

**CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN SINO-LIBERIA ECONOMIC
RELATIONS; 1977-2016**

BY

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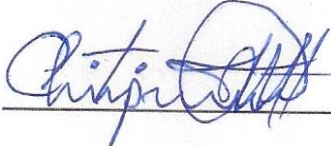
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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SECURITY, DIPLOMACY, AND
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work, has not been presented to any other university/institution for consideration of any certificate and has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Mrs. Kasey Boston and her family for supporting me to accomplish this goal.

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I am grateful to the Almighty God, the supreme leader of humankind whose wisdom, guidance and protection continue to take me through the journey of life. I cannot thank Him enough for everything He has done and continues to do. Lord, I owe it all to you! I am also greatly indebted to so many people who in so many ways contributed to the success of this work.

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ABSTRACT

Inter-state relations are paramount in the international system and have remained the nucleus around which all international and local diplomatic issues evolve. Since states are interdependent, they establish diplomatic relations through the formulation of foreign policies to achieve their national interests. Liberia is one beneficiary of such relations. Since its inception in 1847, Liberia has had strong economic relations majorly with the West. With a little or no relation with South-East Asia. In other words, Liberia's relations in the international system remained with the West for a very long period. However, with the sporadic growth in the economy of few Asian countries in the 1970s, Liberia decided to shift its foreign policy from the western tradition to by establishing full diplomatic relations with other non-western countries such as China, Japan, and North Korea. After 20 years of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Liberia snowballed into the Sino-Liberia economic relations in 1977. Like many other mutual relations, the Sino-Liberia economic relations were marred by long years of disconnect, rivalry and reconnection due to the countries' inconsistent diplomacy with Taiwan. In 1989, China severed bilateral relations with Liberia after Liberia restored its relations with Taiwan. The situation lasted up to 1993 before China and Liberia restored bilateral relations. Ignoring the 'One China Policy,' Liberia in 1997 established relations with Taiwan, which led to another severing of diplomatic relations between China and Liberia until 2003. Nevertheless, despite these diplomatic challenges in the Sino-Liberia economic relations, they have been appraised as a win-win situation. This study investigated the issues of change and continuity in Sino-Liberia economic relations from 1977-2016. In light of this, the study sought to analyze the nature of economic engagement between China and Liberia from 1977-1990, examine the impact of regime change in China-Liberia relations during the period 1991-2016, and assess possible ways to strengthen Sino-Liberia economic relations. The complex interdependence theory was used as the theoretical framework guiding the study. The population sample comprised of two hundred (200) participants. The study adopted descriptive research design and used the mixed research method of qualitative and quantitative to analyze the research data. The study used convenience and snowball sampling techniques to identify respondents. The study's findings revealed that the changes in Sino-Liberia economic relations were influenced by changes in regimes on the part of Liberia. The study also revealed that during 1977 to 1990, economic activities between China and Liberia accounted for increased foreign aid, economic and technical cooperation. Trade relations between China and Liberia started from 1997. Despite the severing of bilateral relations between both countries, the study revealed that significant efforts had been made to strengthen the Sino-Liberia economic relations, beginning with the leadership of the post-war Liberia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xi
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	2
1.0 Introduction.....	2
1.1 Background to the study	2
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	8
1.3 Research Objectives.....	9
1.4 Research Questions.....	9
1.5 Research Premises	10
1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study.....	10
1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 China’s Economic Relations with the World.....	13
2.3 China-Africa Economic Relations	15
2.4 China-Liberia Economic Relations.....	17
2.5 Gaps in the Literature.....	19
2.6 Theoretical Framework.....	20
CHAPTER THREE	24
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	24
3.1 Research Design.....	24
3.2 Study Location	24
3.3 Target Population.....	25
3.3.1 Study Population	25

3.4 Sampling Techniques.....	27
3.5 Research Instruments.....	27
3.6 Data Collection Procedure.....	28
3.7 Validity and Reliability.....	28
3.8 Data Analysis.....	28
3.9 Data Management and Ethical Considerations.....	29
CHAPTER FOUR.....	30
DISCUSSION, FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.....	30
THE NATURE OF SINO-LIBERIA ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT; 1977-1990... 30	
4.1 Introduction.....	30
4.2 Emergence and growth of Sino-Liberia ties; 1977-1980.....	30
4.3 William R. Tolbert Regime in Sino-Liberia Relations: 1971-1980.....	33
4.4 Socio-Political Relations between Liberia and China; 1977-1989.....	37
4.5 Samuel K. Doe Regime; 1980-1990.....	41
4.4 Economic, Trade, Aid and Technical Cooperation; 1977-1990.....	47
4.6 Conclusion.....	50
CHAPTER FIVE.....	52
THE IMPACT OF REGIME CHANGE ON SINO-LIBERIA ECONOMIC RELATIONS: 1991 -2016.....	52
5.1 Introduction.....	52
5.2 Overview of Regime Change.....	52
5.3 Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU); 1990-1997.....	52
5.4 Charles Taylor Regime; 1997-2003.....	53
5.5 Sino-Liberia Trade 1997-2003.....	61
5.6 The Reestablishment of Diplomatic Relations Between China and Liberia; 2003-2006.....	69
5.7 The Regime of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; 2006-2016.....	71
5.8 Sino-Liberia Trade 2003-2016.....	78
5.10 Conclusion.....	84
CHAPTER SIX.....	87
POSSIBLE WAYS OF STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND LIBERIA.....	87

6.1 Introduction.....	87
6.2 Education	87
6.3 Health.....	91
6.4 Infrastructure.....	94
6.5 Investment.....	98
6.6 Conclusion	101
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	102
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	102
7.1 Summary	102
7.2 Conclusion	103
REFERENCES.....	107
APPENDICES	115
APPENDIX I: MAP OF MONROVIA.....	115
APPENDIX II: RESEARCH PERMIT FROM GRADUATE SCHOOL	116
APPENDIX III: RESEARCH PERMIT FROM NACOSTI	117
APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	118
APPENDIX V: QUESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL IN THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORK, LIBERIA.....	119
APPENDIX VI: LIST OF KEY RESPONDENTS	120
APPENDIX VII: MEMORADUM FOR RESEARCH FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.....	121

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5. 1: Trade Volume between Liberia and China; 1997-2003 (in millions of US\$) 63

Figure 5. 2: Trade Volume between Liberia and China; 2003-2016 (in millions of US\$) 79

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3. 1: Sample Population Reached	26
Table 5. 1: China's share of Exports by Commodity Composition; 1997-2003 (in millions of US\$)..	65
Table 5. 2: China's share of Imports by Commodity Composition; 1997-2003 (in millions of US\$).....	67
Table 5. 3: China's Share of Export by Commodity Group; 2003-2016 (in millions of US\$)	81
Table 5. 4: China's Share of Imports by Commodity Group; 2003-2010 (in millions of US\$)	82
Table 5. 5: China's Share of Imports by Commodity Group; 2011-2016 (in millions of US\$)	83

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFC:	African Fruit Company
AFL:	Armed Forces of Liberia
AU:	African Union
CBAL:	Chinese Business Association of Liberia
DELIMCO:	German-Liberian Mining Company
ECOMOG:	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
FOCAC:	Focus on China-Africa Cooperation
FDI:	Foreign Direct Investment
GOL:	Government of Liberia
IGNU:	Interim Government of National Unity
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
INPFL:	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
LAMCO:	Liberia American Swish Mineral Company
LCI:	Limited Consultative Intervention
LEITI:	Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
LMC:	Liberia Mining Company

LPC:	Liberia Peace Council
MDA:	Mineral Development Agreement
MoFA:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOCI:	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
NIOC:	National Iron Ore Company
NPFL:	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
PRC:	People’s Republic of China
PRS:	Poverty Reduction Strategy
ROC:	Republic of China
ULMO:	United Liberation Movement
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNMIL:	United Nations Mission in Liberia
USA:	United States of America
USAID:	United States Assistance in Development

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Anarchy: This term is used in this research to refer to the international system as one that is ruled without a centrally authoritative governing body and a policing power.

Diplomatic Relations: In this research, the term refers to the approaches by which states, throughout the world, conduct their affairs in ways to ensure cordial relations.

Economic Development: In this study, the term is characterized as the development of capacities that add to the progression of society through the acknowledgment of individual, firm and network ability.

Foreign Policy: The term describes policies formulated by a country to protect the interests of the state within, towards, and or among other state actors at the global stage.

International Relations: The field of study that deals with the relations between world governments or nation-states. These relations between states involve a wide range of activities: diplomacy, war, trade, alliances, cultural exchanges and the involvement in international organizations.

Theory: Scholars in general will consider theory to be sets of proclamations that clarify specific occasions, either in reference to a progression of earlier occasions or in reference to at least one causal variable.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, premises, justification, the significance of the study and the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

Relations among states accounts for how states engage with each other. One of the fundamental principles of every bilateral relationship among sovereign states, be it diplomatic, militaristic, political, financial, or exchange, may claim to be mutual reciprocity and exchange profit (Odeh, 1971). According to Keohane and Nye (1977), the liberal school of thought believes that no state in the world is independent. States are interdependent, and as such, they fall under one system, which is recognized as the international system. According to Mingst (2008), all states use diplomacy to stake their international arena positions. States extend beyond their borders to seek various national interests.

Every state establishes diplomatic relations with others irrespective of its political, constitutional, or social differences. Majorly the aim is usually to contribute to the development of friendly relations (Feltham, 1993). As states engage, each formulates specific strategies to guide and protect its interactions and relations with other states outside its territory. According to Bonjang (2018), foreign policy decision-making is agreed to be one of the greatest instruments at a state's disposal to pursue its national interests. The foreign policy of a country is generally formulated in order for the state to

guide the interests of the state. A state's interests include but is not limited to; security, economic development, and political capacities (Goldstein, 2005). Foreign policy, to a considerable extent, thus enhances national interests. The interactions between states in the global system are based on the establishment of their international policies.

Many factors influence the formulation of a country's international policies, and one of these factors is the economic (Feltham, 1993). Jackson and Sorensen (2013) note that the monetary association is a shared high level of financial reliance among nations; it is a striking element of the new state framework.

Since the attainment of independence in 1847, Liberia's foreign policies have been aligned with universal principles and principles that govern the international system. Among these are the standard of non-impedance in other states' issues, regard for sway, and regional trustworthiness of different states, and the protection of national security and economic growth (Dennis, 2006).

Liberia's foreign policy was aligned with the Western-world. Liberia most significant ally in the West was the United States. The two countries had a long history of relations since Liberia was founded in 1822. Despite the United States been a major ally for Liberia, the United States in the 19th century had low economic relations with Liberia, although its support towards the sovereignty of the country from the British and French encroachment was seen on many occasions. According to Qureshi et al. (1964), the United States' economic interest in Liberia developed in the 20th century when Firestone Plantation Company established its first largest rubber plantation in 1926. Within the 25 years of the agreement, Firestone became a significant enterprise in the country's

economy, creating employment opportunities, increasing the exports and government income including banking, exchanging, and other business administrations (Qureshi et al., 1964).

Liberia was deeply integrated into the Western-world's sphere of influence and also maintained economic relations with the West with little or no relation with South-East Asia and other African states. The United States remained Liberia's principal trading partner, chief source of economic and military assistance and its major provider of private investment (Dennis, 2006). In other words, Liberia's relations in the international system from its independence focused to the West until the 1970s when it established relations with other non-Western countries such as; mainland China, Japan, and North Korea. The changes in Liberia's foreign policy were taken into consideration when the Tolbert administration came to power and saw the need to claim Liberia's African identity (Dunn, 2016). The country shifted from its Washington D.C orientation by establishing bilateral relations with communist states, including the Soviet Union, North Korea, China, Japan and Cuba. According to Dunn (2016), this move-in Liberian foreign policy affected the country's allegiances, alliances, alignment, and international political actions.

Between the 1900s and the 1950s, most countries in Africa were under colonial rule except Ethiopia. Liberia was never a colony of any European power but was a vital ally of the United States. By 1960, China recognized that Western Imperialism was a threat to the continent of Africa. China provided an alternative trajectory by offering bilateral trade relations that would foster development in the continent.

From December 1963 to July 1965, the late Chinese Premier Zhou En-Lai visited Africa three times successively touring 11 African countries. These were Morocco, Egypt, Ghana, Algeria, Sudan, Mali, Guinea, Zaire, Tanganyika, Uganda and Somali (Erhagbe, 1996). Premier Zhou's tour promoted many African leaders to establish diplomatic relations with China.

In the 1970s, Liberia decided to turn from its orientation towards the West, especially the United States, to providing leadership, financial assistance and support the cause of African liberation movements, particularly in the international forums like the United Nations (UN), the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), and the Organization for African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU) (Casper, 2012).

The transformation in Liberian foreign policy in the 1970s called for the establishment of full diplomatic relations with few communist countries like mainland China, Japan, Soviet Union, North Korea and Cuba (Dunn, 2016). This period marked the change in Liberia's foreign policy from Western tradition to global plurality. In 1977 Liberia established full diplomatic relations with China breaking 20 years of bilateral relations with Taiwan in favour of China (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012).

Like most African countries in the 1960s and 1970s, Liberia saw China as a non-aligned developing country and did little to foster economic or even any special diplomatic relations with China. However, considering the exchange execution of some Asian states such as China and India that upgraded their revenues and improved innovation, most African nations, including Liberia, started to shift their business sectors to those nations

(Omenka, 2014). The emerging pattern created some incentives to trade with the African countries through foreign direct investment (FDI) and aid.

Odeh (1971) observes that the significant reform in China's foreign policy by Deng Xiaoping of the 1970s and 1980s brought China into more significant contact with the African continent. As an economic partner with Liberia, China became dogged in its relations with Liberia in the subsequent decades. Despite the challenges and the shifting of diplomatic relations between both countries over the year, China continued to commit itself to strong economic relations. This pointed to one thing:

China's long-term plan for Africa and subsequent global Chinese hegemony. According to Khan and Baye (2008), the substantial development in China's economy and its integration into the world trading system instigated numerous countries in Africa to focus on China as a strong trading partner. Sun (2014) also argues that China's novel monetary way to deal with Africa addresses African nations' issues for subsidizing and infrastructure projects. After establishing Sino-Liberia relations in 1977, the Chinese government in the same year sent 50 Chinese technicians to Liberia to replace the departed Taiwanese personnel operating on various projects (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). This was a strategy by China to get the full support of the Liberian government.

The Sino-Liberia relations, which consist of political, trade, investment, aid, and military spheres, have grown significantly (Moumouni, 2014). However, Sino-Liberia relations was also dependent upon the moving of conciliatory acknowledgment between China and Taiwan. Rotberg (2009) observes that China's bilateral relations with any state mainly depends on the principle of non-recognition of Taiwan. Sun (2014) terms it as the

national political interest of China in Africa. In other words, China seeks the support of African states for the Chinese Communist Party's domestic political legitimacy over Taiwan and for China's foreign policy agenda internationally, especially in multilateral forums like the UN considering the size of the African voting bloc. It has been widely understood that China will sever diplomatic relations with countries that recognize Taiwan while maintaining bilateral relations with China.

This was Liberia's case when the country decided to switch its diplomatic relations from China to Taiwan in 1989, and the Chinese government severed bilateral relations with Liberia. The Chinese government shut its embassy in Monrovia and pulled back all Chinese personnel working on different ventures under Liberia's diplomatic agreements (Chieh, 2015). Relations between Liberia and China remained severed until 1993 when the Samuel Doe administration was overthrown in 1990 by the rebel factions. Both countries re-established bilateral relations in 1993 during the violent conflict in Liberia. The re-establishment of bilateral relations between Liberia and China did not account for China's role in Liberia since the peace in Liberia was fragile. According to Moumouni (2014), the re-established relations between both countries lasted up to 1997 but when Charles Taylor, the warlord of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), ascended to the presidency of Liberia, he decided to recognize two Chinas, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan). This decision led to China severing Liberia's diplomatic relations with Liberia once more.

By 2003, the Liberian government under the leadership of Charles Gyude Bryant, once the chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan and re-established diplomatic relations with China (Gray, 2018).

This move created significant change in the path of Sino-Liberia relations. In 2005 the 52nd National Legislature of Liberia adopted a joint resolution reaffirming the "One China Policy." Despite the shifting of bilateral relations, the new era in Sino-Liberia relations has taken different dimensions. The change resulted in affirming Liberia's commitment to the One China Policy. In light of the shifting diplomatic recognition between China and Taiwan by the Liberian government and the continuous re-establishment of diplomatic relations with China, these changes and continuities in Sino-Liberia relations presented a puzzle that required explanations. There are few in-depth studies that have been done on the Sino-Liberia relations. These studies have not adequately elucidated or accounted for the changes and continuities in Sino-Liberia economic relations within the period 1977-2016. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the changes and continuities in Sino-Liberia economic relations between 1977 and 2016.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study sought to trace the extend of change and continuity in China-Liberia economic relations. While both countries have witnessed over 40 years of bilateral relations since 1977, these relations have been marred by the long years of Liberian shifting diplomatic relations between China and Taiwan.

In 1980, the death of William R. Tolbert ushered in the regime of Samuel K. Doe's administration shifted its diplomatic relations towards Taiwan, which led China to severe diplomatic relations with Liberia. In 1991, both countries decided to re-establish bilateral relations, which were maintained until 1997 when Charles Taylor decided to recognize China and Taiwan. This decision also led to another severing of bilateral relations

between China and Liberia. Relations between the two countries were again re-established in 2003. Since the re-establishment of bilateral relations both countries continue strengthen diplomatic relations. However, factors influencing the issue of change on Sino-Liberia relations have not been given much attention. It is within this context of the Liberian shifting diplomatic relations between China and Taiwan that the study sought to investigate.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To trace the nature of economic engagements between China and Liberia in the period 1977-1990.
- ii. To investigate issues of change and continuity in China-Liberia economic relations between 1991-2016.
- iii. To assess the possible ways of strengthening economic relations between China and Liberia.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. What is the nature of economic engagement between China and Liberia between 1977-1990?
- ii. What factors informed issues of change and continuity in China-Liberia economic relations between 1991-2016?
- iii. How could economic relations between China and Liberia be strengthened?

