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*ELITE EXCHANGES:
THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF
CHINESE BUSINESS IN NIGERIA*

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ABSTRACT

Since the late 20th century there has been increasing interest in China's role in Africa, both in academia and popular media. This interest reflects the general curiosity and concerns related to China's political and business interests. Research into African-Chinese relations is usually on the macro level and rarely provides insight into the lived realities of the people at the heart of these interactions, particularly Africans. As such this thesis examines Nigerian-Chinese elite exchanges by interrogating the stock/conventional narratives constructed in political discourse and popular media (and to a large extent by academic research), in which China appears either as benevolent investor or neo-imperialist; and Africa appears as a passive recipient without agency at the mercy of greedy politicians and elite-pacting.

Nigeria is one of China's most important trade partners in Africa. In response to this relationship, the Nigerian government has constructed a complex public relations campaign that taps into the aspirations and dreams of Nigerians and links them with Nigerian-Chinese relations. The campaign is centred on three key areas: big business, entrepreneurship and education. Throughout this thesis, I explore the experiences of aspirational and elite Nigerian actors who attempt to take on the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relations through these three key areas. I argue that although the grand narrative is sold as accessible to all, it is mostly those who have access to capital, both financial and social, that are able to transform the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relations into a reality.

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¹ I have anonymized the names of the people and organisations discussed in this thesis.

ACRONYMS

₦- Symbol for Naira-Nigeria's currency

BEA-Bilateral Education Agreement

CALI-China-Africa Lekki Investment Limited

ECOWAS-Economic Community of West African States

GNIM-Great Northern Industrial Manufacturers

ICT-Information and Communications Technology

LFZDC -Lekki Free Zone Development Company

LekkiFTZ-Lekki Free Trade Zone

LSG-Lagos State Government

LWW-Lekki Worldwide

MOSOP-Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People

MOU-Memorandums of Understanding

NCBA-Nigeria-China Business Council

NCFA-Nigerian Chinese Friendship Association

NYSC- National Youth Service Corps

OgunFTZ-Ogun-Guangdong Free Trade Zone

OECD-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

UNEP-United Nations Environment Programme

UNILAG-University of Lagos

Chapter I-Introduction: Elite Exchanges

The Promise of Nigerian-Chinese Relationships

On the outer edges of Lagos State far from the hustle and bustle of Lagos city is a quiet parcel of land. This land is envisioned to be the prototype for Nigerian-Chinese alliances. Three flags are hoisted above the entrance: Chinese; Nigerian and one specific for the location. The third flag boldly states the name of this place-the Lekki Free Trade Zone (LekkiFTZ). LekkiFTZ is held up as a bastion for international businesses to operate in Nigeria. The zone's marketing campaign and stated objectives highlight management's desire for the LekkiFTZ to be viewed as a global cosmopolitan town. At *The Economist's* Nigeria Summit 2011, Lagos State's Commissioner for Commerce & Industry Sola Oworu spoke on a panel discussing the LekkiFTZ. She stated that the LekkiFTZ was "not a zone, this is a new town that would bring to life the future of [our] dreams". During a visit to the zone Fola Bankole, one of LekkiFTZ's engineers, stated that by the time the zone was completed it would be a town on its own where one wouldn't "have to go anywhere" to have his or her needs met.

LekkiFTZ investors plan to fill the 165 km² of land that makes up the zone² with a variety of businesses and amenities, including: manufacturing plants; entertainment and tourist amenities; residential neighbourhoods; high rises; an international airport and a seaport. To begin with a small portion of the land, around 30 km², will be developed by the Lekki Free Zone Development Company (LFZDC). This is the development which much of the media coverage and discussion about the LekkiFTZ revolves around. The partnership for the LFZDC is a complex formation three investor groups comprised of the Nigerian government, China-Africa Lekki Investment Limited (CALI) and Lekki Worldwide (LWW). The Nigerian government's contribution was the land provided to the partnership to create the zone. This resulted in a 20% share for the Nigerian government. CALI, a private Chinese firm has a 60% share and LWW, a Nigerian organisation, has the remaining 20% share. CALI is comprised of four Chinese organisations: China Railway Construction Corporation Limited, China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation, China-Africa Development Fund and Nanjing Jiangning Economic & Technological Development Corporation.

² Compared with Manhattan which is 87km²

LekkiFTZ is one of twenty free trade zones in Nigeria. Most of the free trade zones are either still in the planning stages or under construction³. Lekki and Ogun Free Trade Zones encapsulate the promise of Nigerian-Chinese alliances as promoted by the Nigerian government. This alliance promises economic and social growth and a futurescape with all of the amenities and technology anyone would want in one town, in a rapidly emerging market. The lifestyle offered by the LekkiFTZ partners is an exclusive one with plans for neighbourhoods full of high-end flats/apartments and homes. With small homes in areas near Lekki already going for £100,000, the prices for homes in the zone are expected to exceed this. LekkiFTZ presents a new paradigm for international development which emphasizes mutually beneficially economic development as the focal point for the relationship between Nigeria and China. Despite all this, Lekki is practically empty. Its grand promises of modernity remain unfulfilled.

This raises questions surrounding how exclusive and elite the dream of Nigerian-Chinese business relations is. Who does it benefit and how does it animate the aspirations of young Nigerians and hopeful entrepreneurs looking to do business with China? After all, to what extent does this great promise of Nigerian-Chinese relationships as encapsulated in the LekkiFTZ bear fruit? And for whom? Development landscapes are not just about infrastructure. They serve to enliven and shape individuals' aspirations for modernity (Cross 2014).

This thesis explores the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relationships promoted to the Nigerian public, the manner in which the promise of is communicated to the Nigerian public, and the organizations and individuals who seek to turn the dream into a material reality. I seek to interrogate the tendency of popular media and academic research into African-Chinese-relationships, which focuses on China as a potential neo-imperialist in relationships with Africans who are portrayed as either encumbered workers or greedy politicians. We are rarely presented with an analysis of the elite Africans who create, broker, engage with and transact Chinese business and investment, particularly those outside of political circles.

This thesis explores Nigeria-China relations through an analysis of elite interactions in three key domains, promoted by the Nigerian government as cornerstones of Nigerian-Chinese

³Two FTZs are operated in conjunction with Chinese partners, the Ogun-Guangdong Free Trade Zone and the Lekki Free Trade Zone (LekkiFTZ). The OgunFTZ is located in Ogun state, the host state for Chinese firms including GNIM operations (See Chapter 3 and 4 for a discussion on GNIM the Chinese family owned firm). Negotiations for the OgunFTZ began in 2004 and construction which began in 2009 was initially delayed due to funding. The OgunFTZ is home to a variety of business enterprises owned by Chinese, Nigerian, Lebanese and Indian entrepreneurs (Brautigam and Tang 2013: 8). By early 2015 there were sixteen firms operating within the zone and over 4,000 jobs were available for Nigerians to fill (Awoyinka 2015). The OgunFTZ's management promoted the area as an exemplar for African-Chinese relations.

partnership: big business, entrepreneurship and education. Through the chapters of this thesis, I trace the interactions of elite and aspirational actors in various sites, from a Chinese multinational company to aspirant Nigerian entrepreneurs to students and educators eager to make good on the opportunities that they envisage China bringing to Nigeria.

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing interest in African-Chinese relationships from scholars, primarily from political economy, international relations, economics and development studies (see for example Strauss and Saavedra 2009; Cheung, Yin-Wong, et al. 2012; Edoho 2012; Mohan 2013). This research has mainly focused on macro-level analysis of foreign direct investment in extractive industries along with the new forms these take vis-à-vis Chinese investment in comparison to ‘Western’ investment (Berger and Wissenbach 2007; Shinn 2009; Melber 2013). Majority of the businesses I study are outside of the extractive industry. Moving beyond extractive industries and honing in on other industries including manufacturing, retail, construction and service provides comprehensive insight into the areas of development in which China is engaged. While extractive industries such as oil and gas are of great importance to the economy of Nigeria, non-extractive industries are significant yet neglected components of Nigeria’s economic growth story.

