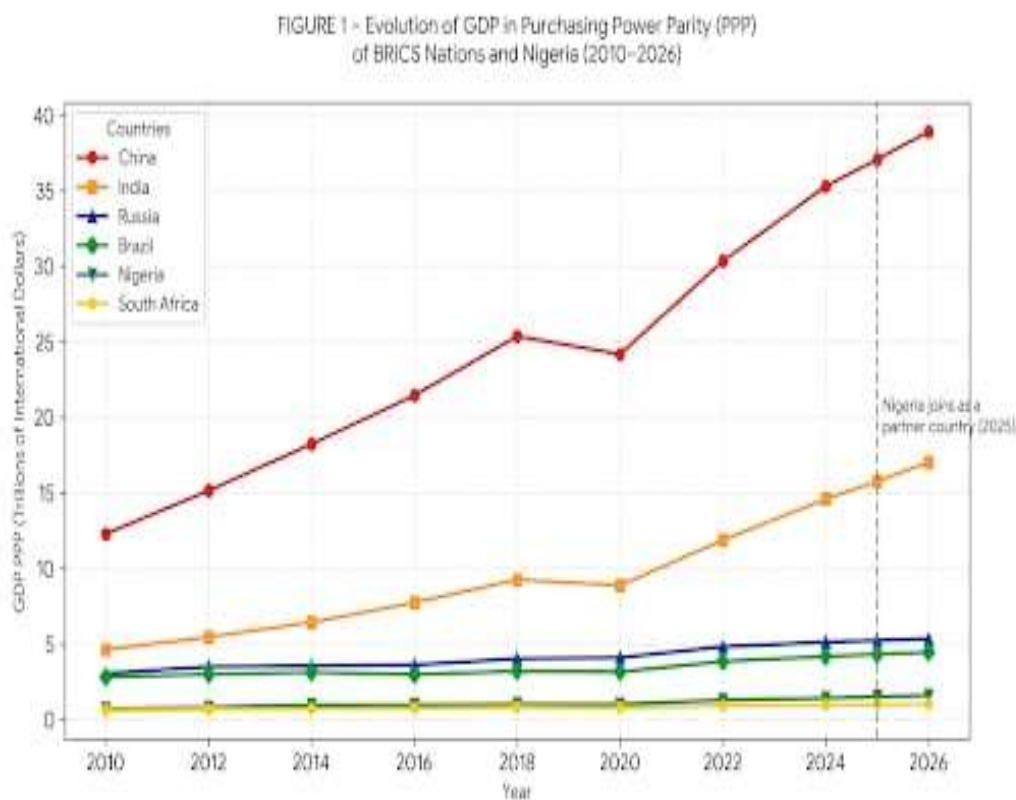
The geographical context of the strikes, near resource-rich areas and adjacent to Sahel states that have recently experienced political realignments, adds further complexity to interpretations of the operations. Contemporary military engagements in West Africa are often justified through counter-terrorism frameworks, yet local experts emphasize that structural drivers of insecurity, including weak governance and socioeconomic marginalization, remain central challenges (Africa Overview: January 2026). A parallel pattern of U.S. military action occurred in Venezuela on 3 January 2026, when U.S. forces launched strikes and detained President Nicolás Maduro and his spouse under a campaign described by some observers as aimed at asserting U.S. strategic interests (Atrocity Alert No. 464, 2026). Such interventions have drawn sustained international criticism for their implications for sovereignty and regional stability. Statements from United Nations officials and civil society groups have characterized these actions as inconsistent with the norms of international law, particularly when conducted without multilateral mandate or clear evidence of immediate threats (Atrocity Alert No. 464, 2026; American Friends Service Committee 2026)

In both cases, the juxtaposition of security rationales with broader geopolitical and economic interests underscores the need for rigorous, context-sensitive analysis. Simple narratives attributing violence to particular communities or organizations may overlook the structural and political conditions shaping conflict dynamics. Likewise, scholarly analysis of military intervention must engage critically with the legal, ethical, and strategic frameworks that govern the use of force in international relations. 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.