1.5 Research Premises

The following premises informed the study:

- i. Regime change was the major determinant of changes in the Sino-Liberia economic relations.
- ii. The re-establishment of bilateral relations between China and Liberia in 2003 strengthened China-Liberia economic relations.
- iii. China's engagement in the development process of Liberia since the civil war in 2003 could provide a possible way of strengthening the relations between the two countries.

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

In *China's Soft Power in Africa: From Beijing Consensus to Health Diplomacy* (2005), Thompson notes that China's influence on the continent of Africa is the result of the sound relationship and the many years of investment in building relations through aid, trade, cultural and technical exchange. China's foreign aid policy has motivated African leaders to establish bilateral relations with China and this has seen China as a development partner filling the vacuum left by western partners. Although America has been Liberia's principal ally, the rise of China in the world economy and its interest in Africa, has intensified the need for research in Sino-Liberia relations. Overtime, China has economically engaged with Liberia through investments, foreign aid and trade.

China is crucial to this study because as an emerging economic superpower, its presence seems to be felt in almost every African country, including Liberia.

1977 was chosen because, for the first time, an agreement was reached between Liberia and China to establish diplomatic relations. Furthermore, this period also witnessed the exchange of ambassadors between Liberia and China and the establishment of the first Chinese embassy in Liberia. By 1977, China's engagement with Africa was highly felt on the continent after imperialism (Diaouari, 2004). China provided an opportunity to Liberia and other African countries by offering bilateral trade and economic relations to foster development on the continent. Following the official establishment of bilateral relations, China and Liberia began to engage economically.

The period 2016 was considered appropriate for ending the study because the Chinese government started the construction of the US\$60 million ministerial complex, which has been classified as one of the significant development initiatives by the Chinese government in Liberia during the leadership of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

The findings of the study will contribute to the knowledge of the economic relations between China and Liberia particularly, the changes that occurred during different regimes in Liberia and the continuation of relations between the two countries. The study is essential as it contributed to fill the gap of literature, which has not explicitly focused on addressing the issue of change and continuity on Sino-Liberia economic relations. The study has provided information that is useful to policymakers to ensure that the formulation of a state's foreign policy is comprehensive enough to address the interests of a state adequately.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study was to investigate change and continuity of Sino-Liberia relations. The study delimited itself to China-Liberia and trade relations. Geographically the study was conducted in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. Monrovia is given much focus because it constitutes the fundamental functions of the government and diplomats, including participants that were important to the study. Although 1977 is selected, the study, where necessary dived into the period before 1977 to understand Liberia's emergence as a sovereign state and its economic relations with other states. Since several issues continue to emerge, which have a direct impact on the study, the study has also looked further into the period after 2016.

One of the significant challenges experienced by the researcher was the disclosure of details from officials. In most instances, the participants (especially at the Chinese embassy in Monrovia) were unwilling to give information openly. However, the researcher addressed this by assuring participants of their anonymity and that the research was to be used for academic purposes only. In some cases, due to other engagements, some respondents that the researcher had intended to interview canceled the interview; however, the next available member of the institution was asked for an interview using the convenient sampling.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The review examined and identified trends in existing literature relevant to the problem of the study. Available literature on the study was reviewed from general to specific contexts in terms of the debate on China-Africa economic relations. The literature also focused on China-Africa economic relations so as to find out if it explained the Sino-Liberia economic relations. This chapter therefore intends to provide an overview on the literature on Sino-Liberia relations, especially the changes in their economic relations overtime.

2.2 China's Economic Relations with the World

The emergence of China as a global power has become one of the significant features of the era of capitalist globalization, and its presence has changed the international economic system of politics (Nolan, 2012). The rise of China on the global stage has become a significant debate in the 21st century. The economy of China in 1949 was directed toward Western nations. When the Soviet bloc's contention began during the 1960s, the Chinese economy was additionally directed toward the Eastern bloc alliance by 1978. According to Qian (2000), the Chinese economy was one of the most tied economies globally, but China's government decided to expand its foreign trade in welcoming foreign direct investment in 1979, since its economy had experienced significant growth. China is emerging as the 21st century's economic superpower (Diaouari, 2004). Although not yet a superpower, China has propelled itself to both

challenges and the existing status quo that has brought it into direct competition with other superpowers. According to Dellios (2005) China in 1978 was at the 32nd place and 10th in 1997; in the intentional trade. China is currently the fourth largest trading nation in the world. China is second to the United States with a GDP of 13% of world output (a purchasing power parity) (Dellios, 2005).

The transition in the Chinese economy from 1979 to 2000 took a different path from that of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Qian, 2000). Dellios (2005) argues that China, an inheritor of 5000 years of civilization, is also the world's fastest-growing economy in this present age and has developed 9.5% annually for the past 20 years. China's high growth rate, low labor costs, and a vast emerging market have attracted the world's highest foreign direct investment (FDI) (Maddison, 1998). China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001, and also became one of the most open economies in the international market, with average tariff dropping from 41% in 1992 to 6% after joining the WTO (Dellios, 2005). According to Fung and Lau (1997), regions that China trades with benefit from cheaper varieties of imported goods, raw materials, and intermediate products. China also provides an extensive and developing export market. Sen (2010) observes that China's export grew at an annual average of nearly 22% between 2005 and 2007. However, the global economic slump affected China's export, especially with its close links with the USA, reducing more than 20% on an average since 2000. During 2009, the value of goods exported was about US\$ 1.2 trillion down, 16% year-on-year, while the value of products imported was US\$ 1.0 trillion, decreasing by 11.2% from the previous year (Sen, 2010).

Prasad (2004) notes that China's trade with the world has increased; the proportion and geographical setting of China's trade changed the global economy. Also, the share of imports by industrial economies accounted for by China had increased, and exports to those markets have become more diversified. China is a significant contributor to the world's economy, and it had strengthened the commodity prices; it is now the world's largest importer of raw materials, including iron ore, aluminum, copper, coal, and cement and also, the second consumer of oil after the United States (Lotta, 2009).

2.3 China-Africa Economic Relations

China-Africa relations have developed over the last five decades. With its annual growth of 8-9 percent and rapid economic growth, China had seen Africa as a favorite partner to secure raw materials (Looy & Haan, 2006). China-Africa economic relations are based on Chinese and African policies, their markets for each other's exports, Africa's demand for infrastructure and China's new approach to financing development projects

According to Sun (2014), China-Africa economic relations since 1949 have been divided into three stages; (1949-1979, 1979-1990s, and 1990-2000). The first stage in China-Africa economic activities was from 1949-1979. During this period, it is established that economic activities between China and Africa were politically motivated. China supported African states to fight imperialism and colonialism. The second stage is called the reform stage, which starts from 1979 to the mid-1990s. According to Sun (2014), during this period, the Chinese foreign policy was directed towards assisting its economic development. During this period, the shift resulted in a change in gaining political favor from African countries for mutual economic benefit and cooperation. The reform process resulted in a rise in the international cooperation of China. The third stage, according to

Sun, was from the mid-1990s to 2000. During this period of China-Africa economic relations, China began to utilize the idea of exploring both the international and domestic markets to grow its economy. Africa, with its rich energy reserves, raw materials, and minerals, became suitable to directly fuel the quest of natural resources for China to boost its economic growth on the global stage (Sun, 2014). Approximately 70 percent of registered African exports to China consist of crude oil and 15 percent of raw materials (Osei & Mubiru, 2010).

Although China and Africa have been trading partners for a long time, China-Africa trade relations have flourished and grown much faster in the post-Mao period. Available data shows that between 1976 and 1980, China's trade with Africa rose to US\$ 1.1 billion (Chaudhry, 2007). Chinese exports to Africa continued to grow faster than its imports from Africa for most of that period. Trade flows between China and Africa have grown rapidly, especially since the mid-1990s, and rose from US\$4 billion in 1995 to US\$40 billion in 2005. Between 2005 and 2006 alone, trade volume increased from US\$40 billion to US\$55 billion (Osei & Mubiru, 2010).

For instance, bilateral trade between Nigeria and China grew from US\$384 million in 1998 to US\$3 billion in 2006. Most of this was attributed to the oil sector (Odeh, 2014).

The first large-scale conference on China-African trade was held in Beijing in 2000. Looy and Haan (2006) note that China explained that the objective of the Sino-Africa Forum was to establish an international political and economic order and explore new China-Africa Cooperation. After the FOCAC in 2000, China promised to increase two-way trade in Africa from US\$40 billion to US\$100 billion in 2009; three to five special economic zones were set-up, and US\$5 billion funds were instituted to support Chinese

development in Africa (Meidan, 2006). Cheng and Shi (2015) argue that over the last decade, the Sino-Africa trade relations have experienced significant growth from less than US\$10 million per annum in the 1950s to almost US\$40 billion in 2005. In 2014, trade between China and Africa exceeded US\$200 billion and was expected to reach a target of US\$400 billion by 2020 (Cheng & Shi, 2015).

Following the changes in China-Africa economic relations, the formulation of FOCAC led to China canceling of debts for many African countries, including Liberia, and the expansion of its market in Africa (Shelton & Paruk, 2008). China is the third trading partner in Africa after the European Union and the United States (Omenka,2014).

The trade relations between China and Africa have developed significantly, however, most African countries continued to witness trade imbalance from China.

2.4 China-Liberia Economic Relations

Since its independence in 1847, Liberia adopted the capitalistic system in its economy, with main focus on the west. According to Bellepea (2009), Liberia's economy in the 1940s began to attract foreign investors when President William V. S. Tubman established the Open Door Policy. The establishment of the "Open Door Policy" attracted many Western foreign direct investments in the country and accelerated economic growth. Liberia continued to experience economic growth until the 1980s when the county's economy began to decline due to the military "coup de tat" that brought in the military government of Samuel K. Doe. A significant economic growth rate averaging 4 to 7% was witnessed in the 1960s. However, the GDP growth rate declined from 5% in

the early 1970s to less than 1% in the 1980s. The external debt rose from US\$7750 million to US\$1.4 billion in 1985 (Casper, 2012).

According to Shinn and Eisenman (2012), during Liberia's economic growth in the 1960s to 70s, there were no formal economic relations between Liberia and China. Liberia's economic activities were directed towards the United States and other Western countries, including Germany, Netherlands, and the United States. According to Kieh (2012), powerful states developed a system of imperialism that he termed as neo-colonialism. Since most of Liberia's economic activities were done with the West, China was never seen as a favorite economic partner to Liberia because of its allegiance to the United States and because its support against the communist regime. According to Odeh (1971), when China and Liberia established bilateral relations China began to provide moral and material support to Liberia in order to have access to the country's rich natural resources, as well as those of other African countries.

Moumouni (2014) notes that the Sino-Liberia engagement clearly shows China's trade involvement with West Africa and its Sub-region. Trade volume between both countries in 2001 was US 141.5 million, China's export totaled US\$113 million, and its import from Liberia was a mere US\$29 million. In 2006, three years after the re-established Sino-Liberia relations, the volume of trade between both countries exceeded to US\$ 532 million with China's export at US\$530 million while imports from Liberia was down to US\$2 million. China mainly imported iron ores and timber and the major exports came from foodstuff, electrical machinery, and ships.

China-Liberia economic relations experienced significant growth since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations in 2003. More than 60 Chinese companies and businesses operated in Liberia in different Liberian economies, and many agreements were signed, including the six pillars agreement in 2010.

2.5 Gaps in the Literature

China, as an emerging economic superpower, has become very significant in the academic arena. China's political and economic involvement in Africa has created more conversations in the research with scholars and policymakers trying to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of this engagement. This study acknowledged that previous studies had investigated the general aspects of China-Africa relations with an in-depth look at specific economic developments (Besada, 2013, Cheng & Shi, 2015, Dellios, 2005, Diaouari, 2004, Looy, 2006, Looy & Haan, 2006, Maddison and Omenka). Besada (2013) and other scholars have studied China-Africa political and economic relations. Besada (2013) notes that China's primary concern is economic development. China has engaged with various regions around the world to boost its economy at the global stage. Cheng and Shi (2015) have argued that China's presence in Africa fuels its economy. Africa is favorable market for cheap Chinese goods. Looy (2006) asserts that Chinese companies bring their laborers in Africa to work where unemployment is very high. Looy looked at some of the disadvantages that Chinese investments in Africa have created, like the influx of Chinese laborers in Africa.

Moumouni (2014), Shinn and Eisenman (2012), and Kieh (2012), among others, have tried to systematically highlight the diplomatic and economic relations between China and Liberia. The literature reveals the general relations between China and Liberia.

However, literature on issues of change and continuity in Sino-Liberia economic relations is absent. Therefore, the researcher has investigated issues of change and continuity in Sino-Liberia economic relations between 1977 and 2016.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The study of international relations deals with many contending theories. These include but not limited to realism, liberalism, game theory, and interdependence theory. These theories endeavor to give an overview on how relations between states can be analyzed.

According to Dunne and Schmidt (2008), realism has remained the most dominant theory in international relations. Realism theory is centered upon four major propositions; these are the international system is an anarchic, states are the most important actors in the international system, states are rational actors that tend to pursue self-interest and finally that the primary concern of all states is survival.

Economic relations are among the essential aspects of states' relations. Scholars like David Ricardo, and Karl Marx, studied the economic relations from the angle of contending theories in international relations. Since the present world is globalized, it operates under capitalist regimes and principles from socio-economic liberalism (Snyder, 2004). The study was, therefore, guided by the complex interdependence theory as a tool of analysis. The phrase "complex interdependence" was postulated by Raymond Leslie Buell in 1925 when he depicted the new formation among economies, cultures, and races (Crane & Amawi, 1997).

The complex interdependence theory in international relations as a critique of political realism was postulated by Keohane and Nye (1977). The complex interdependence

theorists note that states are inextricably connected, and the idea is more liberal than realist. The idea of economic interdependence was presented in Richard Cooper's work in 1968. In their analysis as a critique of political realism, Keohane and Nye (1977) observe that states do not dominate their contacts because there are multiple channels that connect states, and as in such, governments do not use military force against each other. According to Alogo (2014), complex interdependence theorists acknowledge that several and complex transnational connections and interdependencies between states and societies are rising, while the use of military force and power balancing was decreasing but remain essential. From their analysis, Keohane and Nye characterized complex interdependence into the following. First is that, a state's policy goals are not organized in stable hierarchies but subject to trade-off. Second, is that the existence of many channels of contact among societies extends the range of policy instruments, reducing the potential of foreign offices closely to control governments' foreign relations and military force.

In the prevailing global trends, the theory of complex interdependence disputed the postulations of traditional realism and liberalism, that the measures for accomplishing real power are no longer the use of military force. Instead, it required substantial economic and technological advancement. The fall of military force as a policy tool and the rise in economic and other sectors of inextricability should increase the capacity of relations among states (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Complex interdependence theorists have critiqued liberalism and political realism for their failure to address the social nature of state relations and the global community's social structure.

The complex interdependence theory is relevant for analyzing and understanding change and continuity in China-Liberia economic relations because both countries are interdependent in their relations. The theory guided this study in erasing the misconception and misguided application of dependency theory in treating relations between nations. Moreover, the theory is significant as it explains the contemporary world in which no country can be an island unto itself since no nation is naturally equipped or endowed with all the resources that it requires in sustaining itself. Nations must therefore relate with one another in order to survive. This theory's fundamental contribution was that it directs attention to the fact that nations are intricately dependent on one another, to the extent that no nation can entirely decide for others. However, this does not dispel the fact that there must be winners and losers in each relationship. Thus, the theory accepts and indicates the realities of unequal gains from trade among two or more interacting nations, such as Sino-Liberia relations.

The theory helped the study in concluding that China-Liberia economic relations are bedeviled because none of the two countries is independent. Both countries have therefore tolerated with each other in seeking to achieve their national interests. For instance, as an emerging economic superpower, China requires raw materials like iron ore and timber, and Liberia, on the other hand, as an underdeveloped economy, requires the finished products from Chinese companies to meet the demands of her market. Imperatively, it implies that both countries interact and transact their issues across borders. In this 21st century, countries have realized that countries' criteria to obtain real power on the global stage are no longer about the massive military and sophisticated weapons; instead, it required the establishment of economic efficiency and advanced

technology. Considering China's 'win-win' diplomatic approach, the Sino-Liberia relations are intended to foster both countries' economic efficiency. To analyze the study's data, the theory helped in explaining the importance of Sino-Liberia economic relations and issue of change and continuity within the period 1977 to 2016.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the research methodology utilized in the study. It includes aspects such as research design, study location, target population, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, validity and reliability and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The primary objective of the research was to interrogate the changes in Sino-Liberia economic relations in the period 1977-2016. In order to achieve the objective of the research, the researcher adopted a descriptive research design. The descriptive research design was important to the research due to its provision of in-depth analysis of the phenomenon, narration of facts, specific predictions, opinions, values and characteristics concerning individuals, group and institutions. The researcher primarily employed the descriptive research design and adopted the mixed methods approach where both qualitative and quantitative were employed.

3.2 Study Location

The study was conducted in Monrovia, the Capital of Liberia. Accordingly, key government ministries and departments that formed part of the study are located there. Furthermore, the Chinese Embassy is also located in Monrovia. Monrovia has 29% of the entire population of the country. It has been considered by Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services as per the 2008 census as the most populated part of Liberia (LISGIS, 2008). (See **Appendix I: Map Monrovia**).

3.3 Target Population

The target population for the study was the people of Liberia and the Chinese living in Liberia. The study targeted officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Public Works, Commerce and Industry, Chinese Embassy in Monrovia, Liberian students in China, and members from the Liberian business community.

3.3.1 Study Population

The study had a population of 2000 people drawn from the Chinese living in Liberia and Liberians in Liberia including government officials, businessmen and women, civil servants and Liberian graduates from China. Due to the limitation of time, the researcher narrowed the sample size to 10 percent of the study population.