Limited attention has been paid to the extensive Chinese influence and involvement in other areas including retail, shipping, manufacturing and telecommunication which have their own particular set of relations, norms, and challenges. “If you focus only on oil, you’re missing the boat on what the Chinese are really doing in Africa. They are actually engaging in more fundamental investments: infrastructure, telecoms, textiles, tourism, food processing” (Michel and Beuret 2009: 33). There is a critical need to refocus our attention towards non extractive industries, as well as to smaller and medium sized entrepreneurship alongside corporations and to place greater attention on examining the *social* relations that are both created and facilitated by these processes of capital investment, transnational business deals and the regimes they produce. This thesis examines Nigerian-Chinese relationships *ethnographically* in a quest to understand the social and political dynamics that arise when two emerging economies engage in elite exchanges.

More recently scholars have begun to unpack the day to day of these processes of investment and how the operations they generate are actually taking shape on the ground (Nabine 2009; Oyeranti et al 2011; Babatunde 2013). It is evident that African-Chinese interactions are

composed of a multitude of players at various levels, including: small to large business owners; government officials; students; elites and neighbourhood organisations. Yet what is missing from the picture is an analysis of the experiences of these actors. At the same time, there has been an increase in the study of elites and transnational elites in anthropology (Fechter 2007; Fechter 2007a; Fumanti 2007; Fumanti 2007a; Abbink and Salverda 2013; Crewe 2015; Harrison 2015). I build upon this work in order to examine the agency of elites participating in Nigerian-Chinese relationships, particularly Nigerians related to corporations; entrepreneurship and education. Elites are an instructive group of people to study due to their access to resources and opportunities which place them in positions where they are more able to materialize the potential of Nigerian-Chinese engagements.

My main research questions are as follows: What is the relationship between Nigerian and Chinese elites? What are the key areas for Nigerian and Chinese interactions? What is the Nigerian government's official discourse surrounding Nigerian-Chinese relations? How is this discourse conveyed to the public? Which Nigerians are able to take advantage of the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relations? How are these interactions initiated and maintained? What is the role of social relationships in Nigerian-Chinese connections? How do aspirational and elite Nigerians utilize Nigerian-Chinese relationships to further their goals?

I seek to explore how the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relations is cultivated and stoked by the government's public relations mandate to drive and shape the aspirations of Nigerians. Then I examine the operations of a Chinese firm in Lagos through the experiences of Nigerian senior management. An examination of the firm's utilisation of brokerage follows. I then move outside of the firm and into the world of Nigerian entrepreneurs to explore how they engage in business and social relationships with Chinese counterparts. I end my ethnographic analysis by interrogating how Chinese language education takes place in Nigeria, via the experiences of educators and students. This thesis presents a story of Nigerian-Chinese relations which counters commonplace visions of corruption, exploitation and un-reciprocal extraction.

I begin by analysing the historical and current context of Africa-China relations and Nigeria-China relations. This is followed by a literature review of Africa-China relationships; elites and my anthropological approach to this research. I then discuss methodology and provide an overview of the thesis.

The Historical Context:

African-Chinese/ Nigerian-Chinese Relationships

While there have been some attempts to capture the general historical experience of “China in Africa” these remain at a relatively superficial level. Therefore it is essential to position my ethnographic study with the historical context of the relationship between Nigeria and China. This historical and contemporary overview of Africa-China and Nigeria-China relations serves as a background for understanding the landscape in which my research is situated. The relationship has had its highs and lows, ranging from periods of intense communication to periods of very little contact (Alden et al 2008: 4). In the 1950’s China formally re-established ties with Africa (Chidaushe 2007: 108; Alden et al. 2008). Until the late 1970’s China’s interest in Africa was primarily centred on political and ideological issues which were strongly motivated by China’s competition with the Soviet Union, United States and Taiwan for loyalty from African countries (ibid). When Deng Xiaoping began to open China’s borders and centre on international economic development.

With its oil wealth and position as a regional economic hegemon, as of 2015, Nigeria is China’s second largest export partner (Udo 2015). But it is not only this current dominance in terms of Chinese investment in Africa that makes Nigeria such an illuminating case for examining empirically elite, African-Chinese relations; the two countries share distinct and long historical ties. As the most populous and influential countries in their respective regions, China and Nigeria share similar status, as regional economic hegemons. And as Alden points out: as a “commodity based economy (Nigeria)[with] a weak democracy, the relationship between China and Nigeria is one that bears close attention due to Nigeria’s vast oil supply, market size and stature in the African Union (AU) and The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)...” (Alden 2007:68).

China and Nigeria began trade relations in 1961 (Obiorah et al 2008: 274) and formal diplomatic ties were made ten years later (Mthembu-Salter 2009: 6; Fernando 2007: 365). This relationship was consolidated in 1979 when the Chinese State Council allowed select firms to enter foreign markets including Nigeria (Brautigam 2009: 64). Once abroad, entrepreneurs like Jacob Wood, a restaurateur, and Shen Wenbo, an enamel factory owner, stayed in Nigeria and became part of the business community (Michel and Beuret 2009: 30; Hongfeng 2010). Until the early 1990’s

China-Nigeria trade was slow but steady (Cooke 2008: 50). While most of the trade consisted of oil related products, for its part China exported goods to Nigeria (Cooke 2008: 50).

China's contemporary international presence stems from its go global initiative where firms sell products in foreign markets; utilise international marketing techniques and ultimately open factories in the same international markets (Brautigam 2009: 212). An additional component to China's foreign market entry strategy is the "outside-in" approach. This strategy entails Chinese firms entering international marketplaces where Western MNCs are weak and directly competing with them by building strong businesses. After Chinese firms gain a foothold in these countries the Chinese MNCs enter countries where their Western counterparts are in strong positions (Williamson and Zeng 2008: 96). In terms of Africa, China uses the "outside-in" strategy to gain direct access to resources and customers from the African marketplace. Through this direct contact the proverbial middleman, in this case the West, is eliminated (Davies 2008: 151). Another key to Africa-China relations is "China's Africa Policy" which was drafted by Chinese officials 2000 and formally agreed upon by China and over forty African countries at The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The FOCAC serves as the grounds for numerous deals between China and various African countries.

The main objective of the agreement itself was to formally declare a resurgence in Africa-China relations; to improve "...cooperation and mutual benefits between China and Africa and more importantly to increase their political and economic influence on the global stage" (Du Plessis 2014: 2017). Although this policy was established ten years ago, it still serves as the basis for contemporary relationships between China's various relationships with African countries. The document includes official policy towards political, economic, cultural and security issues. The economic section is the longest portion of the policy document (Broadman 2007: 171-172). According to the policy, economic assistance ranges from loans, at low interest rates from Chinese banks, to infrastructure development. China fosters political, economic, and cultural cooperation with African countries by providing Mandarin language training for African government officials and hosting African students in Chinese universities (See Chapter 6 for a discussion on Chinese language learning in Nigeria). Providing training and education programmes for African government officials and most importantly students, helps to create a cadre of future political and business elite who will continue to build Africa-China relations. In 2012, the FOCAC redrafted its six major points, some of which specifically focused on economic development.

Co-operate and improve each other's comparative advantages in key sectors such as trade, investments, poverty reduction, infrastructure, capacity building, human resources development, agriculture, hi-tech industries and others.

China seeks to increase co-operation with regional organisations such as the African Union (AU), New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development. (NEPAD) (Du Plessis 2014: 121)

The FOCAC discussions and other meetings between African and Chinese officials set the scene for negotiation and deal making on a grand scale. Such arenas represent crucial sites of social, political and cultural interaction among political elites, in which the dynamics of negotiation and diplomacy unfold. Since the landmark China-Africa Policy white paper China has published other white papers which outline Africa-China engagement. Two discuss China's plans in relation to Africa white papers on its foreign aid policy (2014) and the China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation (2013). The Foreign Aid Policy white paper highlights China's work in setting up the infrastructure in African countries including power grids; fibre cable installations and transportation networks (Information Office of The State Council 2014). An overlap between the two policy papers focuses on scholarships for young people. In the creation of an "African Talents Program" to train 30,000 African personnel in various sectors, offer 18,000 government scholarships, and build cultural and vocational skills training facilities in African countries" (Information Office of The State Council 2013).