Within the field of political science and international relations, these influxes might lead to “geopolitical irrationalism”—a shift in state behavior, where foreign policy decisions are fueled by ideological, emotional or identity-based motives rather than a rational pursuit of national interest or economic gain—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)



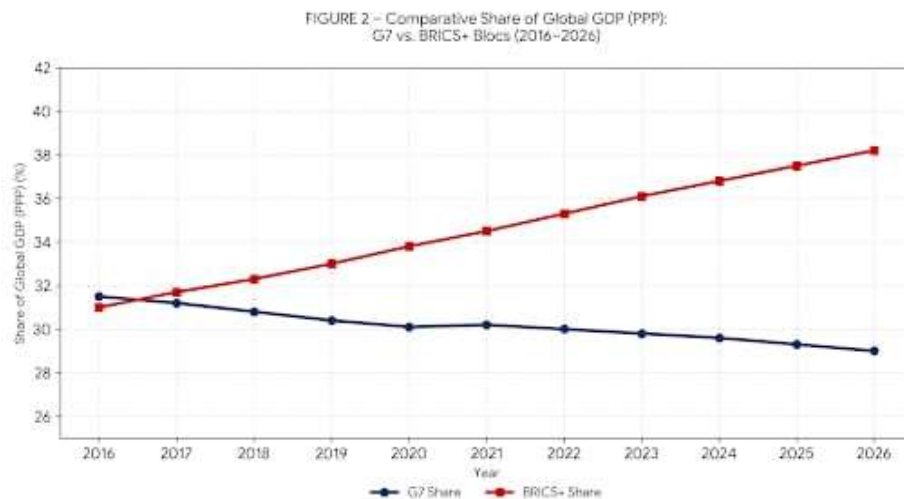
Source: Prepared by the author (2026), based on historical data and projections from the IMF and World Bank.

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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.

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



Source: Author's compilation based on historical data and projections from the IMF and Statista.

The graph illustrates a significant historical shift from 2016 when the G7 held a higher share of Global GDP (PPP) to 2017-2018 when BRICS+ surpassed the G7. The BRICS+ maintained an accelerated upward trend as seen in the graph, and is projected to exceed 38% by 2026, while the gradual decline of the G7's Global GDP share is expected to reach approximately 29% by 2026. (IMF, 2024, 2025; WORLD BANK 2024; and STATISTA, 2024). Lastly, the "scissors effect" formed by the graph highlights the continuous transition of economic weight from the Global North -G7 to the Global South - BRICS+. Despite the optimism, particularly in the case of Nigeria, it is important to recognize that several challenges continue to affect international collaborations in the Global South. One of such challenge is the uneven distribution of growth among member states due to divergent national interests. In other words, the development envisioned collectively by Global South countries tends to be concentrated in certain regions more than others. For example, among Global South countries, higher levels of economic growth are recorded in some regions compared to Nigeria, which can be seen in Figure 1.

In the words of Hopewell K. (2013):

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

Questions have been raised about the genuineness of the pursuit of collective progress by the 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 Global South promote inclusive growth, strengthen solidarity, and advance pathways toward sustainable development. Notably, Nigeria needs to be cautious because over the years, its international collaborations have always been characterized by a vertical relationship with the West, as trade was mostly, exploitative and extractive and development depended largely on aid. Therefore, Nigeria must avoid falling in to such a trap again. The country must avoid a situation of “asymmetric South-South Trade”², where it is used as an extractive outpost to China’s industrial machine. To avoid repeating the extractive traps of the past, Nigeria must transition from being an exporter of primary commodities to a hub of domestic value added products. It must ensure bilateral deals are based on reciprocity, technology transfer, and local job creation. As well as leverage its status as Africa’s largest economy to negotiate from a position of sovereign agency.

Another challenge is Nigeria’s excessive dependence on oil exports, coupled with weak production capacity and low export competitiveness, among other factors. This dependence leads the Nigerian economy to exhaustion, making it “deindustrialized” and, in the worst cases, forced to surrender its raw materials for almost nothing. Nigeria, for too long has relied heavily on the oil sector for revenue, when it should have diversified into other sectors of the economy. If collaboration remains limited to oil and gas exports, Nigeria will fail to industrialize, and industrialization is essential for its economic development. Insecurity and infrastructure gaps are also key factors hindering international collaborations in the country. Security challenges in regions like the North, coupled with the high cost of running a business does not create a favorable environment for investment even for the most risk-tolerant investors in the Global South.

Nigeria, as the focal country, requires greater international collaboration with Global South countries to foster its growth. Sectors such as trade, agriculture, transport, health, energy and education, would benefit enormously from increased international collaboration thereby facilitating sustainable economic development. Furthermore,

²Asymmetric 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.

collaboration between Nigeria and other Global South countries should foster local manufacturing rather than consumption, to enhance the value of exports. This would increase Nigeria's export products and export value, expand markets, and ultimately promote long term sustainable economic development and an improved quality of life for the population.

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. 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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