➤ The output value is 2000

$$\text{➤ } \frac{2000}{X} = \frac{100}{10\%}$$

$$\text{➤ } \frac{X}{2000} = \frac{10\%}{100}$$

$$X = 200$$

Table 3. 1: Sample Population Reached

Category	Total Population
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	25
Ministry of Public Works	25
Liberia Business Community	80
Ministry of Commerce & Industries	25
Chinese Embassy	15
Liberian Students from China	30
Total Target Population	200

The researcher organized seven (7) focus group discussions of mainly fifteen participants from three different institutions including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Public Works and with a number of personalities. Also, the researcher conducted two live history interviews with a former ambassador to China and a former minister of China. Selected informants and focus group discussions were chosen based on respondents' willingness to participate, their knowledge of the subject, age and the number of years they have worked in various areas.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The study used both convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Convenience sampling was used because the participants were considered by the researcher to be having relevant information about the study topic. Furthermore, in convenience sampling, the subjects for the sample were selected based on certain criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at given time and their wiliness to participate for the purpose of the study. Convenience Samples are sometimes regarded as ‘accidental samples’ because subjects may be selected in the sample simply as they just happen to be situated, spatially or administratively near the location where the researcher was conducting the data collection.

The snowball sampling was used because the research topic involved collecting sensitive information which was not easily available to the public. The snowball sampling method yielded a study sample through referrals made among people that knew others who possessed the information that was of research interest. The informants were sampled from specific sections in the ministries, Chinese embassy, Chinese construction sites and market places.

3.5 Research Instruments

The research instruments used in the study comprised of questionnaires, interview guides, and focused group discussion guides. The questionnaire was open-ended and thus allowed for adequate probing of information from respondents.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained a research permit from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The research permit and letter of authorization from Kenyatta University Graduate School were presented to the relevant ministries and the People's Republic of China Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia and an appointment booked with them and other respondents. The researcher informed the respondents about the nature and purpose of the study. This enabled the researcher to establish contact and familiarity with the respondents (See **Appendix II & III: Research Permits**).

3.7 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the findings, the researcher used the triangulation method to allow comparison of different research instruments. The research provided an explanation for either variance or similarity in information, thus strengthening the analysis. To ensure validity, the research instruments were vigorously scrutinized and sent to the relevant department for review to determine their correction.

3.8 Data Analysis

The processing and analyzing of data was done in line with the objectives of the study. To avoid loss of significant information, analysis of data begun in the field by creating orders of collected data. Tape recorded data was transcribed and typed. The collected data was coded and analyzed thematically. Secondary data was subjected to critical textual analysis and interpreted to test the relevance and accuracy of the document. Descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies were used to describe basic data, and other analyzed data was also reported in the narrative, coupled with first-hand quotations from the primary data.

3.9 Data Management and Ethical Considerations

Academic best practices and appropriate norms were observed during the study. A permit for the research was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovations (NACOSTI) after obtaining a letter of approval from the Graduate School of Kenyatta University. Confidentiality was maintained, and all information and data collected were used for the objective of the study. Respondents were informed and participated voluntarily. They also have the right to withdraw at their will and pleasure. The researcher maintained the safety, dignity, and privacy of individuals and institutions participating in the study. The names of participants used as reference in the study are pseudonyms.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION, FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

THE NATURE OF SINO-LIBERIA ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT; 1977-1990

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis on the nature of economic engagement between Liberia and China within the period 1977-1990. It provides a contextual analysis into the relationship between Liberia and China. It was established that due to Liberia's allegiance and long historical relations with the United States, the country was an anti-communist. Liberia had little or no relations with South-East Asia until the 1970s when the country decided to shift from its Western orientation by establishing full diplomatic relations with South-East Asian countries, including Japan, Soviet Union, Cuba and mainland China.

4.2 Emergence and growth of Sino-Liberia ties; 1977-1980

China's approach that attracts relations with Africa started long before the independence of many African countries. The established relations between China and Africa from the 1950s was defined as being non-imperial in its intentions (Omenka, 2014). Furthermore, China's approach was different from that of the Western colonial power because China supported some African countries to gain independence, and its renewed interest in African states was considered one of its kind away from that of Western nations.

During the 2015 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Johannesburg, former Chinese ambassador to South Africa Liu Guijin explained that the relationship between China and Africa had proven concrete because the intention of China in Africa

since the Ming Dynasty era was primarily aimed at supporting African countries improve their development agenda (Omenka, 2014). Furthermore, Guijin disputed the allegation that China's intention in Africa was “neo-colonial.” He noted that since China came into contact with Africa 600 years ago, when Zhen He, led the largest fleet in the world, China did not occupy any part of Africa, like Christopher Columbus did in the New World."

When most African states began to gain independence, trade relations between China and Africa were low (Uchegara, 2009). Moreover, language and cultural barriers kept trade levels relatively low compared to the West which had already established colonies in Africa. The policy of China towards Africa during this period was influenced by the search for ideological allies that could oppose Western powers' influence. Considering China's position in the non-aligned movement and its assistance to get African states in forums such as the Bandung Conference, the government of Liberia was committed to its Western partners, especially the United States. Liberia could not embrace a communist government since it was also anti-communist because of its allegiance to the United States (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). During the Bandung Conference of 1955, Liberia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Libya, and Sudan, were among the 29 Asian and African states present. The conference targeted the promotion of economic and cultural relations between China and African states. Despite Liberia's encounter with the Chinese leader, Zhou Enlai during the 1955 Bandung Conference, Liberia still saw China as an unlikely ally (Andersen, 2008).

The leadership of Deng Xiaoping witnessed a tremendous shift in China-Africa relations from a period of indirect political and ideological assistance to direct assistance for

several liberation movements. Liberia, as the oldest independent state in Africa, was also against the white supremacy in South Africa and joined other African states including Nigeria to support the liberation of South Africa (Looy, 2009). This interface increased Liberia's encounter with China but did not lead to the establishment of bilateral relations because Taiwan was a favored trading partner of Liberia at the time. Meanwhile, Liberia was already benefiting from Taiwan's projects sponsored by the American government (Andersen, 2008). In November 1961, Liberia became the first African country to sign an assistance agreement with Taiwan (Sim, 1971). A Taiwanese team sponsored by the United States Joint Commission of Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) was entrusted with the task of opening a demonstration farming site at Gbedin, Liberia, where U.N. and American missions had previously tried fruitlessly to grow rice. Within four months, the plot yielded a harvest six times greater than the area's average harvest (Sim, 1971). This success encouraged other African countries to accept or request assistance from Taiwan.

Between 1960 and 1963, Taiwan received diplomatic recognition from 13 independent African states out of 23 with only five for China. Despite the competition, five countries did not recognize either Taiwan or China. The latter are; Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Niger, and the Central Africa Republic. According to Rich and Vasabjit (2015), in 1971, China was given a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council replacing Taiwan, which led to an eventual split between the two countries, with China having 22 African allies and Taiwan 20 African allies. Since the replacement of Taiwan in the U.N. Security Council in 1971, China's relationship with African countries began to rise; by 1974, the number increased from 22 to 30. Liberia still supported Taiwan and still did not establish relations with China after Taiwan's replacement on the U.N. Security Council. Liberia

maintained its relations with Taiwan until 1977 by which time China had wooed over 40 African countries. At his time, the Liberian government then realized the significance of China's presence and decided to shift its relations to China in 1977.

Considering China's economic 'meltdown' and having won the tussle with Taiwan in the U.N. Security Council, China's interest shifted to its domestic interests including its economic reforms (Omenka, 2014). China thus started making significant progress in achieving high rates of economic growth, developing its manufacturing sector, and building export growth since the 1970s. According to Adaora (2018), China's share of the world's exports had risen from 1.1% in 1981 to 6.8% in 2005, making China the world's largest exporting nation. Given these positive results in China's economic reform, rapid economic growth and investment Sino-Liberia relations assumed a new trend.

4.3 William R. Tolbert Regime in Sino-Liberia Relations: 1971-1980

The era of William R. Tolbert ushered in a new path into the Liberian foreign policy. Tolbert became the 20th President of Liberia after the death of President William V.S. Tubman in 1971. Before ascending to the presidency, Tolbert was first elected as a legislator to the House of Representatives. In the House of Representatives, Tolbert chaired two critical committees: Ways Means and Finance and Agricultural and Commerce. As Tubman's vice president for 19 years and 27 years of public office before his ascendancy to the presidency, Tolbert was internationally seasoned as he traveled at the behest of the president to represent Liberia on many international occasions.

Moreover, Tolbert also seemed to have had vast experience outside the public and political sector. He was elected President of Baptist World Alliance, which promoted the

Baptist denomination worldwide. This was a position of great prestige since the presidency was awarded every five years during the Baptist World Alliance conference. Tolbert was the Baptist denomination's first Black leader.

In politics and unlike his predecessor, Tolbert believed in nonalignment as a means of diversifying sources of economic support. He therefore maintained a free enterprise system as an economic approach to Liberia's development (Kasongo, 1999).

Tolbert's administration shifted from his predecessor's foreign policy towards a new foreign policy that dealt with both the East and West. Tubman's foreign policy mainly focused on the West, with the United States being Liberia's major ally. For Tolbert, his administration shifted from its traditional allegiance to the United States to a foreign policy that was more independent, clearly anti-colonial and decidedly Africanist (Dunn, 2016). His government also started to redirect Liberia's economic system from liberal capitalism towards a state-led, planned economic system, focusing on food self-sufficiency and industrialization. According to Hahn (2009), in order for Tolbert to gain support for his new policy, he established full diplomatic relations with the socialist-oriented countries, such as the Soviet Union, Cuba, North Korea, and the People's Republic of China.

Although Tubman's regime had strong relations with Western countries in terms of economic and diplomatic relations, his administration had strained relations with Western countries. He did not want the interference of westerner partners in the domestic affairs of Liberia especially the country's original ally, the United States. Tolbert believed that Liberia as a sovereign state needed to execute its internal and external policies while

maintaining its relations with other states (Casper, 2012). For example, in 1973, the Tolbert administration prohibited the United States vessels registered under the Liberian flag from supplying arms to Israel and severed diplomatic relations with Israel thus potentially jeopardizing its steady support from the United States. This act validated Liberia's independence of United States policy and Liberia's alignment with the African, Islamic, Eastern bloc, and Asian states that supported Egypt and Syria.

During the Tolbert regime, Dunn (1979) notes that diplomatic relations with the communist world prospered. After the establishment of bilateral relations between China and Liberia in 1977, the Chinese government in 1978 invited Tolbert to Beijing. The Liberian leader held talks with Chinese leaders, Vice-Chairman Deng Xiaoping and Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang. In the same year, the Liberian government dispatched Ambassador John Daniel Cox to Beijing, while the Chinese government also appointed Ambassador Hua Guofeng to Liberia. As a result of Tolbert's visit to China, both countries concluded an agreement of "economic and technical cooperation," covering an extensive range of projects, including agricultural and infrastructure development as well as cultural exchange.

Since one of Tolbert's domestic policies focused on food self-sufficiency and industrialization in Liberia, his relations with China enhanced the initiation of agricultural projects in the country by Chinese personnel that replaced the Taiwanese that were initially involved in agricultural activities in Liberia (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). Another notable development in this regard was the signing of "trade agreements." According to Jenkins (O.I, 2018), a respondent who served in the Tolbert administration noted that the president was an oriented foreign relations developmentalist. His intention was to

diversify Liberia's external development funds sources. Also, the trade agreement secured a formidable opportunity that would fathom economic growth between China and Liberia. According to Hahn (2009), more than 30 state-owned enterprises were created, and concession agreements with foreign companies were renegotiated, creating severe tension with Firestone, an American company.

On the international stage, Tolbert tried to consolidate Liberia-Africa relations. He advocated for African unity and strengthened Liberia's relations with African countries. On one of Tolbert's visits to the United States, he criticized Western involvement in Africa and advocated for the creation of an economic union for Africa, similar to the emerging Western European Union (Casper, 2012). Tolbert delivered a speech in California, proclaiming his optimism about Africa's future and criticizing the reluctance of Western powers to help the African continent. He cited the problems of minority rule in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), South African control of Namibia, and the continuing war in the Portuguese colonies, such as Angola. These were all significant issues affecting the continent that Tolbert was greatly concerned with. Tolbert's outstanding contributions to Africa in general and Liberia in particular were recognized in 1978 when he was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the Organization of African Union (OAU), now African Union (A.U.).

In 1979, Liberia hosted the Annual Meeting of the O.A.U., and during the meeting, Tolbert was directly involved in the formulation of the Monrovia Declaration that was adopted by the O.A.U. (Hahn, 2009). He continued to exert his regime and Liberia as a diplomatic pillar in the African region and particularly in the Mano River region, involving Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ivory Coast by attempting to resolve

internationalized conflicts. Tolbert's position as Chairman at the O.A.U. brought pride to Liberia as the first Liberian president to hold such a position, that championed the cause of African unity. Being the Chairman of O.A.U. was a significant step by Tolbert in shaping the direction of Liberia's foreign policy.

Tolbert's regime came to an end in a coup d' état on April 12, 1980, when a group of 17 armed men, non-commissioned soldiers in the Armed Forces of Liberia, led by Samuel K. Doe, entered the executive mansion with sporadic gunfire and shot Tolbert. Early the same morning, the leader of the coup, Samuel Doe, announced that Tolbert's government was overthrown.

Tolbert's regime had however set the foundation of Sino-Liberia relations. During the three years of relations between Liberia and China, the Chinese government took a significant interest in Liberia's agricultural sector. His administration had enhanced the nation's sovereignty both continentally and internationally. Tolbert's engagement with China was focused on infrastructure development and agricultural investment. On the other hand, China was equally more interested in the political recognition from Liberia.

4.4 Socio-Political Relations between Liberia and China; 1977-1989

Liberia established official diplomatic relations with China on February 17, 1977. Liberia considered its newly established relations with China as an advantage to secure new sources of external support on the global stage as China had emerged as a global economic giant. Before Liberia snowballed into the bilateral relations with Communist China, it was an unlikely ally for a communist government due to its ties with the United States. However, in the 1970s, Liberia decided to shift from its traditional alliance to the

United States to form a foreign policy that was more autonomous, clearly anti-colonial, and Africanist (Dunn, 2016). For instance, in 1972, the administration of William R. Tolbert (1971-1980) established diplomatic relations with the communist world, including China and several Eastern bloc states.

As a small power in the world, Liberia had and retained the need to establish alliances with more extraordinary powers to survive (Thomson, 1999). Following the growth of the Chinese economy in the 1970s, China's strong position in Africa and the rise of newly independent African countries provided the opportunity for Liberia to form an independent foreign policy, therefore, allowing the country to establish diplomatic relations with the Western and Eastern blocs (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). During this period, Liberian policies became more radical. On the domestic front, the government cultivated a socialist policy for development, while on the international stage, the foreign policy opted for a non-aligned movement. The change in Liberia's foreign policy did not however favor her ally, the United States.

Having established bilateral relations with China, Liberia broke its relations with Taiwan even though it had almost 20 years of relations with Taiwan before snowballing into diplomatic relations with China. When Liberia broke bilateral relations with Taiwan in favor of China, China saw its relations with Liberia as an important policy objective to make sure it overtook Taiwan both economically and politically in Liberia (Kuo,2003). Gray (2018) notes that Liberia was among a few other countries, including Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique, that would switch relations to Taiwan and, in many cases, China again as competition continued. China's effort to woo Liberia was therefore based on the shifting of its relations to Taiwan.

In 1978, William R. Tolbert was invited for a state visit to China. The visit resulted in significant agreements between the government of Liberia and the People's Republic of China. Technical and economic cooperation and trade were part of the agreements during the visit of William R. Tolbert to China. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, both countries during the Tolbert administration experienced healthy and steady cooperation (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012).

Doe's administration was the first military administration since Liberia's independence in 1847 highlighting the "Second Republic of Liberia (1980-1990)."

While Tolbert's regime shifted from its Western orientation to a more autonomous and Africanist policy, Doe's regime solidified its relations with the West, especially the United States, for what he saw as the United States' support for the government (TRC, 2009). For instance, the Liberian government closed down the Libyan embassy in Monrovia and reduced the staff of the Soviet embassy in May 1981 and was later closed in September the same year. However, Doe maintained his relations with the People's Republic of China because he believed that the Chinese government would support his military government. In 1982, President Doe visited China, and the Chinese government pledged its support to Doe's administration. According to Shinn and Eisenman (2012), significant agreements such as; economic and technical cooperation and agricultural assistance were signed between both governments during Doe's visit to China. Moreover, months later, after Doe visited China, the Chinese government sent twenty military jeeps, two limousines, and buses to support the Doe military government (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012).

Sino-Liberia relations intensified during Doe's administration from 1980 to 1989 when Doe decided to switch diplomatic relations to Taiwan to seek foreign aid to support his government. In 1984, after the completion of the 30,000 seat stadium in Monrovia, financed by an interest-free loan, the Vice President of China, Tian Jiyun, visited Liberia for the dedication of the project, which was the major centerpiece of China's investment in Liberia in the 1980s (ChinaDaily.com, accessed June 12, 2017). Doe maintained his relations with China as the Chinese government embarked on several small aid projects, mainly agricultural projects.

However, the Doe administration began to face many challenges, including a series of military coup and reduction in the United States aid from 1986. In order to seek financial assistance, Doe decided to diversify his source of funds. In 1988, Liberia's government re-established relations with the Soviet Union and Libya, but bonds were no longer strong because Doe had appeared hostile to both countries in the first half of the 1980s (Hahn, 2009). Due to the Liberian government's financial constraints, Taiwan decided to seize the opportunity by offering the Doe administration financial assistance of US\$200million in return for recognition of Taiwan. However, some officials from the Liberian government saw Taiwan's offer as a US-coordinated effort to isolate Liberia in the UNSC, where China held veto power and advised President Doe not to accept the offer (Hahn, 2009). Nevertheless, Doe accepted the offer from Taiwan's government and announced his reestablished diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1989. Following the recognition of Taiwan, the Chinese government responded by severing diplomatic relations with Liberia.

The government of China shut down its embassy in Monrovia and withdrew Chinese personnel working on several projects in Liberia. This move affected Liberia's government greatly because all the projects that were being financed by the government of China came to a standstill. In the absence of China, Liberia benefited from Taiwan's financial aid, while Taiwan also benefited from Liberia's recognition over China.

4.5 Samuel K. Doe Regime; 1980-1990

On April 12, 1980, the administration of William R. Tolbert was toppled by a coup d'état. The coup which was led by Samuel K. Doe brought to an end 133 years of minority rule (Kasongo, 1999).