Until the early 1990's China-Nigeria trade was slow but steady (Cooke 2008: 50). While most of the trade consisted of oil related products, for its part China exported goods to Nigeria (ibid). Throughout the years China has increased its business relations with Nigeria and subsequently increasing numbers of Chinese expatriates have settled in Nigeria. Chinese migrants in Nigeria have increased exponentially with a figure of approximately 2,000 Chinese migrants in 2001 and 50,000 just four years later (Kurlantzick 2007: 104). An example of this is the Nigerian textile industry which had a connection with China tracing back to the 1950's when a Hong Kong based firm invested in a Nigerian textile company (Renne 2016). From the 1980's onwards Nigerian textile mills began to close. By the early 2000s the environment was ripe for increased imports of textiles to Nigeria due to changing WTO⁴ regulations which allowed for easier textile exports and the Nigerian government's lifting of a ban on imported textiles in 2010. This allowed for an influx of textile imports from China.

⁴ Compared with Manhattan which is 87km²

Chinese immigration and investments are made possible through a growing number of policies and Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) between China and Nigeria. MOUs became the main method in which Nigeria and China created bilateral trade agreements. MOUs increased from 1999 onwards. MOUs signed during the leadership of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, 1999-2007, were related to the oil sector and were mainly a mix of oil for infrastructure or cash deals. To demonstrate their commitment both countries established trade offices, the Nigeria Trade Office in China and the China Investment Development and Trade Promotion Centre in Nigeria (Egbula and Zheng 2011:4). Landmark MOUs were established in 2005 and 2006 the two countries signed agreements to foster investment and technical cooperation including investment from the Chinese MNC Huawei. This agreement centred on infrastructure for a government ministry as well as investment and development in a number of industries such as gas and oil, energy, agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and communications (Obiorah 2008: 276). In 2006 a Chinese firm signed a lucrative contract with the Nigerian government to build a railway in Nigeria from south to north, Lagos to Kano (Copson 2007: 57). But this deal along with others were scrapped due to a policy shift away from oil for infrastructure or cash deals due to “concerns about a lack of transparency” (Egbula and Zheng 2011: 5).

In order to foster trade and business relationships between Nigeria and China, the government created the Nigeria-China Trade and Investment Forum (NCTIF) in 2006 (Egbula and Zheng 2011: 5). The Forum brings together Nigerian and Chinese elites from government and private sectors in regular meetings both in China and Nigeria. Since then there have been a number of bilateral trade agreements that cover infrastructure; business; education and more. Signees include the Nigerian and Chinese governments and Nigerian and Chinese private businesses.

In 2013, during a trip to Beijing, former President Jonathan signed five major bilateral agreements with China which covered financial cooperation to develop Nigeria through economic channels; a preferred credit agreement to aid in funding the expansion of four Nigerian airports; visa exemption for Nigerian diplomats and prevention of theft and import/export of cultural artefacts (Iwaloye and Shi 2016:103). In 2016, during a meeting between China’s President Xi and Nigeria’s current President Muhammadu Buhari in Beijing, the two leaders witnessed the signing of a number of new MOUs covering trade and investment; aviation; and scientific technology. The goal was to further strengthen bilateral trade between China and Nigeria in various sectors. Buhari’s visit included a speech to the NCTIF where he discussed the trade imbalance between the two countries.

Although the Nigerian and Chinese business communities have recorded tremendous successes in bilateral trade, there is a large trade imbalance in favour of China as Chinese exports represent some 80 per cent of the total bilateral trade volumes. This gap needs to be reduced. Therefore, I would like to challenge the business communities in both countries to work together to reduce the trade imbalance. You must also imbibe the spirit of having a mutually beneficial relationship in your business transactions. (President Buhari 2016)

During the visit other trade agreements were signed between private sector leaders and Chinese officials from the government and private sector. A major agreement was signed between one of China's state owned banks, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and Akiko Dangote, a Nigerian entrepreneur who was ranked as Africa's richest man. The agreement is for the bank to provide a \$2 billion loan to Dangote's company to build two cement plants (ThisDayLive 2016). The Nigerian-Chinese meetings also resulted in a \$6 billion loan offer from the Chinese government to the Nigerian government to help with Nigerian infrastructure. As with most Chinese loans, the loans will more than likely be subject to low interest rates and little to no conditions. The government's public relations campaign which uses MOUs and other agreements will be discussed in the next chapter.

China's increasing presence across Africa has not gone unnoticed by Western government officials who tend to voice concerns and negative views towards Africa-China relationships. Cao documents Western politicians like David Cameron and Hillary Clinton who warn of the dangers of African-China relations. Cameron spoke of his concerns over "Beijing's leading role in the new 'scramble for Africa'"; while Clinton spoke of "the threat of 'neocolonialism' at the hands of external actors-implicating China" (Cao 2013: 61). Chinese funded projects are often described as being tied to Chinese employment with no room for African workers. In his book *The Looting Machine*, Burgis discusses Chinese construction projects in Angola dominated by Chinese labourers (Burgis 2015: 23). China's use of soft power has been critiqued as a means to further internal economic goals as potential threat to the US. The argument is that China could gain a large hold of oil and other resources through relationships with Africa and other oil producing areas (Kurlantzick 2007).

An outspoken proponent of China-Africa relations is Li Rugou the Chairman and president of China's Exim Bank; the export and import bank that provides the loans for a number of business and development deals across Africa. Li has publicly stated that the reasons for the West

concerns over Africa-China relations are due to a shift in the status quo. “The real purpose of these Western criticisms is to restrict Africa’s growth from playing a dominant role” (Corkin 2014: 56). Another argument in favour of Africa-China relations focuses on the various areas of engagement that can lead to growth.

Although Nigeria and China have historically been allies, the increasing Chinese presence in Nigeria has faced some criticism. Areas of concern has been Chinatown in Lagos and the use of Chinese labour. While the government and business elite establish agreements that allow for Chinese businesses to enter Nigeria, the government public discourse campaign works to gain the acceptance and hope for Chinese businesses. This will be further discussed in Chapter 2: Selling the Chinese Dream to the Nation: Public Discourse and Narratives in Action.

Chinese sellers in Chinatown have been cited for taking domestic (Nigerian) clothing patterns, copying them in China and then importing them to Nigeria. Additionally, Chinatown was temporarily closed while sellers were under investigation for using the marketplace as the centre of operations for ‘textile smuggling textile counterfeiting and for the stocking of low quality and cheap Chinese textiles’ (Akinrinade and Ogen 2008: 167). The issue was brought to the Nigerian senate and Chinese diplomats quickly stepped in with talks and meetings to persuade Nigerian officials to reopen Chinatown, which they did. Why did the Nigerian government acquiesce and reopen Chinatown in less than a week? According to Akinrinade and Ogen, Nigerian elites believed they would lose out by enforcing regulations against Chinese vendors so they worked on quickly resolving the issue. This swift resolution highlighted the “extent of incorporation of the Nigerian ruling class of into the orbit of the prevailing global economic arrangement” (Akinrinade and Ogen 2008: 168). This ruling class includes Nigerian business people.

Support from local distributors and consumers also seems to have played a role in the survival of the “China Town” in Lagos. For example, a Nigerian who has been closely involved with the management of the complex reports that it had become a popular source of goods for “market women” from across Lagos and beyond and that when it was closed down by the Nigeria Customs Service in 2005, the city’s influential market women’s association called on the governor of Lagos State to see to its reopening. (Anonymous 12 2010) (Lampert and Mohan 2014: 23)

In Chapter 5- Doing Business with China: The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Nigeria, I discuss business people’s perspectives on the quality of goods they purchase from China. Another area

of concern are the working conditions for Nigerians working in Chinese firms. In 2002, an estimated 45 to 250 Nigerian employees died in a Chinese factory fire (Maja-Pearce 2014). “Survivors said that many of the workers had been locked inside overnight- apparently a regular practice. They painted a grim picture of violence and sexual exploitation in the factory, problems that have been echoed elsewhere” (Maja-Pearce 2014). As recently as the autumn of 2014, a Chinese firm, Linda Manufacturing, operating in Lagos was shut down after employees protested the death of a colleague (Omilani 2014; Sessou 2014). In 2008 after labour complaints from employees, the firm began to hire casual employees and reduce unionized labour (Workers’ Alternative 2008). The death of an employee whose illness and ensuing death were covered up by the firm’s Nigerian and Chinese management led to the firm’s closure in 2014. (Agboola 2014). It was unclear if the firm would permanently remain closed. Throughout the newspaper reports on the employee’s death, only Nigerian representatives spoke to the media.