Liberia began a new regime, under military rule. Doe's regime was highly welcomed by many Liberians, especially the native Liberians, who saw Doe as the first native Liberian to rule the country after 133 years. Unlike his predecessor, Doe had little formal education, and by many accounts, he was illiterate and inexperienced when he took over the presidency (Ellis, 1999). Doe established his government under the banner of the "People's Redemption Council" (PRC), which was composed of 17 soldiers, the majority of the Krahn ethnic group, and key participants of the coup.

Doe immediately suspended the Constitution of Liberia. The new government opened up trials for permanent members of the Tolbert regime. Doe believed that his predecessor's regime was corrupt, and officials of the Tolbert government had stolen Liberians' wealth to enrich themselves. On April 22, 1980, President Doe invited the world press to the Barclay Training Centre, where thirteen prominent members of the Tolbert government were publicly executed (Thomson, 1988). The execution of the 13 former government

officials seemed to have been a wrong move for the Doe administration because the international community did not support the action.

The Doe government seem to have underestimated the reaction of the world. According to Thomson (1988) the execution was denounced not only by the US and other European countries but also African governments. For example, one of the officials executed was a former minister of Foreign Affairs, Cecil Dennis, who was a renowned statesman. The execution of Cecil Dennis was so appalling to the Nigerian government that they refused to allow the new foreign minister of Doe's government, Gabriel Baccus Matthews, to attend the A.U. meeting in Lagos, turning his flight back to Liberia.

The PRC government shifted its foreign policy from the path of its predecessor. Unlike Tolbert, Doe shifted to the Western traditional policy (Dunn, 2016). Since Doe's foreign policy was more favorable for the United States, the United States established strong relations with Doe in the first phase of his government. By August 1980, the same year after the coup, the United States' direct assistance to Liberia increased with the signing of two agreements committing to a total of US\$17 million in aid (Harden, 1986). The significant increase of the United States' direct assistance to the Doe government raised concerns that the United had backed Doe's coup because of Tolbert's non-aligned policies (Casper, 2012). The United States' position was made clear that it was necessary to protect their assets and counter the spread of socialism.

Despite the Doe's strong ties with the United States, his administration maintained strong bilateral relations with China. He however decided to terminate bilateral relations with some communist countries. For example, in 1981, Doe accused the Libyan People's Bureau of orchestrating a plot against him. Therefore, he ordered the closing of the

Libyan embassy and asked the Libyans out of the country. Moreover, he reduced the Soviet embassy staff and eventually severed diplomatic relations (Harden, 1986). This way, President Doe gained more support from the United States. Despite the country's turmoil, the United States government continued to provide economic and security assistance to Liberia. According to Thomson (1988), over five years of the Doe government, the United States provided US\$43.5 million for the construction of military housing. The TRC Report (2009) also notes that the early years of the Doe administration received the highest amount of United States aid of US\$500 million. Liberia became the highest per capita aid recipient in sub-Saharan Africa and much more than all previous Liberian government administrations combined.

Despite the United States' presence and influence in Liberia during the Doe administration, the Chinese government remained committed in supporting the administration of Doe because significant groundwork of enhanced relations between Liberia and China was already established during the Tolbert regime.

The change of regime and shifting of Liberia's foreign policy did not affect the Sino-Liberia relations at the beginning of the new military government because Doe would turn to Chinese financial aid to support his government agenda (Dunn, 2016). During the Doe administration, China-Liberia economic relations also began to grow with high-level political contacts between the two countries, followed by a series of agreements (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). In 1982, Doe was invited to Beijing by the Chinese government. During the visit, the Chinese government agreed to support the military government of Samuel Doe. While Liberia sought financial support from China, the Chinese, in the meantime, also sought political support from Liberia against the recognition of Taiwan.

The visit was followed by military supplies, including fifty military jeeps to support the new government.

The Chinese government continued with its agricultural initiatives during the Doe administration. To solidify its commitment, China and Liberia further signed cultural, agricultural, economic and technical agreements. For example, in 1981, the Chinese government agreed to take over the Kpatawee rice project after the signing of an agreement on August 27, 1981. With this agreement all local expenses were to be met by the Chinese loan for the remainder of the project (Brautigam, 1993). The initial project targets consisted of the raised production of seed rice on 163-hectares, a 30-meter bridge, a warehouse, residential houses for senior and junior staff, and a workshop; the establishment of piggery and poultry units; and reconditioning of the 13-hectare irrigated rice field.

Ying (2018) notes that the Chinese government's Kpatawee rice project in 1981 in Liberia was intended to help the Liberian agricultural sector with an effective irrigation system that would produce rice on a large scale for its economic growth.

On the regional level, President Doe did not have a friendly relationship with his African counterparts. The execution of former government officials of the Tolbert government and Tolbert's death created anger in Africa. Tolbert's role as chairman of O.A.U. before his death had made him well known. According to Casper (2012), Doe's relations with the A.U. were already stormy as he claimed to be the new O.A.U. chairman succeeding in Tolbert, the chairman at the time of his death but O.A.U. rejected Doe's assertions. The military coup troubled the O.A.U.; it was reluctant to recognize a leader who seized power through violence. All the O.A.U. member states, except Ethiopia, refused to

recognize Doe. The executions in Monrovia were broadcast live in Lagos, Nigeria, where the A.U. Council of Ministers was preparing for a summit meeting. The ministers spoke openly about their disgust and sent a letter to Doe declaring their objections to the violence.

In May 1980, the Economic Community of West African States refused to allow Doe to attend the summit held in Lomé, Togo (Harden, 1986). Doe ignored the rebuff and arrived in Togo uninvited. To further damage his reputation, he arrived in full combat gear, brandishing pistols (Harden, 1986). Doe's actions and disrespect for the community much angered President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, and Doe was immediately sent away. In retaliation, Doe recalled Liberia's ambassadors from Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Nigeria. According to the *New York Times* report (May 28, 1980), Doe's isolation from the West African community was based on two primary reasons. The first reason given was that Tolbert was popular among African leaders, and he championed the cause to liberate other African states. The second reason was that Doe's coup terrified many of Liberia's close neighbors whose civilian governments were also fragile. For instance, the stability of Sierra Leone and its economy were dependent on Liberia. Sierra Leone feared that the coup of Liberia was a threat to its economy and peace.

The situation between Doe and the West African community was remedied by the United States' diplomatic efforts and overtures to West African leaders on behalf of president Doe. The United States continued its support toward the government of Liberia. Casper (2012) notes that the United States embassy in Liberia began to play a major role in shaping and influencing the government's direction. Doe professed a stance of

nonalignment at some point, but this was impossible for his government because he depended on the United States not just for aid but for political advice and support.

By 1986, the military government transitioned into a civilian government after the 1985 elections. Doe won the election and was recognized by the United States and other African leaders. At this time, President Doe appeared to have as many problems as his predecessors. According to Thomson (1988), at this time of the new government, the economy continued to falter, exacerbated by the reduction in the United States' aid to US\$52 million. No additional military assistance was provided in 1986. The government attempted to meet its debt obligation but fell further behind as the world market for iron ore and rubber tumbled. The reduction in the United States' aid to Liberia created a problematic economic prospect for the new administration because the United States had played major role in financing the administration.

John (O.I: 2018) notes that by 1987, the United States Congress had already begun questioning the amount of money being expended in supporting President Doe and ordered the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) to audit all funds to Liberia. The GAO report issued in February 1987 showed gross misuse and diversion of funds by the Liberian government (Thomson, 1988).

This time the new government of Doe began to face numerous problems. With the challenging economic prospects and the country's turbulent political environment, Doe professed a stance of nonalignment again, but this time, the United States had little or no interest in Liberia (Thomson, 1988). In 1988, Liberia reestablished diplomatic relations with Libya and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union reopened its embassy in Monrovia.

Meanwhile, the Chinese government continued to support the government of Liberia. However, following the government's economic challenges, Doe found economic involvement with Taiwan to be more palatable than China. Meanwhile, Taiwan also seized the situation of the deteriorating economy of Liberia to gain recognition over China. In 1989, Doe reestablished diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Kasongo (1999) noted that the government of Liberia's decision appeared as a tremendous slap in the face of China.

As a consequence, the Chinese government responded by severing diplomatic relations with Liberia. Before the recognition of Taiwan, the Chinese government had invested in Liberia with excellent support in infrastructure including the construction of the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex (SKD), the Ministry of Health's construction, and many other projects. In return for the recognition, the government of Taiwan gave Liberia US\$200 million in aid of education and infrastructure development. In the meantime, the Taiwanese government appointed Lee Huan as ambassador to Liberia (Thomson, 1988). Considerably, the United States appeared to have abandoned Doe during this period of his administration. On December 24, 1989, opposition forces invaded the country through neighboring Ivory Coast to unseat Doe. Doe having been abandoned by the United States, was captured in 1990 by one of the rebel forces headed by Prince Y. Johnson and killed.

4.4 Economic, Trade, Aid and Technical Cooperation; 1977-1990

Economic relations between states are established due to numerous factors, including the exchange of trade, investment between both countries, the flow of aid, and technical assistance provision. Since Liberia and China snowballed into bilateral relations in 1977,

relations between both countries have been influenced by economic activities (Moumouni, 2014).

The economy of Liberia is mostly dependent on its natural resources, foreign direct investment and foreign aid. Since the establishment of bilateral relations between Liberia and China, Liberia continued benefiting from China's foreign aid. According to Moshi (2008) China's relations and aid flow with African countries were longstanding and have evolved significantly over the past 40 years. Moreover, it is important to note that China, as an emerging economic power, had offered significant amounts of aid since 1960 and other development assistance to African countries. Li Wei (O.I: 2018) a Chinese participant at the Chinese Embassy in Liberia noted that China's aid to Liberia had been based on the need for it to solidify its economic relations with Liberia. Besides, China's aid and technical cooperation were intended to contribute to developing underdeveloped countries like Liberia (Wei, O.I: 2018).

To support the Liberian government's effort, a series of agreements were signed between the Chinese and Liberian governments.

The agreements that were signed under the umbrella of economic, trade, aid, and technical cooperation between China and Liberia included; The Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation Between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Liberia February 17, 1977; Trade Agreement Between the Government of Republic of Liberia and the Government of the People's Republic of China May 16, 1979; Protocol on the Projects of Economic and Technical Cooperation Between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and the Government of

the People's Republic of China August 27, 1988; and Culture Agreement Between The Government of The Republic of Liberia and the Government of the People's Republic of China May 6, 1982.

The Chinese government also sent a team of fifty persons to Liberia following the established bilateral relations to determine the feasibility of rehabilitating Taiwanese project. The team concluded that the project was not feasible, and the project's funds should be directed to other projects (Gray, 2018). A 45-year-old informant, Zinnah Johnson (O.I: 20180) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that China firmly opposed Taiwan's recognition and could not support most of the projects that were established by the government of Taiwan in Liberia. Many of the projects that were initiated by the Taiwanese government in the 1960s and 1970s, included the Say-Dude rice farm, Garwalu-Tombe rice, and vegetable project. The renovation of the Gbedin Water Conservancy project, feasibility studies on setting up improved rice seed station and vegetable centers. Also, the sole technical studies on assessing the possibility of cultivating paddy rice in some areas along the valley of St. John and other three rivers. The technical guidance to the three water conservancy projects of Foya, Zleh-Town, and Juarzon were all canceled by the Chinese government.

Despite the cancellation of the Taiwanese projects by China, there were several channels through which Chinese activities impacted Liberia's development process. For example, from 1984 to 1989, the Chinese government sent three medical teams to Liberia, with some total accumulative personnel of 42. By 1989, China initiated several joint ventures, some of which were linked to its foreign aid program. Liberia benefited from these projects as they contributed to the development of the country.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the nature of Sino-Liberia economic engagement between 1977 to 1990. The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Liberia in 1977 was intended for political interest of China, while on the other hand, Liberia needed investments to fund its development programs and improve its economic growth. China's political interest was to terminate Liberia's relationship with Taiwan since Liberia was among a few African countries that still maintained bilateral relations with Taiwan. It is generally accepted that after Liberia had established diplomatic relations with China, the Chinese government sent some Chinese technicians to replace the Taiwanese personnel that were working on significant projects in Liberia.

Sino-Liberia relations were officially established during the Tolbert regime. Tolbert entertained the idea of solidifying relations with communist states thus shifting from the traditional Western orientation of Liberia foreign policy to a more independent foreign policy. Tolbert considered this approach as a means to balance Liberia's relations with the United States and the West to champion the cause of African unity, securing better opportunities for investment, technology transfers, terms of trade, military support, and financial assistance.

Liberia's relations with China during the Tolbert regime created investment opportunities and jobs for Liberians especially in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, the relations opened a formidable path for trade relations between both countries.

Despite the changes in Doe's foreign policy, Doe considered the enhanced relations established between China and Liberia during the Tolbert administration. He also turned

towards China in order to secure military support, financial assistance and investment. The Chinese government welcomed the new administration of Doe and began to support his government. High-level visits, followed by a series of bilateral agreements were made between the two countries.

The nature of economic engagement between China and Liberia from 1977 to 1990 basically accounted for improvement in agriculture, Chinese foreign aid and investments. This period witnessed strong agricultural support from China and also the severing of bilateral relations during the administration of Doe.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPACT OF REGIME CHANGE ON SINO-LIBERIA ECONOMIC RELATIONS: 1991 -2016

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview on issues of change and continuity in Sino-Liberia economic relations, focusing on the changes in regime between 1991 to 2016. The chapter investigates the impact of various regimes, starting with the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) (1990-1997), Charles Taylor (1997-2003) and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2005-2016). The chapter thus discusses how regime change influenced the relations between China and Liberia.

5.2 Overview of Regime Change

Relations between states are shaped by the change of regime or by relations within states, which can shift the dynamics of states' foreign policies. Chigora and Ziso (2011) note that a political administration's change may be an outcome of internal and external factors where incumbents were forced to leave the political office. Furthermore, regime change, mostly as it may be regarded as the replacement of an existing political leader by the next. This was exactly what had been played out in Liberia, from Taylor's regime to the Sirleaf regime, with each leader coming with their own foreign policy strategy.

5.3 Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU); 1990-1997

Following the violent conflict that started in 1989 by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor to unseat Samuel Doe from power, the Interim Government of National Unity was formed in Banjul, Gambia, on August 30, 1990. After

the death of Samuel Doe, Amos Sawyer was installed as the president of IGNU and represented the government of Liberia.

In the meantime, the civil war continued to escalate and Liberia had little or no international support. According to Kasongo (1999), Liberia ceased to exist effectively as a nation due to the escalation of the civil war.

In an effort to attract international support, the IGNU decided to reestablish diplomatic relations with China. In 1993, Amos Sawyer reestablished diplomatic relations with China. Due to the orgy of violence in Liberia during this period, diplomatic missions in Liberia were evacuated and embassies were closed. However, China and Liberia maintained bilateral relations during the administration of Amos Sawyer from 1993-1997. Although relations between China and Liberia thrived from 1993 to 1997, they were hampered by the sporadic violence from the war.

5.4 Charles Taylor Regime; 1997-2003

Charles Taylor, a former warlord of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), became the 22nd President of Liberia in 1997 after the historic civil war that erupted in Liberia from 1989 to 1997. On July 19, 1997, Charles Taylor, the rebel leader of NPFL and the standard-bearer of the National Patriotic Party (NPP), defeated 12 other candidates in the presidential election with 75% of the votes (Dennis, 2006). International observers declared the election to be free and fair. However, some human rights and scholars noted that the election took place in an atmosphere of intimidation (Keih, 2013). Due to the rebel factions' presence and readiness for another war, measures were put into place to prevent Charles Taylor from challenging the election results. With the promise from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to leave the country

after the election, many Liberians feared for the eruption of another devastating war and voted for Taylor to maintain stability in the country. Charles Taylor overwhelmingly won the election with the slogan, "He killed my Ma; he killed my Pa, I will vote for him."

On August 2, 1997, Charles Taylor and Enoch Dogolea were sworn into offices as president and vice-president of Liberia respectively after the seven-year period of bloody civil war. After Charles Taylor became president, many Liberians hoped that Taylor would restore peace in the country. The international community such as ECOWAS, O.A.U., U.N. and the United States hoped that Taylor would unite the country and would also address the root causes of the seven-year of devastating war (Kieh, 2013). Unfortunately, the Taylor regime undertook various actions that undermined the peace-building process in the country. At the vortex, Taylor and his officials refused to put measures that would address the war's taproot. According to Kieh (2013) the overarching failure by the Taylor regime was the refusal to democratically reconstitute the neo-colonial Liberian state, the primary pillar of the crises of development that occasioned the war. Contrary to what the Liberians and various international actors expected, the Taylor regime became the worst with human rights abuses and poverty (Dennis, 2006).

For example, Liberia's subaltern classes' social and economic conditions remained deplorable after the 1997 elections. By 1999, according to the *United Nations Development Programme* (2006), the poverty rate was 76.2 percent, and the unemployment rate stood at an alarming of 85 percent. Necessities, such as food and health care, were demanding for many Liberians to access. In addition to these challenges, the country's refugee situation was still disastrous, with hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons taking refuge in neighboring countries.

However, Taylor tried to make little effort to address the situation, but soon, the pattern of human rights abuses and corruption further aggravated Liberia's precarious situation.

The overall policy of Taylor's administration, according to Hahn (2012), was centered around nationalism, capitalism, and a reconciliatory policy towards the United States, based on business interests. Charles Taylor's foreign policy was different from all his predecessors. Before becoming president, Taylor had established strong relations with some countries, including Libya, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, France, and Taiwan. These countries, according to Utas (2003), supported Taylor to invade Liberia. As president, Taylor's relations with the sub-region of West Africa was perceived as a significant destabilizing force in West Africa (Durotoye, 2015). With high expectations from Liberians and the international community on the Taylor government to maintain peace and stability in Liberia, barely two years into Taylor's presidency, numerous allegations began to surface concerning his involvement in the Sierra Leone's civil war. Taylor was accused of aiding the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) through weapon sales in exchange for diamonds. According to Kieh (2013), Taylor supported the Rally of Democratic Forces of Guinea (RFDG), a rebel group, to depose the government of President Lasana Conte. Also, in Côte d'Ivoire, the Taylor regime is said to have provided military and other support to the rebel outfit Movement for Peace and Justice (MPJ), which was determined to overthrow the regime of President Laurent Gbagbo (Kieh, 2013). Arguably, Taylor's effort to destabilize the sub-region was motivated by two primary objectives: first, Taylor's desire for personal control of natural resources in the sub-region as the locus of his private accumulation of wealth, and second, his ambition to control the sub-region as the most potent president (Utas, 2003). Some scholars argued

that Taylor's motives in seeking Liberia's presidency had been personal aggrandizement, individual empowerment and financial gain (Dennis, 2006).

In the meantime, Taylor's administration was accused of rampant corruption, and the entire Liberian economy was slowly taken over by foreigners, especially those that could support his government with military supplies (Hahn, 2012). Significant concessions in the country were handed over to friends and shady business people, people who entered the country in collusion with government officials and benefited from the country's precious resources. Notable among this was the operation granted to a Malaysian Oriental Timber Company (OTC). OTC was the leading timber company in Liberia. The company chairman, Gus Van Kouwenhoven, who also served on the Liberian Forest Development Authority board, was a close associate to Charles Taylor. Sirleaf (2009) notes that Gus Van Kouwenhoven was convicted in 2006 of selling arms to the government of Charles Taylor in violation of the U.N. embargo, but was later released through an appeal court. The violation of human rights and the West African region's destabilization scheme created unfavorable conditions for the Taylor government.

Taylor's actions in the region created an antagonistic relationship between his government and the United States government. According to Kieh (2013), the United States government became incensed by Taylor's destabilization campaign, especially in Sierra Leone and Guinea, whose governments had close relations with the United States.

To address the situation of Taylor's destabilization campaign in the region, the United States sought three sets of interrelated measures as the pillars of its relations with the Taylor regime (Kieh, 2013). The first approach was the isolation of political and diplomatic support toward Taylor and his government. Secondly, the United States

imposed sanctions on importing Liberian rough diamonds and timbers, which were significant sources of Taylor's income to fuel rebel activities. Thirdly, the United States government pursued a humanitarian assistance program through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which focused on refugees and internally displaced persons, and a modest but successful democracy and governance program.

Accordingly, to secure another source of assistance, Taylor turned towards Taiwan to enhance his political power and financial assistance. In 1997, Taylor proclaimed the recognition of both China and Taiwan. Following the announcement, the Chinese government severed diplomatic relations with Liberia and closed its embassy in Monrovia. The following year, Taylor visited Taipei through an invitation of the Taiwanese President, Lee Tenghui. According to Hahn (2012), before the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Taiwan and Liberia, in the mid-1990s, Taylor had been introduced by the United States government to Taiwanese representatives who had visited Taylor in Greater Liberia and oral agreements of cooperation were made. Taylor's decision resulted from the United States' concern about Liberia's relations with China, and for Taylor, he thought that recognizing Taiwan would send a reconciliatory signal to the United States government.

However, Taylor failed to establish strong relations with the United States government because of his destabilization campaign in the West African region and his close relations with Libya and France.

Considering Taylor's involvement in the region conflicts and in Liberia, members from the opposition most notably, Joe Wylie, Maxwell Khobe, and Roosevelt Johnson, began a

new rebel group called Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) to unseat him. The rebel group was formed in Sierra Leone but structured in Guinea. LURD was first chaired by Mohammed Jumandy and subsequently headed by Sekou Demate Conneh (Hahn, 2012). According to LURD, its primary objective was to stop the destabilization campaign and influence of Charles Taylor in the sub-region because Taylor's presidency became a significant threat to West Africa (Hahn, 2012).

The secretary-general of LURD, Joe Gballah, stated that their objective was to get Taylor out of power and install a power base that would favor the United States government (Hoffman, 2003). In other words, Taylor's government was not in the United States' interest, so the United States had to support LURD through the government of Guinea to unseat him.

To exert more force on the Taylor regime, LURD split into two, creating the Democracy Movement in Liberia (MODEL). The determination propelled the decision to create MODEL that the two-front war would exert enormous pressure on the Taylor regime, especially its demoralized military. MODEL opened a second front in the South and South-Eastern part of Liberia while the LURD rebel-controlled Liberia's Western region (Kieh, 2013). With these rebel forces and the U.N. sanctions on the regime, Taylor realized that his relations with Taiwan had severe consequences at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). China has been a permanent member with veto power in the UNSC since its replacement of Taiwan. Taylor had considered the idea of reestablishing diplomatic relations with China as a means of getting its support in the UNSC.

In 2002, Taylor had requested Winston Tubman, Liberia's representative to the U.N. in New York, to establish relations with China. Meanwhile, Taylor also instructed Othello

Brandy, Liberia's ambassador, to Brussels, to organize a Liberian delegation to Beijing (Gardes, 2013). Dorbor (O.I: 2018) notes that while the process to establish relations with China was in progress, Taylor stopped the process because the Taiwanese government offered the government of Liberia US\$10 million to maintain its relations with Taiwan. The money was desperately needed because the Liberian government was in dire need to support its defense budget, considering the rebel groups' pressure, LURD and MODEL (Dorbor, O.I: 2018).

Meanwhile, China was also interested in reestablishing diplomatic relations with Liberia and would support the Taylor regime in the UNSC. However, Brandy and Tubman considered Taylor's decision as a grave mistake and the major reason for his downfall.

As the war intensified in Liberia, the conditions of Liberians deteriorated. ECOWAS, on the other hand, made several attempts to find a remedy to the situation in Liberia, resulting in a peace negotiation meeting on June 4, 2003, in Accra. Closer to the meeting, the UNSC expanded and extended its sanctions on Liberia, thereby increasing LURD and MODEL's pressure on the Taylor regime (Hoffman, 2003). During this period, the Taylor regime lost control over the entire country except for a small enclave of Monrovia, the capital city, where Taylor and his core of fighters were ensconced. For at least two months during this period, residents in Monrovia and its environs were subjected to attacks from LURD and Taylor's forces. The war on Taylor led to the injury and death of thousands of innocent civilians.

As the negotiation for the peace talks was about to begin in Accra on June 4, 2003, David Crane, an American chief prosecutor for the Special Court in Sierra Leone, issued a press statement announcing the opening of a sealed indictment against President Taylor (Hahn,

2012). The indictment accused Taylor on 17 counts, including "bearing the greatest responsibility" for atrocities in Sierra Leone since 1996. Astonishingly, they came through Interpol, asking the authorities of Ghana to arrest Charles Taylor during Accra's peace negotiation. Because Charles Taylor was a sitting President of Liberia at the time of the indictment, this may have been a wrong approach. Arresting Taylor in Ghana would have prolonged the war in Liberia and resulted in more atrocities for innocent civilians.

Meanwhile, some African heads of state at the peace talks decided to discuss the indictment behind closed-doors. Some African heads of state, including Thabo Mbeki, then president of South Africa, termed the indictment "unprecedented for a sitting African head of state" (Gberie, 2004). African leaders decided to ignore the indictment and continued with the peace negotiation.

In June 2003, the Accra Ceasefire Agreement was signed by the Government of Liberia (GOL), LURD, and MODEL. However, even after the ceasefire, fighting continued in the country between Taylor, LURD, and MODEL. It was only after two months that the warring parties decided to agree through another peace agreement to stop the hostilities. In August 2003, the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed, leading to the cessation of hostilities in Liberia after nearly 15 years of civil war.

With increased pressure from the international community, especially the George W. Bush administration, that had announced that Taylor should resign and leave the country, Taylor was forced to resign and leave the country for exile. On August 7, 2003, Taylor presented his resignation letter to the Liberia Legislature, through which he turned over

his authority to Vice President Moses Blah. Immediately Blah succeeded, Taylor sought asylum in Nigeria.

Despite the severing of bilateral relations between China and Liberia during the Taylor regime, there was an account of trade relations. Liberia traded with China in timber. According to Agubamah (2014), until mid-2003, China was a significant trader in Liberian timber through Taylor in violation of the U.N. sanctions. The OTC and its importer to China, Global Star (Asia) Trading, had a direct link to the large mainland Chinese timber processor Global Timber Corporation, which had very close ties with the Chinese government.

5.5 Sino-Liberia Trade 1997-2003

Economic relations have been one of the major issues in China's foreign policy towards the African continent. Its reform and opening up in 1978 had been one of the world's most significant economic events in the past few decades. China increased its economic relations both domestically and internationally, which led to a rapid increase in the Chinese economic growth and development (Sun, 2014). Africa had played a significant role in China's development during this period. Moreover, Africa remained one of the critical markets for China's exports.

According to Prasad (2004), China had become a significant partner for development among African countries. China's trade, investment, diplomatic, and political relations with Sub-Sahara Africa continued to strengthen. In most cases, several countries in West Africa established economic relationships with China during the 1960s shortly after independence. For instance, Guinea was the first to sign economic and technical

cooperation with China in 1960, and several regional neighbors followed suit (Pigato & Gourdon, 2014).

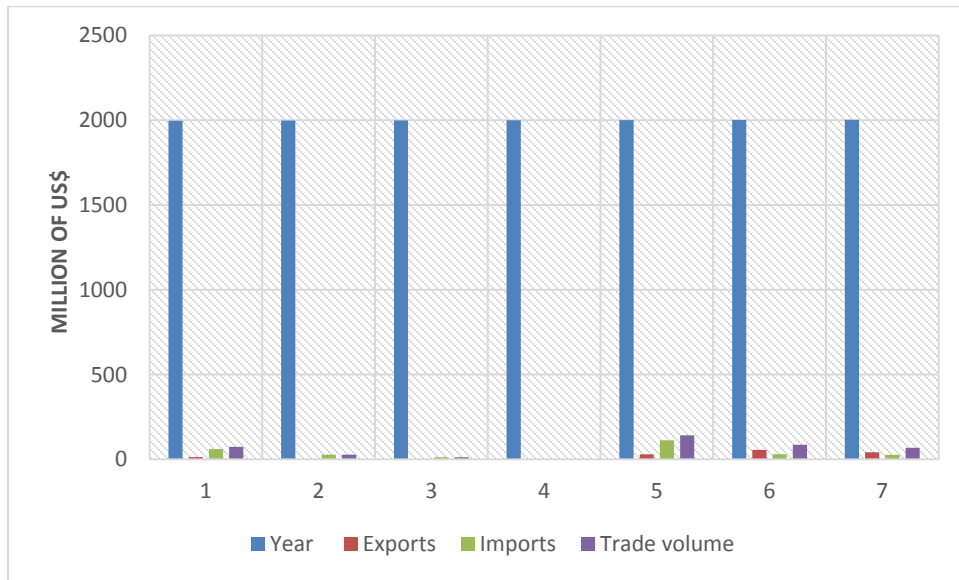
In Liberia's case, the trade agreement with China was signed in 1979, two years after the signing of diplomatic relations between the two countries. According to Shinn and Eisenman (2012), Liberia did not rush to establish trade relations with China because its economic relations were tied to the West. During this period, most of Liberia's trade was with its traditional partners, such as the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and France. However, after signing a trade agreement between Liberia and China, the agreement opened formidable economic relations between the two countries. In 1982, Chinese companies began to enter the Liberian labor market, but the trade volume between Liberia and China from the 1980s to 1990 continued to grow modestly until 1997 when the Charles Taylor government came to power (Sirleaf, 2009).

Liberia's main exports to China included rubber, round logs and wood chips, while Liberia's major imports from China include machinery, transport equipment, foodstuffs, manufactured products, crude minerals, chemical products, electronics, beverages, tobacco and steel (Central Bank of Liberia, 2017)

Since 1997, despite the severing of diplomatic relations between Liberia and China, trade relations between both countries grew over the period. Liberia's totaled trade with China averaged US\$ 449 million during the period 1997-2003. Imports mainly dominated trade volume. Liberia's import volume totaled US\$ 322.8 million, while export totaled US\$ 126.47 million during the period, with China accumulating 72 percent of the total trade

during the period 1997-2003 (Moumouni, 2014). The figure below indicates the balance of trade between Liberia and China during the period 1997-2003.

Figure 5. 1:Trade Volume between Liberia and China; 1997-2003 (in millions of US\$)



Source: China Statistical Yearbook 2005 /Central Bank of Liberia 2001-2003

Figure 5.1 above shows the balance of trade relations between Liberia and China during the period 1997-2003. The total trade volume between Liberia and China began to grow from 1997. Two-way trade between China and Liberia averaged US\$73.76 million in 1997, Liberia's imports accounted for US\$60.76 million while exports to China were US\$13 million. Total trade volume in 1998 was US\$27.78 million, accounting only for Liberia's imports from China. In 1999, trade volume decreased to US\$12.37 million from US\$27.78 million in 1998, accounting for only imports. According to the Central Bank of Liberia (2018) the year 2000 did not account for any trade between China and Liberia due to the pressure from the civil war.

As evident from figure 5.1, the volume of trade between China and Liberia significantly increased in 2001. Trade volume between both countries totaled US\$141.51 million, mainly dominated by imports with US\$112.72 while exports were US\$28.79 million. In 2002, trade volume decreased from US\$141.51 in 2001 to US\$83.70 million, and import that year accounted for US\$30.11 million while export increased to US\$53.59. Also, in 2003, trade volume totaled US\$68.15 million, with imports at US\$26.19 million while exports at US\$41.96 million.

The change in trade relations between China and Liberia during the period 1997-2003 was influenced by two significant factors: The first factor is the severing of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1997. In 1997, Taylor's administration announced the recognition of both Taiwan and China, which led to China severing diplomatic relations with Liberia. Due to the termination of diplomatic relations between China and Liberia, between 1998-2000, China stopped its exports from Liberia, but Liberia imported from China between 1998-1999. China is one of Liberia's trading partners and the Liberian economy is attached to imported goods. According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (2018) approximately 85% of Liberia's consumable products are imported including the country's staple food, rice. With China being a major economic player in the country's economy, Liberia continued with its importation from China during this period.

The second factor that influenced the change in China-Liberia trade relations during the period 1997 to 2003 was the Liberian civil war. The Liberian civil war, which started in 1989, continued until 2003. As already observed, between 1999 to 2003 the Taylor administration was under attack by two rebel groups, Liberians United for Reconciliation

and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). The civil war did not allow the free flow of trade between China and Liberia. However, for Taylor to fuel his government with military support, his administration started to trade with China despite the severed diplomatic relations (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). As indicated in Table 5.1, China's major export from Liberia between 1997-2003 was round logs. In 2001, China's share of export accounted for US\$ 28.76 million in round logs, which has been recorded as the highest commodity exported between Liberia and China during the period 1997 to 2003 (see Table 5.1).

Table 5. 1: China's share of Exports by Commodity Composition; 1997-2003 (in millions of US\$)

Commodities	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Export							
Rubber	2.7	0.005	0.006	0	0.018	0.01	0.01
Round Logs	4.1	0.01	0.006	0	28.76	0.19	0.013
Others	0.2	0.0003	0.0006	0	0.001	0.001	0.002
Total	7.0	0.015	0.0126	0	28.78	0.201	0.025

**Source: Central Bank of Liberia: 2001-2003
China Statistical YearBook:1997-2005**

Meanwhile, in 2002 the two-way trade between Liberia and China decreased from US\$ 141.51 million in 2001 to US\$ 85.7 million in 2002. However, exports to China increased to US\$ 55.59 million, while imports decreased to US\$ 30.11 million. Furthermore, in 2003 the total trade volume between Liberia and China decreased from US\$ 85.7 million in 2002 to US\$ 68.15 million in 2003. In 2003, Liberia's exports to China were US\$ 41.96 million while imports were US\$ 26. 19 million (see **Table 5.2**).

Table 5. 2: China's share of Imports by Commodity Composition; 1997-2003 (in millions of US\$)

Commodities Import	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Food & Live Animal	0.0068	0.008	0.033	0.000	0.0054	0.017	0.0194
OW/Rice	0.01	0.0009	0.0076	0.000	0.001	0.0045	0.0031
Beverages & Tobacco	0.0006	0.0005	0.0044	0.000	0.0005	0.0019	0.0021
Crude Minerals	0.0004	0.0003	0.0015	0.000	0.0004	0.0007	0.0014
Minerals, Fuel & Lubricants	0.0002	0.0003	0.0008	0.000	0.0002	0.0005	0.0005
Animal & Vegetable Oil	0.0003	0.0003	0.0023	0.000	0.0002	0.0009	0.001
Chemical & Related Products	0.0007	0.0006	0.0053	0.000	0.0008	0.0025	0.0026
Manufactured Products	0.002	0.0016	0.0074	0.000	0.0016	0.004	0.0057
Machinery & Transport Equipment	0.003	0.0043	0.0138	0.000	0.0031	0.0048	0.0057
Miscellaneous Articles	0.002	0.0019	0.01	0.000	0.0016	0.0068	0.0124
Total	0.026	0.0187	0.086	0.000	0.0148	0.0436	0.0539

**Source: Central Bank of Liberia 2001-2003
China Statistical Yearbook 1997-2005**

According to the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) (2003), the decrease in trade was due to the sanctions imposed on Liberia's major export commodities, including round logs(timber), diamond, and gold by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In 2001, the government of Liberia was accused by the international community of using its natural resources to fuel violence in the West African region, including Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. As a result of the violent conflict in Liberia and its neighboring countries the UNSC on May 6, 2001, imposed sanctions against Liberia through Resolution 1343. Despite the sanctions on the Liberian government between 2001 and 2003, the government continued in illegal trade, especially in the timber industry. The illegal trade in Liberia's round logs (timber) during the period 2001 and 2003 also resulted in the exponential export of round logs between Liberia and China, although both countries did not resume diplomatic relations. For example, the Oriental Timber Company (OTC) that was operating in the timber industry in Liberia had its exporter to China, Global Star Asia, which was directly linked to a large Chinese timber processor, the Global Timber Corporation that had close ties with the government of China.