Of particular importance in this thesis is how the government seeks to assuage the public’s fears by aligning the public’s aspirations for a better future with China. Given historical and contemporary context of Africa-China relations and Nigeria-China relations, I now set out to present my theoretical analysis of the key literature related to the areas I discuss in this thesis: Nigerian-Chinese relations and elite social relations.

Towards an Anthropology of Elite African-Chinese Relations

The debate surrounding Africa-China relations is highly polarized. Depending on the radically divergent viewpoints of scholars, the contemporary relationship between Africa and China represents a number of things: a resumption of an old comrade in arms relationship; a new colonial paradigm with the coloniser coming from South to South; an equitable partnership which can improve the lives of hundreds of millions; or a relationship that can potentially eliminate Western strongholds in Africa (Rotberg 2008; Zhu 2010; van Dijk 2009; Alden 2008; Carmody 2011). The great debate over China’s intentions in Africa is divided into two major camps, one that asserts China’s interest in Africa as predatory and another stating that it is for the mutual good of Africa and China. These arguments commonly place Africa between China and the US who act as rival suitors for the attention and affections of Africa (Burgis 2015).

Collier argued that China’s lack of interference in foreign government affairs could neutralize the positive benefits of China’s economic deals to secure natural resources in Africa. In fact he asserts

that “the Chinese are making it worse, for they are none too sensitive when it comes to matters of governance” (Collier 2008: 86). Carmody and Taylor compared China to the US and found that the US uses “coercion informed by consent to achieve neoliberal normalization” (Carmody and Taylor 2009: 17) while China’s utilises what the pair terms, “flexigemony.” Flexigemony is a “combination of economic, political and military levers in flexible strategic combinations to ensure continued raw material supplies” (Carmody and Taylor 2009: 2, 5) that changes from country to country depending on the historical and geographical terrain. Their major argument is that Chinese policy is not consistent and depends on opportunism. They used the example of Sudan and Zambia where China carried out two different approaches.

In Sudan, China helped with peace negotiations and remained neutral. In Zambia where there was an increase in complaints over Chinese traders displacing local traders and concerns over poor working conditions in Chinese owned mines, Michael Sata, a presidential candidate included anti-Chinese sentiments in his campaign. In response to Sata’s public dissention, Li Baodong, then China’s ambassador to Zambia threatened to cut all diplomatic ties to Zambia if Sata won. Despite Sata’s win diplomatic ties were not cut and China’s President Hu created a new loan package for Zambia. (Carmody and Taylor 2009:12). Zambians ignored China’s threat to cut diplomatic ties and China’s policy on non-interference was ignored in Zambian example. Carmody and Taylor argue that China’s use of flexigemony is predicated on economics and politics which leaves China liable to change its policies whenever it suits them instead of uniformly applying them. This flexibility has the potential to create harmful repercussions for African countries if China aligns with autocratic or dictatorial governments.

Agubamah voiced a number of concerns related to the Nigerian-Chinese trade. Overall he viewed the relationship as “lopsided” as opposed which is in opposition to what he views as the packaged tale of a ‘win-win’ relationship as sold by Nigerian and Chinese government officials. This lop-sidedness stems from Nigeria’s overreliance on oil as the key export and a growing trade imbalance between the two countries. In 2014, China’s exports to Nigeria were \$3 billion while Nigeria’s exports to China were \$1 billion (Agubamah 2014: 67). Agubamah also cautioned against Nigeria become a “dumping ground” for cheap Chinese products including textiles. Another issue for Agubamah is labour, both Chinese and Nigerian labour. His concern was that Chinese employees displace Nigerian workers on Chinese led projects in Nigeria. Additionally, when Nigerians are employed, he asserts that they are mistreated. He compared Chinese actions to that of the British in a new form of “Sino-imperialism”:

With the trend of relationship between the two countries at present, we can confidently say that China is rather a significant contributor to Nigeria's deindustrialization and underdevelopment. (Agubamah 2014: 68)

Henderson et al's review also argued that Chinese labour displaces local workers in other parts of Africa. Their research into Chinese firms across Africa revealed that apart from the mining industry most Chinese firms hired Chinese employees. Firms that hired Africa employees, such as Zambian mines and Tanzanian textile mills, utilised casual labour practices. (Henderson et al 2013: 142-1243). These findings align with other research which concluded that Chinese investments in Africa can lead to employment for both African and Chinese workers; but with Chinese workers gaining the majority of jobs and higher level positions opportunities (Mung 2008; Park 2009). Lumumba-Kasongo argued that although China provides a number of loans to African countries with no visible strings or conditions, unlike Western countries, there seems to be an inherent condition that also favours China.

What is clear, is that almost all the aid packages greatly works to China's advantage. Almost all of them stipulate that Chinese goods and services be purchased as part of the infrastructure building. For instance, it is estimated that 69% of Chinese aid to African countries is spent on Chinese equipment . (Lumumba-Kasongo 2011: 256)

These arguments are countered by scholars that view Africa and China as mutually benefiting from an increase in relations. Fijalkowski asserts that

In its political relations, China's diplomacy stress the notion of solidarity and South-South cooperation, and the fact that China has never sought to subjugate, colonise or enslave Africa. Chinese discourse also emphasises the notion of respect for African countries embodied in its support for non-interference and respect for sovereignty. (Fijalkowski 2011: 230)

Wang and Zou, for example, argued that China is not trying to create new "spheres of influence" that lead to colonization and in fact the claims of neo-colonialism which come from the US and other Western powers are due to fear of displacement. (Wang and Zou 2014: 1131). The pair state that "Much of these criticisms of China's Africa diplomacy come from Western countries." (Wang and Zou 2014: 1128). The pair attempts to assuage concerns of Chinese employees displacing African workers and complaints over China increasing sales of arms to African counties. Instead they state that China's interest in Africa goes beyond economic interests and are a part of China's global strategy. "In a nutshell, the expansion of China's diplomatic horizon in a large measure is a symptom of China's transformation from a regional power to a global

power” (Wang and Zou 2014: 1115). This strategy includes a variety of positive points for Africa-China relationship including debt cancellation, peace keeping, and health care initiatives. Zhou compared Chinese business and government policies to that of Western counterparts and argued that Chinese styles are more conducive to African counterparts for a number of reasons. Three major reasons are the work ethic of Chinese employees and managers; a mutual history of “colonial aggression” at the hands of the West; and China’s non-interference policy that allows African governments to conduct business without fear of Chinese oversight. (Zhou 2014: 1036). These sentiments are echoed by Sautman and Yan, who argued that when compared to the West, Africans generally view China more favourably. The pair compared a number of issues including Western countries use of aid which is tied to structural adjustment programmes and protectionist treaties (Sautman and Yan 2007). Sautman and Yan also argued that China provides loans provides more freely.

Economist, Dambisa Moyo, advocated for African-Chinese economic relationships. She argued against aid, particularly Western aid which she linked to African corruption. Instead she strongly advocated for further African-Chinese trade and Chinese FDI in China. Her response to criticism from the West of the potential for China to become a neo-colonial presence in Africa, Moyo stated:

Despite all the scaremongering, China’s motives for investing in Africa are actually quite pure. To satisfy China’s population and prevent a crisis of legitimacy for their rule, leaders in Beijing need to keep economic growth rates high and continue to bring hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. (Moyo 2012).

Moyo also argued that concerns over Chinese employees displacing African counterparts are misplaced (Moyo 2012). She used the example of Zambia where “the ratio of African to Chinese workers has exceeded 13:1” (Moyo 2012). Daniel and Maiwada encouraged Nigeria to take advantage of its relationship with China and learn from China’s agricultural developments because “China has much to offer Nigeria in terms of lessons learnt from its own success in agricultural growth, alleviating poverty, and achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in its eradication of extreme poverty and hunger” (278). Nascimento et al encourages African countries to court both the US and China and focus on economic activity.

What the burgeoning Chinese and American interest in Africa show is overwhelmingly positive: It moves the prevailing view of Africa from a mindset where engagement is driven by aid and

humanitarian instinct to one of partnership and commercial opportunity. (Nascimento et al 2013: 130).

The polarized nature of the debate and its focus on analysis from the macro level has failed to produce a more nuanced understanding of the social aspects of African-Chinese relations. Both sides neglect to analyse the inter-personal relationships between African and Chinese actors. These macro level critiques also miss opportunities to examine the numerous players that contribute to African-Chinese relationships. Additionally, much of the debate is framed from the vantage point of how Chinese people treat Africans in comparison to Westerners. While there is an increase in research that examines African perspectives (Harneit-Sievers 2010; Kopiński and Polus 2011; Mohan and Lampert 2013; Corkin 2013), what is missing from most of these debates are the roles and positions of Africans, in shaping and negotiating African-Chinese relationships, more specifically, Nigerian-Chinese relationships, which is precisely the goal of an anthropological approach.

Of particular interests in terms of my research are the perspectives of those who are able to engage with Chinese counterparts more readily, due to access to capital: (financial, social and educational) namely, elites; specifically, those outside of the public sector. In this thesis I join together the critical areas that influence the Nigerian government's promotion of Nigerian-Chinese interactions: big business; entrepreneurship and education. These areas are explored by examining the social relations and practices; individual aspirations and constraints at the heart of Nigerian-Chinese relations. At the same time, anthropology's preoccupation with subaltern agency has led to a neglect of the ways in which elite actors' exercise agency over processes of transnational business and development.

Anthropology of Elites-Local and Transnational

For decades, researchers have analysed, debated and retooled what it means to be an 'elite'. Elites have a sphere of influence and power that workers and community members do not (Shore 2002: 4; Scott 2008). Additionally, they share the ability and power to "facilitate things" (Scott 2008: 26). But the category of 'elites' is of course contextual. One can be a part of the local elite whilst not being a part of the global elite or inhabit both spheres (Scheyvens and Storey 2003: 183). Smith warns against strictly defining elites and non-elites into disparate links without any crossovers. After all in one circumstance a person can be an elite and non-elite in another situation (Smith 2006). Rahman Khan describes "elites as those who have vastly disproportionate

control over or access to a resource” and are able to convert this access to various forms of capital (Khan 2012: 362).

In 1972 Laura Nader called upon anthropologists to “study up” and research elites. Nader’s urging was linked to one main point, by focusing on those with less power and access to resources, anthropologists were only receiving a small part of a larger picture (Nader 1972). Researching elites provided insight to not only the larger picture but also how those with greater access to power impacted society at large (ibid). Over four decades later, although more anthropologists have heeded this call, ethnographies that examine the lives of elites are still in the minority. There has been a recent upsurge in the recently the anthropology of elites which has expanded into a number of areas including elite schools, mining corporations and financial institution (Ho 2009; Courtois 2013; Rajak 2011; Welker et al 2011; Welker 2014). Research has also extended to the lives of mobile/expatriate elites; landowners and politicians/diplomats (Birtchnell and Caletrio 2014; Crewe 2015). But between these ethnographies and Nader’s original call to study elites, there was a long span of time where her call went mainly unheeded. That was until 2002 when Shore and Nugent published a group of ethnographies that considered elites through an anthropological lens. In the book’s introduction, Shore discussed the inherent power relations embedded in the concept of elites.

The very idea of ‘elites’ suggests qualities of ‘agency’, exclusivity’, ‘power’ and an apparent separation from ‘mass society’-concepts that in different ways, oblige us to consider themes of stratification, hierarchy, brokers and casual agents behind events. (Shore 2002:4)

Additionally, the collection provided insight into elites through the analysis of “succession and reproduction” of elite networks and the varying forms, from the local to global scale which highlighted the range in “elite cultures” which were analysed against the backdrop of historical context to understand how these cultures came to be. (Shore 2002:13). While Shore and Nugent reinvigorated interest in an anthropological focus on elites, it took over a decade for another ethnographic anthology of elites to be written.

The definition of elites I use to shape my research is multi-pronged with four components. Firstly, I define elites as members of societies who have greater access to income, opportunities and networks. Additionally, I infuse Khan’s definition of the convertibility of capital. For example, an elite actor must have capital that can be convertible into another form of capital; social capital

that allows them to acquire economic, cultural, or cosmopolitan (Khan 2012). Furthermore, I argue that elites are members of society whose actions and decisions can impact society at large and that understanding their lives provides insight into the ways that non-elites are denied access to acquire various forms of capital. (Nader 1972; Gilbert and Sklair 2017). In the context of the elites I studied, they are either currently in powerful positions or aspiring to reach these heights. Lastly, elites in Nigerian-Chinese relationships have a global reach which transcends their home countries. They are a part of a transnational elite class that is made up heterogeneous groups of elites from across the globe. “This class is transnational because it is tied to globalized circuits of production, marketing, and finances unbound from particular national territories and identities and because its interest lie in global over local or national accumulation” (Robinson 2004: 47).

Elite Values and Subjectivities: The Cultivation of Aspirations

Contemporary elites are never static; they are dynasties, in the making, always. As an elite wealth manager explained, it's not just about preparing the money for the children. It's preparing the children for the money. What he meant was that it was essential to create the kind of human being who would be capable of handling an inheritance when the time came. (Glucksberg 2016: 4)

Succession is crucial to maintaining elite power. Within dynasties, succession rarely occurs without grooming and education. This is applicable to dynasties within societies and organizations. Fumanti argued that the contemporary elites he researched in Namibia reflected upon the leadership of their elders. Up and coming younger elites skipped past their immediate elders, apartheid era elites, and looked to colonial era elites for inspiration. This indicates that succession is both simultaneously cultivated and negotiated by the older and younger generations. (Fumanti 2016). I explore this in chapter three's discussion of the third generation in GNIM.

Throughout my discussion on entrepreneurs and education (Chapters 5 and 6 respectively) I seek to understand how elite subjectivities and values influence elite actors and how this impacts aspirations and future prospects. Elite values and subjectivities are cultivated in various arenas, but educational institutions are the most formative places for instilling these values. An increasing number of research focuses on elite education and how elite subjectivities and values are cultivated in elite schools.

Drew et al's research into elite schools' websites found that schools branded themselves as providers of a “happy, good and desirable life...while discursively marginalising and sidelining non-privileged subjectivities” (Drew et al 2016:88). Parents see these websites and identify with the images that are promoted. These images are something they want their children to be part of, in order to expand upon the lifestyle and values that parents have provided for their children.

Courtois argued that private schools marketed themselves not just through the educational capital that students could attain, but also through social, cultural and moral capital (Courtois 2013: 176). Cultural capital is of high importance and helps students in the becoming of an elite through learning a “class habitus” that includes “language, body, hexis, distance world vies, expectations, and taste” (Courtois 2013: 176). These characteristics are a part of what constitutes an elite person. Weenink proposed that cosmopolitan capital is also an integral value for elites.

Cosmopolitan capital comprises bodily and mental predispositions and competencies (savoir faire) which help to engage confidently in such arenas. Moreover, it provides a competitive edge, a head start vis-à-vis competitors. (Weenink 2008: 1092)

Cosmopolitan capital and a global outlook can become a part of young elites perspectives through exposure to social networks which include family members who live abroad or through an understanding of how their country’s relationship with other countries (Kenway et al. 2016: 146-168). This capital can also be acquired through interactions with international cultures, both domestically or abroad and through the learning of language classes and extracurricular activities. However, cosmopolitan capital does not necessarily displace local cultural capital. Research into aspirational and cosmopolitan elites, Lysonski and Durvasula found that although Nigerians were eager to engage with different cultures outside of Nigeria, they also valued Nigerian cultures (Lysonski and Durvasula 2013: 503). In chapter six I discuss Chinese language education in Nigerian educational institutions. Of particular focus is a private school and exploring how the institution links aspirations and future prospects to Chinese language classes as a part of its branding.