5.6 The Reestablishment of Diplomatic Relations Between China and Liberia; 2003-2006

On October 11, 2003, the government of Liberia under the leadership of Charles Gyude Bryant of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan and switched to China thus recognizing and committing its diplomatic relations with China. According to Boas (2001) the decision by the Liberian government was interpreted as an attempt to seek China's support in the United Nations Security Council considering China's position. Liberia needed the support of China in order to have the participation of China in the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia. Liberia had suffered from 15-years of civil war that led to losing of many lives, massive destruction of infrastructure and development, and the displacement of its citizens. Despite the involvement of ECOWAS to keep peace and stability in the country, the UN peacekeeping operation was the only hope for genuine peace and stability. Meanwhile, in order for the country to have the support of China, there were three essential measures that had to be met, including the authorization of UN, respect of sovereignty, and an invitation from the state that needed the support (Ayenagbo, Njobvu, Sossou, and Tozoun, 2011). In other words, the possibility of China's full participation in UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia without the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries was close to impossible.

In September 2003, the United Nations Security Council agreed upon a resolution to send UN peacekeeping troops to Liberia. Evidently, China's involvement in the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia was anchored on two major factors; first is the UN

Security Council Resolution 1509 which authorized the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and second, Liberia re-establishing bilateral relations with China. The decision by the Liberian government to re-establish diplomatic relations with China and letting go of Taiwan convinced China to dispatch its first contingent of peacekeeping troops to Liberia in November 2003, a month after the reestablishment of bilateral relations between the two countries. The arrival of Chinese peacekeeping troops in Liberia signalled a wider commitment of Chinese efforts to contribute to the stability of Liberia, and it also expanded China's influence and interest in Liberia.

Moumouni (2014) notes that the restoration of bilateral relations between China and Liberia played a major role in Liberia's development. China's involvement with Liberia has impacted different sectors such as its participation in UNMIL and the resurrection of Liberia's fragile economy. In order to enforce the non-recognition of Taiwan, the 52nd Legislature of the Liberian government on August 19, 2005, passed Resolution No. 001 which confirmed and reaffirmed the government of Liberia acceptance of the "One China Policy".

At the peacekeeping level, Liberia was the first country to receive the largest Chinese peacekeeping mission (576), followed by Sudan (348), and Darfur (323) (Kuo, 2013). The Chinese contingent was responsible for transport, engineering and medical assistance to the UN peacekeepers. In UNMIL, the Chinese transport unit consisted of 240 peacekeepers, responsible for transportation and supplies for UNMIL operations. The engineering unit consisted of approximately 275 peacekeepers and was positioned in the

South-East of Liberia, in Zwedru, in UNMIL Sector-4. The engineering unit's responsibilities included the reconstruction of roads, bridges, UN camps and related basic infrastructure. According to Rogers (2007), the Chinese engineering team built 1,200-kilometres of road, four camps, two parking aprons, twenty-one bridges, and levelled off over seventy thousand square meters of ground. The 43-person medical unit staff provided treatment to UN peacekeepers and even community dwellers. In addition, there was a 25-person military police unit responsible for human resource management, police support, information collection, criminal investigation, traffic management, and emergency responses (Kou, 2013). Within UNMIL, Chinese participation was focused on infrastructure reconstruction and provision basic health care services. These were major contributions by the Chinese to a country recovering from a civil war.

According to Kou (2013) one of the mandates of UNMIL was to facilitate the process of a peaceful election in October 2005 for the new democratic government. Following this mandate and after the observation of stability in the country through the implementation of ceasefire and disarmament of ex-combatants, Liberians on October 11, 2005 exercised their political rights by electing a new government. The first Liberian post-war elections in 2005 resulted in the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, as the first female president in the history of Liberia as well as Africa. The ascendancy of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as president set the path for more cordial relations between Liberia and China.

5.7 The Regime of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; 2006-2016

The term of the NTGL under the chairmanship of Charles Gyude Bryant ended in the historic post-war election of 2005. The result of the 2005 election in Liberia was proven

to be significant in the history of Liberia as it marked the first electoral process in Liberia that was never under the influence of the Americo-Liberians oligarchy or the successive dictatorship of a military leader or warlord (Gberie, 2010). Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won the election on the platform of “peace and stability”. Ellen became the first elected female president in the history of Liberia, as well as Africa. The election of Sirleaf in 2005 promised a new beginning for Liberia, a country which had been destroyed by civil war for more than a decade.

The Sirleaf administration in its quest to implement its campaign pledges and restore the hope of Liberians began with four major pillars as the fulcrum of her administration in 2006. These were economic revitalization, governance and the rule of law, rebuilding infrastructure and provision of basic service, and enhancing peace and security (Mikell, 2009). In this capacity, the Sirleaf regime embraced a foreign policy of development. It became more preoccupied with attracting substantial foreign investment to explore Liberia’s resources in the mining sector, agriculture, and forestry, as well as offshore oil exploration. The Sirleaf administration began the process of restoring and strengthening relations with several international partners and multilateral agencies, including the USA, China, European Union, ECOWAS, and its member states, World Bank, African Development Bank, O.A.U and UN.

The involvement of international partners in restoring peace and stability and achieve economic recovery in Liberia helped the Sirleaf administration in the maintenance of peace and stability in the country. Considering Liberia’s many international partners, its relationship with China improved after the re-established diplomatic relations in 2003.

The reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Liberia and China became the fulcrum for an enhanced relationship during the Sirleaf administration.

Sino-Liberia economic relations during the Sirleaf administration commenced with high-level visits, political engagements, followed by several concession agreements between the two countries. For instance, in 2006, during the inauguration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing visited Liberia to attend the occasion. During the visit, Zhaoxing noted that “the government of China would solidify exchanges and cooperation with the new Liberian government in all fields and at all levels, and would maintain close consultations and cooperation in the world and regional affairs” (Xinhua, 2006). This signalled the commitment from the Chinese government and its willingness to work and enhance diplomatic relations with the Sirleaf administration.

Few months after her inauguration in 2006, President Ellen Johnson made a state visit to China from October 28 to November 6, 2006. During the state visit, President Sirleaf held lengthy conversations with the Chinese President, Hu Jintao and Chinese government officials. The Chinese government pledged its support to enhance cooperation with the Liberian government through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in the fields of natural resources exploration and infrastructure construction (Taylor, 2009). Furthermore, the Liberian leader also reaffirmed Liberia’s commitment to the “One China Policy”. The Liberian government also opened its door for China to explore its natural resources and enhance economic growth and development in the country. Meanwhile, the visit also resulted in a series of agreements covering development assistance for infrastructure development.

Sirleaf, while in China also attended the 2006 Beijing Summit of the FOCAC. The FOCAC was established between China and Africa in October 2000 and is a significant approach that had been considered to strengthen China-Africa relations and cooperation (Shelton & Paruk, 2008). The forum serves as an instrumental body and effective mechanism for conducting collective dialogue, exchange experiences in governance and enhancing mutual trust and cooperation in practical terms between China and African states.

In November 2006, the Beijing summit of the FOCAC concluded two historical documents, a declaration and an action plan for 2007 to 2009, that were adopted by the Chinese and African leaders. Furthermore, the action plan also presented cooperation in the fields of politics, economics, international affairs and social development.

During the 2006 FOCAC summit, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao also presented a fast trade program targeted at improving two-way trade between China and Africa to a total of US\$100 billion by 2010 (Sun, 2014). Uchehara (2009) notes that trade between China and Africa only totalled US\$10 billion in 2000, but at the close of 2006, trade had totaled almost US\$40 billion. The Chinese president also announced to increase China's assistance to African countries by 2009, consisting of the provision of US\$3 billion in preferential loans, US\$2 billion in preferential buyers' credits, and US\$5 billion funds to encourage Chinese investment in Africa and debts cancellation of a portion of African debts owed to China by heavily indebted poor countries (Shelton & Paruk, 2008).

The FOCAC formed the central pillar in advancing China–Africa relations, and it is the arena for constructive diplomatic interactions. It provided the pillar for solidifying a long-

term ‘win-win’ China–Africa relationship. Liberia, like many other African countries, has become a direct benefactor of Chinese aid and investment. For example, Liberia was one of the poor countries that were heavily indebted to China whose debts were cancelled after the 2006 FOCAC submit.

As a follow up after the visit of President Sirleaf to Beijing in 2006, President Hu Jintao made a one-day state visit to Liberia on February 1, 2007, making him the first Chinese president to land on the Liberian’s soil since both countries established bilateral relations in 1977. During the state visit, the Chinese leader held extensive talks with President Sirleaf and other Liberian government officials. The results of the visit were the signing of bilateral agreements, including the co-launching of the Liberia Anti-Malaria Centre by Hu Jintao, the co-signing agreement for the construction of three China-aided schools in rural Liberia, and the agreement on debt cancellation. The visit of Hu Jintao to Liberia and other African countries signified the importance China attached to its relations with Liberia and other African countries towards enhancing bilateral relations on the continent.

China’s strategy has been largely a success due to the fact that it was by means of “clear government policy” assisting African industrial projects, considerable financing and tax benefits for Chinese firms operating abroad and robust international relations toward the continent (Moumouni, 2014).

China’s massive loans and infrastructure development projects have been significant to the Sirleaf administration in supporting the government’s development agenda. Following the improved development and trade agreements between both countries,

China's involvement in Liberia is said to be a great development partner since the resumption of diplomatic relations.

The Sirleaf administration established a new path of bilateral relations between Liberia and China. Since Liberia became a member of the FOCAC, the country witnessed significant relations within the South-South cooperation and the present diplomatic relations with China (Gray, 2018). Considerably, China and Liberia have experienced sumptuous trade relations in the past years after the Sirleaf administration seized the opportunity of the FOCAC to attract Chinese investment in Liberia to promote economic growth, infrastructure development, and human resource development.

With the United States and other Western partners continued debate on the merits of aid to Liberia, China continued to fill a major gap in several areas of investments. For instance, in 2009, the government of Liberia and a Chinese company signed the biggest mineral investment project with China Union worth US\$2.6 billion (Shinn & Eisenmen, 2012). The investment was the biggest in the Liberia mining sector, which created jobs and promoted economic growth in the country. The Sirleaf administration was focused on the natural resource sector as the centrepiece of its development strategy.

Between 2006 to 2016, more than fifty bilateral agreements were signed between the government of China and the government of Liberia (Chieh, 2015). These agreements covered several sectors of investments, including trade, infrastructure development, construction of roads, hospitals, schools, sports stadium and agricultural facilities.

The rapid growth and development between China and Liberia was the outcome of Liberia's position towards the "One China Policy". In June 2006, the former Speaker of

the House of Representatives, Edwin Melvin Snowe allegedly met with representatives of the Taiwanese government in secret meetings in the Gambia for recognition of Taiwan but the government of Liberia quickly trashed the information and Snowe was forced to step down as a speaker (Moumouni, 2014). In 2016, another former speaker George Dweh, allegedly wrote a communication to the Taiwanese government encouraging the establishment of bilateral relations with Liberia. Dweh as cited in (Dodoo, 2016) “your excellency, what I am clearly indicating or driving at is that Taipei should not be intimidated by the presence of China’s diplomatic ties with Liberia or other West African states; then, of course, Taiwan will automatically achieve her trade mission desire or objective” (p. 20).

Despite these attempts to undermine “the one China policy,” the Sirleaf administration remained committed to supporting the policy to boost relations between the two countries. In April 2010, Liberia received the Chinese Deputy Minister of Commerce, Fu Ziying and his delegation. The delegation included 14 senior government officials, 23 business executives, and five journalists on a mission to strengthen trade and cooperation with the government of China and the Liberian government (Dodoo, 2016). During the visit, both countries signed the six pillars agreement that covered different investment sectors. James Johnson (O.I: 2018) a junior staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that most of the bilateral agreements and their implementation created opportunities including jobs, investment and economic growth that helped the Sirleaf administration to achieve some of the government’s development agenda. For example, the signing of China Union concession agreement was another investment opportunity that created jobs for Liberians.

The Sirleaf administration thus profoundly shifted the dynamics of China-Liberia relations. For Sirleaf, the government foreign policy towards China was the Liberian government reaffirmation to the “One China Policy” which helped to strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries. What continued to play out between China and Liberia since the establishment of formal relations is the economic cooperation.

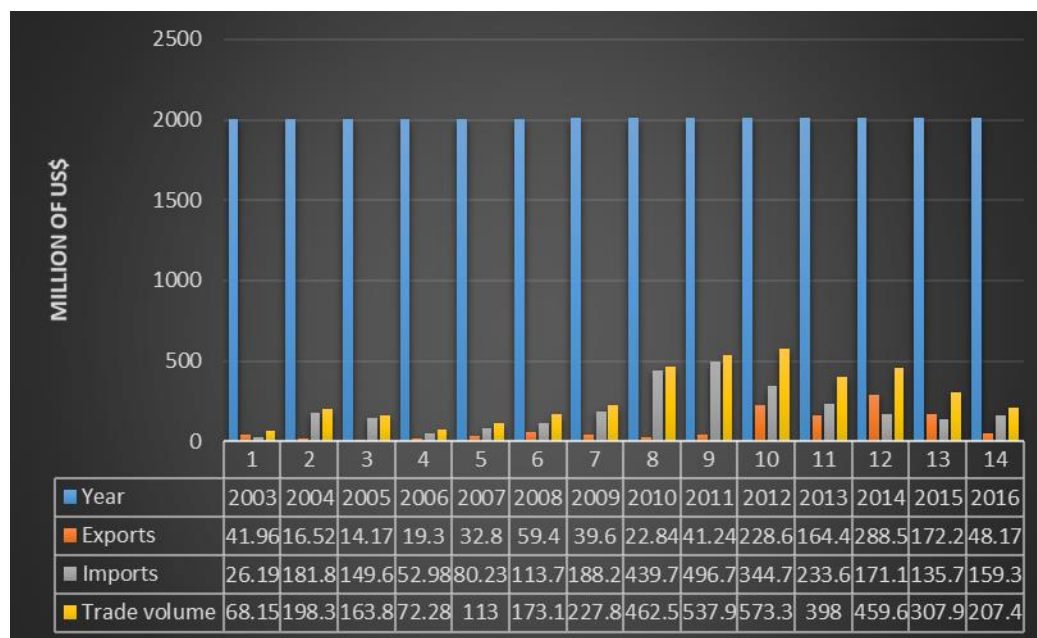
5.8 Sino-Liberia Trade 2003-2016

China in the past years established an industrial overproduction in sectors like electronics, textiles, and footwear (Diaouari, 2004). In addition to that, industries in China needed to expand their markets considering that their markets were not only meant for the exportation of Chinese manufactured products but also, and foremost, for the importation of energy and raw materials. It is from this background according to Diaouari (2004) that Chinese companies decided to explore the opportunities in Africa’s vast resources and untapped markets. Since then, China’s trade and investments with African countries has increased on a large-scale.

In the case of Liberia, its trade cooperation with China has increased substantially. In 2010, trade cooperation was one of the six pillars agreements signed between the Liberian government and the Chinese government. The first Sino-Liberia economic and trade cooperation forum was held in April 2010 in Monrovia, the capital. The nature of the forum between both governments was to enhance and deepen the Sino-Liberia trade relations. During the forum, the Chinese government agreed to establish a free trade zone in Buchanan, outside the capital of Liberia (Moumouni, 2014). Furthermore, the Chinese Business Association in Liberia (CBAL) was also established in March 2011 with 15 Chinese companies as the founding members.

In an effort to enhance trade relations, trade between China and Liberia experienced significant growth. From the total trade volume of US\$68.15 million in 2003, the volume of trade between both countries grew to US\$164.86 million in 2016 with bright prospects in the following years ahead. **Figure 5.2** below shows the increase pattern of trade between China and Liberia.

Figure 5. 2: Trade Volume between Liberia and China; 2003-2016 (in millions of US\$)



**Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry 2016
China Statistical Yearbook 2003-2016**

Figure 5.2 above shows the level of trade between China and Liberia within the period mentioned above. As evident from the figure, the volume of trade between both countries has increased exponentially. In 2009, trade volume increased to 65% over the previous year to US\$ 227.7 million, with China’s export to Liberia totalled US\$ 188.1 million. In 2011, trade volume totalled US\$ 537.8 million, with Liberia’s exports to China recorded at US\$ 41.2 million, an increase of 84 percent in the previous year but it was meaningless

because it only represented 1 percent of the total trade volume (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2018).

As indicated in figure 2.0, in 2014, two-way trade between Liberia and China averaged US\$ 459.45 million with export at US\$ 288.45 billion, while at US\$ 171 million. According to the Liberian Ministry of Commerce and Industry annual report (2014) in 2014, the real GDP growth rate of Liberia dropped to 0.3 percent, from 8.7 percent in 2013. The decrease in Liberia's economy that year was the result of the Ebola virus outbreak in the country that affected every sector of the economy. However, in 2015, the trade volume between China and Liberia totalled US\$307.7 million with exports at US\$ 172 million, while imports totalled US\$ 135.7 million.

As a result of the rapid growth of its trade with China, Liberia has become a significant trading partner with China. The trade volume between China and Liberia from 2003 to 2016 totalled US\$25.96 billion with China's exports at US\$24.7 billion while imports at US\$1.89 billion, constituting 7.28% of the total trade in favour of Liberia.

Despite the considerable increase in trade between China and Liberia, there is also a huge gap in trade imbalance from Liberia trade with China. Liberia's main exports to China were rubber, timber, scrap metal, iron ore, and timber, while Liberia's imports from China were foodstuff, vehicles, textiles, light industrial products, chemical products, mechanical equipment, electrical appliances, and steel (see **Table 5.3, 5.4 & 5.5**).

Table 5. 3: China's Share of Export by Commodity Group; 2003-2016 (in millions of US\$)

Commodity Exports	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rubber	0.01	0.057	0.089	0.89	0.56	0.348	0.233	0.069	0.54	0.006	0.008	0.003	0.003	0.01
Round Logs	0.01	0	0	0	0	0.001	0.006	0.001	0.005	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002
Iron Ore	0	0	0	0	0.012	0.003	0.002	0.001	0.005	0.005	0.019	0.01	0.008	0.01
Others	0.002	0.004	0.003	0.0037	0.016	0.001	0.008	0.008	0.001	0.004	0.003	0.004	0.001	0.001
Total	0.0202	0.061	0.893	0.927	0.588	0.362	0.318	0.151	0.56	0.017	0.031	0.018	0.013	0.023

**Source: Central Bank of Liberia: 2003-2016
China Statistical Yearbook: 2003-20016**

Table 5. 4: China's Share of Imports by Commodity Group; 2003-2010 (in millions of US\$)

Category of Commodity Imports	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Food & Live Animal	0.0193	0.00425	0.0045	0.00229	0.00016	0.0018	0.00086	0.00042
OW/Rice	0	0	0.00114	0.0013	7.4788	0.0009	0.0003	0.0001
Beverage & Tobacco	0.0021	0.00063	0.00056	0.00036	1.956	0.0001	0.0001	4.00
Crude Minerals	0.00137	0.00015	0.00053	0.0002	8.6006	0.0001	7.3343	1.364
Minerals, Fuel & Lubricants	0.00049	0.00029	0.00193	0.00029	7.1048	0.0001	5.686	0.00014
Animal & Vegetable Oil	0.00095	0.00018	0.00017	0.00017	8.974	2.550	6.537	2.615
Chemical & Related Products	0.00259	0.00048	0.00061	0.00041	2.5428	0.0003	0.00015	7.2324
Manufactured Products	0.00568	0.00174	0.0018	0.00082	8.812	0.0009	0.00045	0.00016
Machinery & Transport Equipment	0.00565	0.00348	0.00217	0.00123	0.00012	0.0018	0.00068	0.00028
Miscellaneous Articles	0.01244	0.00262	0.00202	0.0001	5.06067	0.0005	0.00014	0.0001
Total	0.06483	0.01852	0.02163	0.00970	0.00069	0.0080	0.00334	0.00172

**Source: Central Bank of Liberia: 2003-2016
China Statistical Yearbook: 2003-20016**

Table 5. 5: China's Share of Imports by Commodity Group; 2011-2016 (in millions of US\$)

Category of Commodity Imports	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Food & Live Animal	0.0006163	0.000566	0.000787	0.00212	0.002637	0.00168
OW/Rice	0.0002	0.00019	0.000377	0.0009	0.000919	0.00062
Beverages & Tobacco	4.107	6.22361	0.00043	0.00012	0.00017	0.00014
Crude Minerals	1.087	1.8221	7.58643	0.00016	0.00017	0.0001
Minerals, Fuel & Lubricants	0.00012	0.000148	0.00138	0.00173	0.002754	0.0021
Animal & Vegetable Oil	2.3154	9.09025	0.00118	0.00194	0.002587	0.00186
Chemical & Related Products	7.12748	0.000139	9.8769	0.000132	0.000166	0.0001
Manufactured Products	0.0001894			0.002	0.001274	0.000596
Machinery & Transport Equipment	0.000505	0.0009019	0.00066	0.000905	0.004836	0.00085
Miscellaneous Articles	8.3556	8.3445	0.00012	0.001016	0.0005	0.000196
Total	0.0023476	0.003291436	0.006742203	0.0149632	0.01884028	0.010035

**Source: Central Bank of Liberia: 2003-2016
China Statistical Yearbook: 2003-20016**

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter endeavored to examine the impact of change of regime on Sino-Liberia economic relations from 1991 to 2016. Taylor and Sirleaf were the major elected leaders and their regimes were discussed in this chapter. The chapter also analyzed the nature of trade relations between China and Liberia within the period 1991 to 2016.

Arguably, relations between states are influenced by the change of regime and can also shift the dynamics of state foreign policy. Between 1991 to 2016, the Sino-Liberia relations shifted between regimes. In 1993, Amos Sawyer of the IGNU reestablished bilateral relations with China after the termination of relations between Liberia and China in 1989.

The administration of Charles Taylor in 1997 shifted Liberia's bilateral relations towards Taiwan thus severing bilateral relations with China. According to the analysis of the study, trade relations between China and Liberia picked up during the administration of Charles Taylor despite the termination of bilateral relations between both countries during his administration. The severing of bilateral relations between the two countries led to a decline in trade relations. Between 1998 and 1999, the total trade volume between Liberia and China was at US\$ 40.15 million, accounting for only Liberia's imports from China in 1998 and 1999.

Meanwhile, while both countries were yet to resume diplomatic relations, Liberia and China trade relations picked up again in 2001. Between 2001 and 2003, the total trade volume between Liberia and China averaged US\$ 295.36 million. During this period, the rise in trade between China and Liberia resulted from China's interest in the round logs

(timber) industry, which accounted for the highest export commodities. The change in Sino-Liberia relations during the Taylor regime was the severing of bilateral relations which terminated Chinese investment in Liberia during the period. Meanwhile, trade relations between China and Liberia continued.

The reestablishment of China-Liberia diplomatic relations in 2003 after the civil war also witnessed great changes between both countries. Charles Gyude Bryant, the chairman of the NTGL broke bilateral relations with Taiwan and reestablished relations with China in 2003. The reestablishment of bilateral relations between China and Liberia gave birth to China's participation in UNMIL. Moreover, it also created a new era in the relations between both countries.

The Sirleaf administration recorded a significant impact in the China-Liberia diplomatic relations. From the study, the administration shifted the dynamics of China-Liberia relations by solidifying the relations between both countries. According to the findings, over fifty (50) bilateral agreements were signed between Liberia and China during the Sirleaf administration that included trade, infrastructure development, construction of roads, hospital, schools, sports stadium and agriculture facilities. Since 2006, Liberia has committed itself to the "One China Policy" which has strengthened its relations with China. Another change that has been witnessed between China and Liberia is the increased trade volume. The volume of trade increased from US\$68.15 million in 2003 to US\$164.86 million in 2016. On the other hand, China continued to invest in the development process of Liberia especially in the agricultural sector which became a major focus of China-Liberia economic relations.

The chapter discussed the impact of regime change on the China-Liberia relations. From the findings of the study, Sino-Liberia relations were influenced by the change of regimes from 1991-2016.

CHAPTER SIX

POSSIBLE WAYS OF STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND LIBERIA

6.1 Introduction

This chapter sought and suggests the possible ways that could strengthen Sino-Liberia economic relations. The chapter focuses on the following as possible strategies to strengthen the Sino-Liberia relations: education, health, infrastructure and investments.

6.2 Education

African countries are striving to build their human capital in order for its people to compete for jobs and investments at the local and international levels. As China continues to maintain its strong relations with African countries, the aid of China and other engagements have increased, including Chinese government scholarships for African students. Omoruyi, Jiao and Steve (2017) believe that apart from the field of economic activities that China has had with African countries, education is essential, and it is also a major component of China-Africa relations. Education aid, which is a component of cultural diplomacy is one of the tools of China's foreign policy that can help to strengthen the relationship that China has with Africa.

Arguably, education cooperation between China and African countries including Liberia has been demonstrated in the high-level visits, exchanges of students and teachers, cooperation in higher education and research projects, scholarships, China's provision of various professional and vocational training programs to African countries, and the

establishment of Confucius Institutes (Chinese-language and culture teaching institutions).

As a developing country, Liberia sees education as one of its major priorities in order to develop its human capital and compete in the increasingly globalized world. In this regard, China has been relatively supportive in offering educational support to Liberia to boost its human capital (Adaora, 2018).

The educational ties between Liberia and China are not a new phenomenon. In 1982 Liberia and China signed a cultural cooperation agreement that was to promote culture exchange between both countries, but due to the shift in bilateral relations between the two countries, culture exchange was very low with only 41 Liberian students benefiting from the culture exchange program by 1995 (Shinn & Eisenmen, 2012). However, the resumption of bilateral relations between Liberia and China in 2003 created an opportunity for China's continued support to the Liberian educational sector.

For example, when President Hu Jintao visited Liberia in 2007, the Chinese government co-signed a construction agreement of three China-aided rural schools in Liberia. These schools were built in Suhen Macca Town, Bomi County, New Georgia, and Paynesville, Montserrado County to facilitate the Liberian government's effort in its education programs (Gaye, 2017).

To achieve long-term development in Africa, educational activities needed to be given the necessary attention. During the 2006 FOCAC summit, one of the agenda on the Action Plan was the Cooperation in Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) (Omoruyi, 2007). On the basis of the CEHRD, four main areas of involvement

were targeted: setting up rural schools in Africa, increasing Chinese government scholarships to African students, establishing Confucius Institutes in African universities for teaching Chinese language and the encouragement of teaching African languages in Chinese Universities, and the provision of professional and educationists to various institutions in Africa (FOCAC, 2006). Nagao (2016) notes that the government of China in 2006 increased the scholarship opportunities for African students to enrol in Chinese universities and colleges. The number increased from 2,000 to 4,000 each year, but in 2015 the number of scholarships increased to 10,000 per year.

In the case of Liberia, since 2006 the number of Liberian students studying in China had also increased. Before 2008 could end, about 108 Liberian students were educated in basic programs in China ((Moumouni, 2014). Meanwhile, the number also improved in 2013 with an estimated 500 Liberian students having either had received or were receiving formal education in China. Approximately 200 government employees also received some professional education in China (Gaye, 2017). These and many initiatives were part of its strategy towards strengthening its relations with Liberia. These initiatives also helped and supported the development of Liberia. On the side of China, these initiatives were part of China's strategy towards strengthening its influence in Liberia as a major development partner.

In 2008, the Confucius Institute was established at the University of Liberia. The establishment of the Confucius Institute in Liberia was to meet the needs of Liberians desiring to learn the Chinese language and culture. A Chinese informant, Li Jie (O.I: 2018) at the Confucius Institute in Liberia noted that, Chinese was the top language in the world by population, so if one may be able to speak Chinese, he or she had a chance to

communicate with one-fourth of the world population. Furthermore, the Chinese growing influence in Liberia and other African countries has stimulated the courage for Africans to learn the Chinese language and understand its culture to support the flow of communication.

In a focused group discussion (FGD, 2018) several Liberian students at the Confucius Institute noted that Liberian youths were increasingly getting drawn towards the Chinese language driven by the ambition to benefit from a dream job in China or also benefit from Chinese increasing engagement in Liberia. The Chinese ambassador to Liberia, Zhou Yuxiao explained that the purpose of the Confucius Institutes in Liberia is to strengthen educational and cultural exchanges and Cooperation between China and Liberia and enhance mutual understanding and friendship between their peoples (Chinese Embassy in Monrovia, December 2008). Considering the increased trade relations between China and Liberia, cultural exchanges were essential for Chinese and Liberians to understand each other and for both sides to further consolidate their relations. Furthermore, this was another strategy of China to enhance Chinese language and culture and to gain more influence among African countries.

Economically, the Confucius Institute at the University of Liberia also generates income for the institution from students desiring to learn the Chinese language.

In an effort towards enhancing Liberia's educational sector, the government of China also built Fendell Campus which is a branch to the University of Liberia at a cost of US\$23 million and was presented to the Sirleaf administration in 2010. In 2015, the Chinese government also presented the Monrovia Vocational Training Centre (MVTC),

which cost about US\$9 million to the Liberia government. The Chinese ambassador explained that Chinese projects in Liberia including the MVTC, were efforts of the government of China toward the development of Liberia (Gbollie, 2015).

Sino-Liberia relations referred to as a win-win cooperation; that is, both countries had a chance to benefit in the relations. Vaye, a Liberian graduate from China stated as follows: “I am studying Environmental Engineering. We try to solve those environmental related problems or issues starting with climate to our water, soil and the air we inhale. According to the United Environmental Program (2017), Liberia is badly affected by climate change, causing major flooding in Monrovia. In 2018 alone, more than 30,000 people were affected by floods and for safe drinking water, 75% Liberian lack access to safe drinking water, which means we have a lot do. These problems greatly affect our economy as long as they affect public health, imagine us working as a team to mitigate these problems and see how the economy is going to improve”.

Educational cooperation between China and African countries has produced great impacts on the social and economic development of both countries. In a focus group discussion (FGD, 2018) with Liberian graduates from China, it was noted that Chinese government scholarships to Liberian students to study in Chinese universities and colleges include many other initiatives. In the education sector of Liberia, China’s commitment in contributing to human capital development is well noticed.

6.3 Health

The 14 years of civil war in Liberia obliterated the health system in the country and resulted in most of the rural population having little or no access to modern medical care.

Liberians suffer from high mortality and morbidity, resulting from a combination of poor living conditions and lack of quality health care (Kruk et al., 2011). According to World Health Organization data, life expectancy in Liberia was as follows: male 62.0, female 63.9 and total life expectancy was 62.9, which gave Liberia a world life expectancy ranks of 156 (WHO, 2018). This low life expectancy is exacerbated by numerous health complications in a fragile health system which is unable to handle complicated health matters in the country. As the result of the poor health-care sector in Liberia, some people were compelled to leave the country for medical purposes but for the majority Liberians that could not afford have to stay in the country as they face these health challenges.

China has been supportive of the health sector in Liberia before the shifting of bilateral relations. Between 1984-1989, the Chinese government sent about three medical teams to Liberia to boost the health system in the country (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). Despite the vacuum that was created in Sino-Liberia relations due to the shifting of bilateral relations, the Sirleaf administration had worked to fill the gap which had emerged into a new phase of Sino-Liberia relations.

Improvement in the health sector is a possible way of strengthening Sino-Liberia relations, considering the fragility of Liberia's health sector. Following the visit of Hu Jintao to Liberia in 2007, Hu Jintao and President Sirleaf co-launched the Anti-Malaria Centre in Liberia, and the Chinese government donated 93,840 doses of anti-malaria medicines worth US\$145,390. Furthermore, in 2008 another 16,000 doses of ant-malaria medicine were donated to Liberia Anti-Malaria Centre by the Chinese government. A four-member Chinese expert delegation in malaria control and prevention also visited Liberia for the installation of the anti-malaria equipment donated by China and trained 11

Liberian lab technicians for the Anti-Malaria Centre and other clinics (*Chinese Embassy in Monrovia*, May 2008). This project has been another effort by the Chinese government to fight malaria in Liberia.

In an effort to strengthen the health sector in Liberia, the Chinese government in 2011 opened the Jackson F. Doe Memorial and Regional Referral Hospital in Tappita, 360 kilometres away from the capital of Monrovia at a cost of US\$10million and equipped it with 25 Liberian medical personnel trained in China for the effective use and maintenance of its modern equipment (Gaye, 2017). The project has been a beacon of hope for many Liberians in Nimba and across the country. With such modern facility and trained medical personnel, it has eased some pressure on the stockpiling of cases at the John F. Kennedy Medical Centre in Monrovia which was already overwhelmed by patients from across the country.

Meanwhile, the Chinese government, through its gratuitous assistance to the Liberian government, renovated the Liberia Ministry of Health building for US\$4.7million. The Chinese renovation of the Health Complex has given serious support to the health sector in Liberia, simplifying that better health-care service delivery leads to economic and social development.

In 2014, Liberia was among three countries in West Africa, especially in the Mano River region that experienced the devastating impacts of the deadly Ebola Virus. The situation led to an immediate halt of all activities and dragged the country's growth to a little more than one percent. Faced with difficult economic prospects and a poor health sector, the Chinese government became the first international partner to lead the fight against the

Ebola virus in the following ways: it constructed a 100 bed Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU), provided medical equipment, managed and ran the ETU by dispatching a medical team, and also provided US\$1.7 million for the implementation of the project.

These and many other initiatives continued to cement the relations between China and Liberia. Despite China having been criticized for the kind of aid provided to countries in Africa, Cooke (2016) notes that China's engagement with countries in Africa has been associated with the economic development of China and its quest for resources in Africa. However, it is also observed that the engagement of China into Africa and its influence among African countries is the result of the cordial relations China had established with African governments. In the case of Liberia, some Liberians have viewed China as a major development partner due to the support given by the Chinese government towards Liberia's development.

6.4 Infrastructure

Infrastructure development is part of China's bilateral relations, especially with countries in Africa. Since the establishment of Sino-Liberia relations, there was substantive evidence of China's numerous infrastructure projects undertaken in the social and economic sectors of Liberia. For example, the construction of a sports complex and a sugar mill factory before the Liberian civil war. From 2006 to 2016, Chinese infrastructure projects have increased in roads construction, hospitals, schools, and government administrative buildings. All of these projects indicated the central role that China was playing towards the development of Liberia.

Kuo (2013) notes that infrastructure development by Chinese companies in Liberia are structured into two forms: these are projects funded through bilateral aid granted by Chinese central government to Liberia as a gift; and secondly are the World Bank and other international partners funded projects which Chinese construction companies bid. In the case of the World Bank and other international funded projects bided for by Chinese construction, firms are work on a profit basis.

For instance, Chongqing International Construction Cooperation (CICO) a Chinese state-owned construction firm won the World Bank tender of US\$15.66 million for the construction of a 24.5 kilometre road that started in November 2007 and was completed. In 2013 another Chinese state-owned construction firm China Henan International Cooperation (CHICO) also won US\$70.9million for the construction of the Gbarnga-Ganta-Guinea Border Road (*Liberia Daily Observer*, May 2013). The project included the construction of a 68.61kilometre road that linked the central, provincial city of Gbarnga and the Guinea border. CHICO has been a major Chinese construction firm in Liberia which had executed various road projects in the country, including the 91 kilometre road connecting Monrovia to the eastern port city of Buchanan and also the construction of 165 kilometre road connecting Monrovia to the provincial city of Gbarnga in the central region of the country at a cost of US\$160million by the government of Liberia.

Liberia being faced with a huge infrastructure deficit, these roads development connect the country, improve business and facilitate the flow of transport for citizens and foreigners.

In the case of China's bilateral projects, Kuo (2013) notes that China overcomes inefficiencies and potential for local corruption by not giving funds intended for projects directly to leaders of Africa. The projects are agreed upon with the respective African leaders and managed by the government of China through its embassy.

For example, Chinese government bilateral projects in Liberia include but are not limited to; the development of the Gbedine rice project in Saniquillie, founding of Liberia Sugar Cooperation, renovation of US\$7.8million Samuel Kanyon Doe multi-purpose sports stadium in Monrovia, construction of Tubman cantonment, a military installation in Bong County, construction of US\$60million ministerial complex in Monrovia, construction of US\$12.9million annexes at the Capitol Building in Monrovia, and the renovation of Roberts International Airport in Liberia at the cost of US\$50million. These are all examples of Chinese bilateral aid in Liberia (Embassy of PRC in Liberia, 2007, Kuo, 2014, and Moumouni, 2014).