In 2013 Salverda and Abbink presented a contemporary analysis of elite ethnographies. The collection considered historical and contemporary issues related to elites including the recruitment and replacement of elites; new forms of elites including transnational elites and those in emerging economies; and the role of elites in “shaping distinctions” within a society (Salverda and Abbink 2013: 4). Other elite ethnographies examined the lives of transnational and cosmopolitan elites (Hannerz 1996; 2000; 2005). Fechter built upon Hannerz’s research and explored the lives of expatriates working in Indonesia. She argues against Hannerz’s application of boundaries in the day to day lives of her research participants. Instead she found that instead of easily disposable boundaries as Hannerz analysed (Hannerz 2000), expatriates in Indonesia attempted to construct and maintain various types of boundaries (Fechter 2007a: 26). This is instructive in understanding how transnational elites can simultaneously interact with both local

and international communities (Fechter 2007a: 121). In Chapters 3 and 4, I analyse how a Chinese firm in Nigeria utilises its relationships with various international communities in Nigeria to conduct business.

In 2014 Birtchnell and Caletrío took the concept of transnational elites one step further and explored elites on the move, in *Elite Mobilities* a volume of ethnographic researcher into elites. These ethnographies explored elite interactions across the world in various spaces. Birtchnell and Caletrío argue that elite interactions do not just take place in private spaces such as boardrooms and mansions but in public spaces (Birtchnell and Caletrío 2014: 11). They also argue that travel and mobility is essential to the lives of transnational elite. Throughout the thesis, we see actors demonstrating this mobility which they harness to take advantage of a variety of education and business opportunities. The bureaucratic and exclusive process that enables some elites to exploit these opportunities and others not to, will be discussed, particularly in chapter five's discussion on entrepreneurship and aspirations.

Anthropology of Business

Three ethnographic chapters within this thesis explore elite exchanges between Nigerians and Chinese within the business world; specifically, the experiences of Nigerian entrepreneurs and Nigerian senior management within Great Northern Industrial Manufacturers (GNIM), a family owned Chinese MNC headquartered in Lagos. I explore the critical role of social relationships in business. These relationships are established and maintained through a number of classically anthropological factors which include: kinship, brokerage, performance and rituals. As such, business anthropology, particularly family business anthropology informs my analysis of Nigerian-Chinese elite interactions.

This thesis explores globalisation and cross-cultural exchanges through Nigerian-Chinese relationships in business settings which are influenced by cultural practices within organisations. These cultural practices play a large role in the management of GNIM.

Recent anthropological interest in corporate formations (Benson and Kirsch 2014; Cefkin 2010; Shever 2012; Rajak 2011; Welker 2014; Peluso and Lucas 2016; 2016a) have directed our attention to diverse groups of people within organizations and the implications of their actions. The group of people I focus on within GNIM are, Nigerian senior management. I seek to understand the ways in which global corporate operations and patterns of investment are socially

constituted through senior management's relationships with members of their elite network. GNIM and the entrepreneurial ventures discussed in chapter five all began as small enterprises with an individual at the helm and some level of family support. The influence of kinship is a theme that emerges in the analysis of Nigerian-Chinese elite relationships therefore I have drawn upon the anthropology of family business in building my anthropological theories and analysis.

In 1992, Marcus and Hall published one of the first anthropological explorations into family business which analysed various American business dynasties in a number of essays. The Chinese owned firm I researched is a family owned firm; succession and kinship play a key role in the firm's operations. The early 2000's saw advocacy for using an anthropological lens to study family business as well as the first major ethnography of a family firm. Chua et al argued for the use of kinship studies in the analysis of family business. "By switching its attention to kinship, the field [business studies] would benefit from the extensive anthropological literature on the basis, benefits, costs, and dynamics of kinship that family business researchers would not have to recreate" (Chua et al 2003: 335).

At the same time Alex Stewart, an anthropologist, advocated for the use of kinship studies to analyse family business in order to provide insight into a variety of areas including kinship logic as a primary role over business logic; nepotism; network ties and mobilization of employees [family members] (Stewart 2003:). I explore these issues in my study of the Chinese family firm operating in Lagos. I sought to understand how flexible kinship logic is used to simultaneously include and exclude actors from the firm's senior management level and its extensive social network. Yanagisako's 2002 ethnography into Italian family owned silk firms was the first ethnography to lay bare the complex relationships within a family firm. Yanagisako explored a number of issues including the tensions of succession and a number of issues: "gender and the inclusion of daughters, as family members rethink and reconsider sentiment and strategies of capital accumulation, firm reproduction, and family continuity" (Yanagisako 2002:35). I draw upon Yanagisako's research particularly the exploration of dynastic issues between second and third generation family members within the Chinese firm. In the same year de Lima explored the world of elite family businesses in Portugal. Similarly to Yanagisako de Lima also discussed issues of succession but in relation to Portugal's 1974 revolution. deLima found that:

The informal processes with which elites organize their lives reveal, however, that family and kinship continue to play an important role in capitalist societies being as they are connected to the development and maintenance of other forms of power. (de Lima 2002: 95)

deLima's research highlights the overlap between two key areas I focus on in this research, elites and the use of kinship in the business world. In the early 2010's there was a new wave of family firm ethnographies which deeply questioned the historical separation of capitalism/business and kinship and the low number of ethnographies that examine the links between kinship and business (McKinnon 2013; Yanagisako 2013; Shever 2013; Bear 2013). Yanagisako traced critiques on capitalism back to Weber who separated family enterprises from enterprises in general (Yanagisako 2013; McKinnon and Cannell 2013: 17). Yanagisako posited that one of the reasons kinship has been dislodged from analysis of globalisation and capitalism is due to "an evolutionary model of modernity that posits a steady, global march away from the fetters of family and kinship bonds" (Yanagisako 2013: 64). This is particularly peculiar given that 70-95% of businesses around the world, which account for over 70% of global GDP, are family owned businesses (Family Firm Institute; PricewaterhouseCooper 2014). I find Yanagisako's argument particularly useful in my analysis of the Chinese family firm. It has operated in Nigeria for nearly half a century and relied upon decidedly non-capitalistic factors to establish maintain and expand its business operations. These factors include social relations; social and cultural work that involves kinship; performance; ceremony and ritual.

Yanagisako also argued that although globalisation can mean new partnerships like the joint ventures between Italian family and Chinese companies, kinship logic influenced business decisions (Yanagisako 2013). In the example of the Chinese firm in Lagos, we find an organization with headquarters in Lagos and partnerships with a variety of international business partners yet kinship practices are a strong component in the firm's relationships with these business partners and other members of its social network. In the same volume, Shever discusses familial connections in a newly privatised oil company in Argentina. Although employees were not blood family, they drew up on kinship ties in order to gain and maintain employment (Shever 2013). In chapter three I discuss the liminal position of senior Nigerian management within GNIM who are treated as family but do not receive all the rights as family.

Methodology

My fieldwork took place from February 2011 to April 2012. Most of my research was conducted in Lagos state with visits to neighbouring Ogun state. I also travelled to Abuja for a Nigerian economic and business conference.

Tracing the connections between Chinese and Nigerian elites involved researching a variety of people across multiple sites. Conducting multi-sited ethnography requires a level of openness and responsiveness to the field. While I did not have the difficulties of crossing country borders I faced the complexities of researching a range of actors. Researching multiple groups requires “... a clear theoretical orientation and [a more deliberate] strategic site selection than work in a single site” (Fitzgerald 2006: 3). I placed an emphasis on designing an ethnography that followed the key areas in which the Nigerian government promotes Nigerian-Chinese interaction.

Access: Exclusion and Inclusion

To answer my overarching research question of “What is the relationship between Chinese and Nigerian elites?” I needed to define elites within the Nigerian context and trace these relationships. Before arriving in the field, I determined that the major sites of interaction for Chinese and Nigerian elites were within government and business (see discussion of elite ethnography in the Anthropology of Elites-Local and Transnational section in this chapter). As such I contacted potential Chinese and Nigerian research participants from business and government sectors including members of Chinese firms, Nigerian brokers, as well as Chinese and Nigerian government officials. Some responded while others did not.

Compared to non-elites, access to elites is regarded as particularly difficult because they, by their nature, ‘establish barriers that set their members apart from the rest of society’ (Hertz & Imber, 1993, p. 3). The process can therefore be far more time-consuming and costly than making contact with non-elites.’ (Welch et al, 2002: 615)

This difficult became more apparent after my arrival in Nigeria when I continued to try to make contacts. The process took months of using every conceivable way I could think of to establish contacts and to set up meetings. I spoke with a member of the Chinese consulate in Lagos who initially seemed interested in meeting but subsequently ignored all my emails and calls. The barriers were greater than initially imagined.

Before arriving in Nigeria I corresponded with a mid-level Chinese employee at a large Chinese technology firm who expressed an interest in participating in the research and providing me

access to others in the firm. Our correspondences were in Chinese and were positive but after meeting in person he declined to participate. Other potential research participants with Chinese government and business communities either only briefly met with me or denied access all together. On multiple occasions, I received introductions or was sent to an office and asked to use a broker's name as if it was a virtual passcode or shibboleth. Alas, doors did not open and I was not allowed access. I faced the same issue when connecting with Nigerian officials. While attending a business conference in Abuja held by The Economist, I met a Nigerian government official related to Chinese affairs in Lagos. Although she eagerly expressed interest in participating in the research and helping me access other research participants, my calls and emails were ignored.

The challenge of studying up is that the people you want and need to speak with are in positions of power to exclude you or to confine your access to people, information and place. Participant observation takes on new levels of difficulty when you study up. (Smart and Smart 2012: 282).

When faced with these barriers to research I began to reassess my original research questions and brainstorm how I could conduct research despite facing issues of access. While the field does in a sense help shape our decisions as ethnographers, it is ultimately up to us to decide what avenues to follow and which to abandon. As Fairhead declared, "When 'following the story', multi-sited ethnographers are not roaming at will but are following very particular paths whose salience has been exposed within the different theoretical traditions and insights that anthropologists have discerned" (Fairhead 2012: 145).

I decided to tackle the issues of government and Chinese access with two different solutions, starting with government access. Despite not being permitted to access political circles, I was determined to find a way to analyse government's role in Nigerian-Chinese relations. I decided to analyse the political discourse presented to the public by the Nigerian government through a public relations campaign. By following the virtual fieldsite of political discourse through media and press releases, I was able to analyse the government's presentation of Nigerian-Chinese relations to the public. This discourse provided insight into the government's policies and initiatives that allowed Nigerian-Chinese interactions to take place. Researching public discourse provided a powerful lens to analyse how Nigerian-Chinese relationships are packaged and promoted to the public. Public discourse focused on key areas where Nigerian and Chinese counterparts interacted and thus, areas where the government sought to encourage participation. These sectors included my initial choice of business, but it also led me into an unplanned sector,

education. This helped focus my fieldsites on three primary locations which were the three key sectors of Nigerian-Chinese interactions: big business, entrepreneurship, and education.

Accessing government officials and Chinese firms mirrored the inherent challenge of attempting to conduct research in elite circles. Although I initially considered this issue as one linked to gatekeeping, I quickly realized it was a matter of brokerage which meant utilising relationships to help with introductions and accessing research participants. Entering most of my research sites required a broker who could vouch for credibility. After a few months of making little headway into accessing Chinese firms, I decided to draw upon the help of my own networks. A few familial connections had access to employees within Chinese firms in Lagos and Delta states. Most of the firms were small and did not have Nigerian management. I found a good fit with Great Northern Industrial Manufacturers (GNIM) a large Chinese owned firm that employed a few Nigerians in the ranks of upper management. The firm is discussed at length in Chapters 3 and 4. Gaining access to a firm of its magnitude was only made possible through brokerage and the firm's trust in my professional integrity which was an extension of the trust they placed in the broker who was a part of both GNIM's and my social networks. Due to this broker's relationship to the firm, he was also included in the research. (See discussion on Oba (King) Oduwale in Chapter 4).

Making connections with entrepreneurs and educational institutions proved much easier, but they also involved the use of brokerage. I met entrepreneurs through individual or organizational brokers. While attending a conference on foreign direct investment, I met a variety of Nigerian business people; one of whom introduced me to a Nigerian entrepreneur who conducted business with Chinese counterparts. Through that entrepreneur, I met another entrepreneur and from there it snowballed and I met other entrepreneurs. I also met entrepreneurs through social connections and via organizational brokers. I gained access to Chinese language teaching institutions through the head of the Confucius Institute at the University of Lagos. Once I was granted access to visit classes at the university, I parlayed this into access to schools.

Almost all the research participants I worked with were directly or indirectly introduced to me via a broker. The avenue in which I accessed elite research participants, parallels the difficulties Nigerians face when attempting to engage in Nigerian-Chinese elite exchanges. Facing challenges to access elites provided insight into the critical nature of social relationships and brokerage in the formation of Nigerian-Chinese relationships.

Location-Field Sites

I conducted my research in Lagos and Ogun states. Both states are located in Southwest Nigeria. Ogun State borders a few states including Lagos State. Lagos State is the birthplace of several Nigerian presidents and artists while Ogun State boasts more universities than any other state. Both states are the home of a growing number Chinese firms operating in Nigeria. Most of my time in Lagos State was spent in Lagos city and Lekki. As the commercial capital of Nigeria and the most populous city in Nigeria, Lagos city was the perfect place to conduct research. As of 2014, Lagos city was estimated to be the home of 21 million people (Lagos State Government 2014; Kaplan 2014). Lagos city consists of mainland Lagos and three islands-Ikoyi, Lagos, and Victoria. Lekki is an up and coming part of Lagos State that is the home of new housing developments and the Lekki Free Trade Zone which was discussed at the opening of this chapter. My parents are from Nigeria and much of my family still lives there. As such I was familiar with the some of the country through my upbringing and previous trips. Despite this familiarity, much of my previous time in Nigeria was spent outside of Lagos city. Although I previously visited Lagos city, conducting research in Lagos State required adapting to the Lagosian landscape.

Many foreign firms and expatriate residences are located on the islands. However, GNIM headquarters is located on mainland Lagos. Educational institutes were spread throughout mainland, while entrepreneurs were spread throughout Lagos city and Lekki. Travelling from one part of mainland Lagos can take over three hours during morning and evening commutes. Depending on traffic, travelling from mainland to one of the islands can take twice as long. Balancing the schedules of busy research participants along with traffic considerations was a challenge. Most of the time I resided with family on the mainland near GNIM. From there I travelled throughout mainland and the islands. When I met with research participants located on Lekki Islands or Ogun State, I usually spent time with family in those areas.

Business participants generally had constricted schedules with little leeway so there was considerable focus on engaging in their activities as far as permitted and conducting ‘ethnography by appointment’, basically doing research when my research participants could allocate time in their schedules (Kemmitt 2008). Sometimes our meetings were scheduled a few weeks in advance, other times I would receive a call the day before an entrepreneur was available.

The fieldsites I spent time in are categorized according to the three key pillars:

Big Business & Brokerage

I regularly visited Great Northern Industrial Manufacturers (GNIM), a Chinese corporation. My research took place at the firm's Lagos headquarters and some of its subsidiaries in Lagos and neighbouring Ogun State. I interviewed all four of the Nigerian members of GNIM's upper management and one of the Chinese directors along with formal interviews with one king and a joint informal meeting with the king and his colleague, another king. I also spoke with other members of the firm including Chinese employees, the wives of top managers, and a consultant from North America. My time was also spent observing operations and interactions at various subsidiaries and participated in social events.

Entrepreneurs

Research into Nigerian entrepreneurs took place throughout Lagos city in a wide variety of places including offices; restaurants and on the road. I also attended an industry event with one of the entrepreneurs. I interviewed nine entrepreneurs and focused on five of them in this chapter and referred to one in the education chapter. I also conducted participant observation as their schedules permitted and conducted fieldwork on the go by observing and interacting with entrepreneurs on social media as they used various platforms to promote their businesses.