Despite these developments in the infrastructural sector, there exist a number of impediments that are linked with Chinese construction companies in Liberia. The model of China aid, according to Cooke (2016) suffered from skills transfer in terms of both labor and management skills. Furthermore, it did not employ local sub-contractors and therefore limited the social-economic impact and creation of jobs that large infrastructure projects like the Western aid usually provided. Moreover, private companies were expected to create jobs in their host countries for local citizens but for the case of many Chinese companies operating in Liberia they import their own labour force, thereby exacerbating the already high unemployment in the country.

Varney (O.I: 2018) a participant working with CHICO explained that communication between Chinese workers and local Liberian workers is a problem. Another Liberian engineering consultant working with CHICO also explained that the language barrier was a challenge in working with Chinese and that lack of capacity building and skills transfer from Chinese construction firms were also problems (Wilmot, O.I: 2018).

In recent years, there has been some criticism in the media about Chinese construction companies operating in Liberia. The criticism is that some roads constructed by these companies lasted for less than a year prompting the users to nick-name these roads as “made in China roads” which implied that the roads were substandard. However, Yarkpa (O.I: 2018), an officer at the Ministry of Public Works at the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation pointed out that emergency roads were constructed by Chinese companies based on the funding. He also said that roads renovation in Monrovia were supported by a lower road category and without drainage because of the low funding given by the World Bank. “In fact, it is the insufficient funds given that usually led to lower specifications for roads and their quick deterioration, and not sub-standard Chinese workmanship”, he said.

In a focus group discussion (FDG, 2018) it was noted that most of the roads constructed by Chinese companies in the country require proper maintenance for long duration.

However, despite the low level of skills transfer and the limitation of social-economic impact provided by Chinese infrastructure companies, the visible presence of China aid and Chinese constructions in the country were widely appreciated by the Liberian government.

6.5 Investment

China-Liberia engagement has considerably expanded over the past decade. Since the Sirleaf administration in 2006, cooperation initiatives have significantly increased between both countries.

China's involvement in Liberia has been marked by close linkages in trade, investment, and financial assistance. Noticeably, African countries including Liberia that have a close relationship with China are benefiting from Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI), which extends across the African continent in increasingly diversified components (Diaouari, 2004).

Considering the difficult economic prospects of Liberia when the Sirleaf administration took power, FDI became the centrepiece of the Sirleaf administration with the hope of enhancing the economic revitalization program, which could increase economic growth and employment in Liberia. Since 2006, foreign direct investment flows to Liberia was exponentially increasing over the period (Moumouni, 2014).

In 2009, the government of Liberia and a Chinese company, China Union signed US\$2.6 billion agreement for the excavation of iron ore in the Bong Mines, Western Liberia. Shinn and Eisenmen (2012) note that the iron ore agreement between China Union and Liberian government was the biggest investment project in Liberia since the last 25 years.

The Liberian government's objective towards the concession agreement to China Union's operation had been: "that regions in which the company is operating benefit from the following; the provision of quality education, social development for the region, the provision of employment opportunities for the citizens, maintain and protect the

natural environment, and the transfer of technical and technological skills to the citizens of Liberia.”

The Minerals Development Agreement (MDA) between China Union and Liberia appears to demonstrate positive outcomes for the development of human capital in Liberia. In exchange for the rights granted, China Union consented to several requirements involving infrastructure, jobs, social sector investments, and taxes. Also, China Union acknowledged to prioritize employing Liberians as opposed to expatriates and estimated at the time 2009 the agreement was signed the company was expected to directly employ between 3,000-4,000 Liberians and would have generated an additional 15,000 to 20,000 jobs via contractors and suppliers (Minerals Development Agreement, 2009).

Financially, China Union also agreed on the royalties for the Liberian government to pay 3.8 percent of the index price of the concession, 47 surface rent was to be paid in two different forms: the first rate was at US\$100,000 a year for the first 10 years while US\$250,000 be paid during the next 15 years. The second financial aspect of the agreement involved the allocation of mineral development and research funds; the first payment of US\$50,000, followed by US\$100,000 per annum, beginning with the date of the initial deposit. Also, China Union agreed to the provision of educational support, including scholarships worth US\$200,000 each year (Mineral Development Agreement, 2009).

Arguably, Chinese investments in Liberia continued to enhance economic growth; technology transfer and job creation opportunities. For instance, in 2011 China Union

donated in kind of US\$5.6 million for the rehabilitation of 11.4kms of road from Bong Mines to Hendy and 30kms road from Bong Mines to Kakata (LEITI, 2013). Also, by the end of 2016, China Union had supported approximately 500 students on scholarships in various universities (Tokpah, 2016).

China's investment in Liberia has been in place since the establishment of bilateral relations. Despite the creation of jobs from Chinese investments in Liberia, some of the outputs towards work are considered low. In a focused group discussion (FDG, 2018) at CICO construction site, some Liberians considered Chinese investment in Liberia as a win-win cooperation. Considering the long history of war in Liberia that destroyed infrastructures, China remained a great partner to Liberia towards its development.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the possible ways that would strengthen Sino-Liberia economic relations. The study notes that education, health, infrastructure and investment are the fulcrum of Sino-Liberia economic relations. While it is true that these pillars have been in existence since China and Liberia signed formal bilateral agreement, there have been changes.

Since Liberia and China signed a cultural cooperation agreement that would promote culture exchange in 1982, education had been an important tool to the agreement. China provided more opportunities for Liberians to study in different universities in China. Furthermore, the Chinese government invested in the educational sector of Liberia in order to support the human resource development.

The study observes that the reestablishment of bilateral relations heralded new era in the relations between Liberia and China. The new era of Sino-Liberia relations, from the findings witnessed significant growth and cooperation between the two countries. Chinese foreign direct investment and bilateral projects in Liberia have enhanced the relations and provided opportunities for economic growth, job creation, infrastructure development and human resource development.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary

The study analyzed issues regarding change and continuity on Sino-Liberia economic relations within the period 1977 to 2016.

The complex interdependence theory was used as the theoretical framework to guide the study. The theory assumed that the economies of states are inextricably tied together and that mutual benefits accrue to states in their inter-state trade relations. Consequently, through Chinese economic activities in Liberia, aid and other forms of assistance accompanying trade from China, the Sino-Liberia economic relations have significantly enhanced economic development in Liberia, in view of the findings of the study.

Before the re-establishment of bilateral relations between China and Liberia in 2003, Liberia shifted relations between China and Taiwan which led China to sever its bilateral relations with Liberia. The severing of bilateral relations between China and Liberia affected the relations between both countries. The change of regimes has been a formidable factor that has influenced the change in Sino-Liberia relations.

On the overall Sino-Liberia relations have been strengthened since 2003 to present. From Chinese peacekeeping and peacebuilding effort in Liberia. There is evident of China's willingness to contribute to the development of Liberia and maintaining strong bilateral relations. In terms of trade relations, China and Liberia have made significant progress in respect to the rapid growth of trade volume, accounting for more than US\$425 million, a

75% increase in 2015, a process that has made Liberia to see China as one of its top trading partners as well as the biggest foreign investor.

7.2 Conclusion

Having carried out an analysis of the data, the findings of the study revealed that the changes in Sino-Liberia relations were informed by the shifting of bilateral relations from 1989-2003. The shifts of bilateral relations were informed by the change of regimes. Economic engagement between China and Liberia during the period 1977-1990, accounted for these foreign aid, economic and technical cooperation between both countries. During this period, the Tolbert and Doe's administrations accounted for Sino-Liberia economic engagement.

Regime change was a major factor in Sino-Liberia economic relations. According to the findings of the study, the shifting bilateral relations between China and Liberia was the result of the change in regimes. From the findings, the Doe and Taylor regimes severed bilateral relations with China which accounted for low economic interaction between the both countries from 1989 to 2003. During this period, the issue of change in Sino-Liberia relations was the inconsistency of relations. The termination of Chinese aid and the evacuation of Chinese personnel from Liberia. However, trade continued between China and Liberia during the regime of Charles Taylor.

The study revealed that the trade volume between China and Liberia picked up in 1997. Trade between both countries from 1997-2003 totalled US\$407.14 million with exports at US\$269.9 million while imports at US\$137.34 million during the Taylor's regime.

The findings also revealed that the Sirleaf regime played a significant role in strengthening Sino-Liberia economic relations. During the Sirleaf regime, economic relations between China and Liberia experienced significant growth in sectors such as trade, education, infrastructure, health and investment. The findings of the study revealed that the period 2003 to 2016 the Sino-Liberia economic relations experienced significant growth. Trade volume between both countries totalled US\$25.95 billion. The trade figures for 2016 of US\$25.95 billion between China and Liberia against \$407.14 million in 2003 supported a positive relationship in Sino-Liberia economic relations. It can therefore be concluded that the Sino-Liberia relations opened up formidable economic relations for both countries.

Also, the sound development in Sino-Liberia relations is the result of the governments and people of both countries' realization that sustained and stable bilateral relations are in the interest of both countries. However, the inference to the imbalances between the two countries, Liberia appears only a 'relative winner', with China as an 'absolute winner' in the relationship. Liberia has failed to export value-added commodities and products to China but its major imports are from China. China is now dominating the Liberian market. The numbers of Chinese traders in Liberia with owned businesses are on the rise. In fact, major contracts in Liberia especially infrastructure are won by Chinese firms, but there is no reciprocation of contracts being won by major Liberian firms in China. There are however possibilities that exist for Liberia to highly benefit from the growing Chinese economy. Liberia has not adequately endeavoured to take advantage of those necessary opportunities offered by China.

7.3 Recommendations

From the finding of the research, the followings were derived as recommendations:

First, it would be necessary for the Liberian government to create a comprehensive strategy that would effectively balance its relations with China and the West. In addition, the Liberian government needs to unleash its full potential and establish a policy for long-term development that corresponds with the interests of its citizens.

Secondly, the government of Liberia should also establish a coordinating institution in China. China is seen in every part of the country, but details about China's activities and engagement are scanty and fragmented. This institution, basically a technical branch of an institution that is already into existence, should be responsible in examining and investigating agreements, memorandum of understandings, and other contracts between China and Liberia. The main function of this proposed institution is to determine the advantages and disadvantages of Sino-Liberia relations. The suggested technical institution in its duty should have considered the availability of local resources including skills and ensure that as much as possible, the domestic content of the concession agreements is adequate enough not only for the purpose of job creation for Liberians but also in building their technological capacity.

Thirdly, the government of Liberia needs to revisit all concession agreements with China and make sure that her citizens are benefiting from the Mineral Development Agreement (MDA).

Fourthly, Liberian government needs to understand and know what it is benefiting and losing from the Sino-Liberia relations in order to develop a plan that would increase its

benefits and minimize the loses. Also, in order for the government of Liberia to reduce the trade imbalances with China, Liberia needs to take advantage to expand its export to China with value-added products and commodities.

Fifthly, the establishment of joint ventures including permanent supporters should be motivated as there is a possibility for transferring both technical and managerial skills to the local business community.

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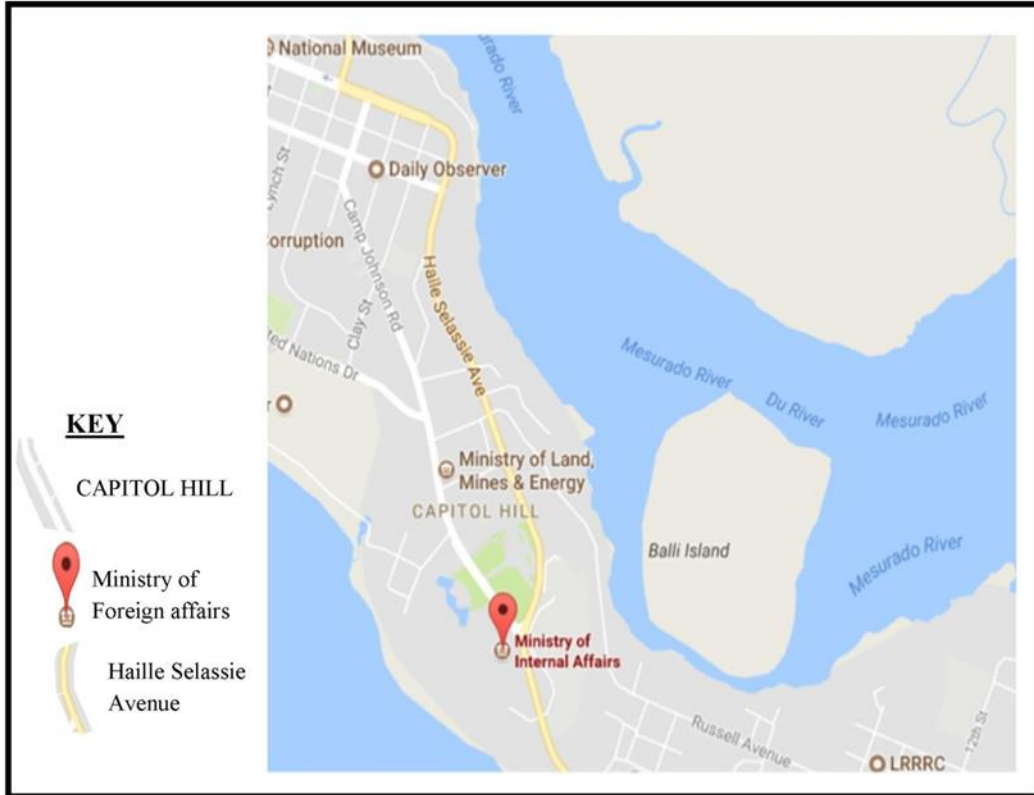
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: MAP OF MONROVIA



Source: Google Map Data of Liberia Ministry of Foreign Affairs

APPENDIX II: RESEARCH PERMIT FROM GRADUATE SCHOOL



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: C50F/37698/2016

DATE: 12th January, 2018

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR CHRISTOPHER KOKO PENNIE – REG. NO. D53F/37698/2016

I write to introduce Mr. Christopher Koko Pennie who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. He is registered for M.A degree programme in the Department of Diplomacy and International Relations.

Mr. Christopher Koko intends to conduct research for a M.A Proposal entitled, "Changing Patterns in Sino-Liberia Economic Relations: 1977-2016".

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


MRS. LUCY N. MBAABU
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

JL/rwm


APPENDIX III: RESEARCH PERMIT FROM NACOSTI

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. CHRISTOPHER KOKO PENNIE
of **KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, BRISBANE**
ROAD, BREWERVILLE-1000-10
MONTERRADO COUNTY, has been
permitted to conduct research in *All*
Counties

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/86316/20925
Date Of Issue : 25th January, 2018
Fee Recieved : Ksh 2000

on the topic: *CHANGING PATTERNS IN*
SINO-LIBERIA ECONOMIC RELATIONS

for the period ending:
25th January, 2019



[Handwritten Signature]
.....
Applicant's
Signature

[Handwritten Signature]
.....
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for personnel in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and The People's Republic of China Embassy in Liberia.

1. In your opinion, how would you describe China-Liberia economic relations since the inception of bilateral relations in 1977?
2. How had China and Liberia economically engaged from 1977-1990?
3. Would you agree that there have been changes in the pattern of China-Liberia economic relations?
4. Have there been changes also China-Liberia economic relations from 1990-2000?
If yes, how can you describe those changes?
5. How would you describe China-Liberia economic relations from 2000-2016?
6. There has been the breaking of bilateral relations between China and Liberia; to what extent has it affected the economic relations between both countries?
7. In your opinion, how would describe the trend of China-Liberia economic relations?
8. The importance of economic relations is to foster mutual benefit between states. Based on this, do you think that China and Liberia stand to benefit mutually in their relations?
9. How would you describe the influx of Chinese goods on the Liberian market?
10. What are the challenges faced in the trend of China-Liberia economic relations?
11. How would you describe the trend of trade in China-Liberia economic relations?

**APPENDIX V: QUESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL IN THE MINISTRY OF
PUBLIC WORK, LIBERIA**

1. How many concession agreements have been awarded to China from Liberia?
2. To what extent does the economy of Liberia benefit from concession agreements being awarded to China?
3. What are the factors influencing China-Liberia economic relations?
4. It has been claimed in the media that China builds substandard roads in Liberia as compare to other countries. Based on this, do you think that this promotes mutual benefit in China-Liberia economic relations? Please expound your answer.
5. What would you consider as defining features in the changing patterns of China-Liberia economic relations?

APPENDIX VI: LIST OF KEY RESPONDENTS

NO.	NAME	DATE	PLACE OF INTERVIEW
1	An Officer	27/02/2018	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2	An Officer from CHICO	27/05/2018	Bong County
3	Dorbor	28/03/2018	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4	Focused Group Discussion	14/03/2018	Bong Mines, China Union Mining Site
5	Focused Group Discussion	20/04/2018	University of Liberia, Monrovia
6	Focused Group Discussion	27/04/2018	Waterside
7	Informant	04/05/2018	Ministry of Commerce, Liberia
8	Informant	20/05/2018	Chinese Embassy, Monrovia
9	James	06/03/2018	
10	Kamah	14/04/2018	Waterside
11	Kumah	20/04/2018	Waterside
12	LSSC	26/05/2018	Liberian Student Studying in China
13	MPW/M&E Officer	11/05/2018	Ministry of Public Works
14	Varney	17/07/2018	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
15	Wilmot	29/03/2018	Monrovia
16	Yarkpa	07/05/2018	Bong Mines

**APPENDIX VII: MEMORADUM FOR RESEARCH FROM THE MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

MEMORANDUM

TO : Atty. Naomie Gray
Assistant Minister for Afro-Asian Affairs

Mr. Dave Kontoe
Officer-in-Charge
Bureau of International Cooperation

FROM : Ciata Armah Stevens d'Almeida
Special Assistant to the Minister

SUBJECT : Christopher Koko Pennie

DATE : March 13, 2018

I present my compliments and have the honour to introduce Mr. Christopher Koko Pennie, a Liberian student studying Diplomacy and International Relations at the Kenyatta University Graduate School in Nairobi, Kenya. Mr. Pennie is conducting his MA research on "Changing Patterns in Sino-Liberia Economic Relations: 1977-2016". He has written H.E. Minister Gbehzohngar Findley for research authorization and requested permission to speak with departments that would aid his research.

In this connection, I kindly request your assistance as appropriate. During the course of next week, Christopher will be at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to meet with you based on your availability.

For ease of reference, I am attaching Mr. Pennie's letter from Kenyatta University and an abstract of his research.

With thanks,