Education

My research primarily took place at educational institutes. I interviewed eleven research participants who ranged from educational institution administrators to Chinese language teachers and adult students. I also conducted participant observation in primary and secondary classrooms as well as university classrooms. Because of my previous experience as a Chinese student and ability to speak Chinese, I was able to help students in class and participate as a student and teaching assistant.

Throughout my time in the field I attended several events which included the Nigeria Summit in Abuja hosted by The Economist; an expatriate charity fair in Lagos; a Chinese language competition for Lagos students and Chinese national holiday celebrations hosted by GNIM. I also visited the offices of the Lekki Free Trade Zone partners in Lagos city and the zone itself in Lekki.

Ethics in Elite Encounters

Confidentiality and consent were important factors in conducting ethical research. All my research participants gave their informed consent to engage in research. I also gave them opportunities to speak with me away from work if they had any concerns of other people in their organizations taking note of their participation. My original research proposal that was accepted by the University of Sussex's ethics board did not include children. Therefore, when I extended my research to educational institutions I observed classes, but limited my research participants to educators and university level students.

When conducting ethnography, general practice is to anonymize the names of research participants and other identifying features such as the names of organizations they are related to. Woods argues that there are three challenges to anonymizing:

....elite subjects are by definition drawn from a relatively small group of individuals; elite subjects are often interviewed because of the position that they hold, and the reporting and analysis of their comments cannot be easily divorced from their office or organization; and some (though not all) elite subjects are public figures. (Woods 2012: 4)

I did not anonymize the public figures discussed in the government discourse article because the bilateral agreements and policies discussed within the chapter are all presented to the public through press releases and other media. Conversely, I anonymised most names and organizations that I discussed in the other chapters, particularly people I interviewed and attributed quotes and data to. Despite my efforts, some of the research participants and organizations are easy to determine due to their prominence in Nigerian society.

Researching elites has different challenges than research with non-elite actors. The typical dynamics where the researcher has more power than the research participant is not present. Instead the roles can be more balanced or even reversed with the researcher is in a less powerful position (Busby 2011:11). This power can be linked to economic, social, or political capital. Regarding this shift in power, Gilbert poses the following question: "When can – or should – ethnography produce critique, confrontation, or collaboration? Or does the hospitality that ethnography depends on make working for political change impossible?" (Gilbert 2016).

I wrestled with feelings of obligation due to the hospitality of my research participants. This was compounded by including research participants who were introduced to me via brokers which included familial connections. As both a researcher and lecturer in business ethics, my commitment ultimately rests with conducting, analysing, and presenting research in an ethical manner.

Throughout my time in the field I found that access had “to be both scrutinized for the way it transforms the researcher and continuously negotiated throughout the time of fieldwork” (Hirsch and Gellner 2001: 5). My position in relation to research participants was constantly changing and how I was introduced to and viewed by people changed, depending on the fieldsite. Additionally, as a first-generation African-American with links to Nigeria my familiarity with Nigerian cultures was useful when dealing with Nigerian research participants. Despite my strong American accent, Nigerian research participants generally viewed me as a Nigerian due to my familial links to Nigeria. Although Lagos citizens include a mixture of the over 250 ethnic groups within Nigeria, majority of Lagos inhabitants are Yoruba. Although most of my family is of a different ethnic group, some of the family members I lived with in Lagos city are Yoruba. Furthermore, my connections with other ethnic groups and knowledge of these cultures furthered my acceptance with various research participants.

My experiences as a tutor/teacher and student, helped me relate to educators and students. As a doctoral researcher with an MBA and experience working in business, entrepreneurs and research participants related to GNIM, felt comfortable discussing business concepts with me. Some research participants, particularly those within education, viewed my position a researcher in the department of a British university, as a source of credibility. Adult students connected to me as a contemporary who also spoke Chinese and had Nigerian ancestry. Even previous experiences interviewing people for a university newspaper and radio station came in handy when conducting interviews.

When interacting with elites in general, some researchers suggest approaching them from the position of the foreign, humble and unknowledgeable ethnographer who asks complimentary questions in order to gain their trust (Scheyvens and Storey 2003: 186). Others have followed the path of an insider by drawing on similarities with elite research participants. Mikecz stressed the importance of a researcher’s positionality in gaining access to interviews by utilizing, “the researcher’s ‘track record’ of interviews [which] serves as proof of trustworthiness” (Mikecz 2012: 490). Coupling my Nigerian heritage with what is generally considered a fairly upper-middle class background, along with my experience living as an expat in three countries, I was usually accepted as ‘one of us’ throughout the various groups I studied. I was also able to demonstrate my knowledge of unstated rules such as respect for elders and hierarchy, which was particularly useful when observing and interacting with research participants.

Nonetheless, I was not privy to top level meetings at any organization where my research took place meetings or even allowed to work within any organization. I was an outsider with limited insider privileges which allowed me to speak to people, observe daily interactions, and to attend events. In this role, I drew upon a wide variety of experiences I had in business, education, and other arenas. These experiences made it easier for me to gauge how to position myself in relation to research participants, and once again underline the key methodological imperatives that came to define my fieldwork: adaptability, flexibility, and reflexivity.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis examines ethnographically the relationships between Nigerian and Chinese elite and aspirational actors in strategic areas of interaction. The first chapter of this thesis has illustrated the current promises and tensions related to Nigerian-Chinese relationships. Through a historical and contemporary overview of the relationship, I have highlighted the extent to which scholarly debates are divided and rarely provide insight into the agency and lives of Nigerians, negotiating and interacting with Chinese. In the next chapter, I examine how the dream and promise of Nigerian-Chinese relations are constructed and deployed.

Chapter 2- Chapter II- Selling the Chinese Dream to the Nation: Public Discourse and Narratives in Action, the virtual field site of public discourse. Public discourse and narratives are a fundamental part of government and business policy making. These campaigns are created and implemented in order to gain support. In the case of the Nigerian government and business elite, they seek to gain public support for their partnership with China. I argue that while the government can make deals with Chinese counterparts without the public's consent, history has taught the government that acquiescence from the public will help the formation and implementation of these alliances go smoothly. The chapter reviews the history of public relations, which is a cornerstone in shaping public discourse, and dissects how the Nigerian government and business elite publicly present agreements between Nigerian and Chinese. Of particular importance is the use of language and style of presentation which are designed to highlight the benefits of these agreements for Nigerians. Agreements which cover the areas discussed within the thesis include entrepreneurship, education, and Chinese firms.

After exploring public discourse and narratives I turn to Chinese big business in Nigeria through Chapter 3-The Family Firm, which delves into the world of Great Northern Industrial Manufacturers (GNIM), a Chinese firm headquartered in Lagos. The family owned firm has

operated in Nigeria for over forty years and utilises kinship in its daily operations. Of particular interest are the rarefied Nigerian employees who are able to rise to upper management within the firm. The chapter focuses on their experiences in GNIM as well as the firm's extension of kinship to lower ranking employees and other people within its network. Along with kinship, GNIM utilises ceremony, ritual, and performance to affirm its social and economic relationships. I argue that although GNIM's use of kinship logic helps the firm conduct business in Nigeria, there are conflicting issues of mistrust and paternalism that the GNIM contends with regularly.

Chapter 4-“Our Friend for Eternity”: Brokerage, Guanxi, and Corporate Gift Giving explores the various forms of social work that GNIM relies upon in order to operate. Social work is related to brokerage; guanxi and corporate gifts. These areas of social work are complex and sometimes linked with corruption. I posit that the typical explorations of corruption conducted by such organisations as Transparency International and the World Bank do not allow for the complexities that make up social work. This chapter examines the historical and current usage of brokerage along with guanxi-Chinese form of relationship building along with corporate giving. Ethnographic evidence from my fieldwork provides insight into local usage and understandings of these forms of social work.

In Chapter 5-The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Nigeria?, I move away from GNIM and into the world of Nigerian entrepreneurs who engage in business with Chinese counterparts. Nigerian entrepreneurship is one of the heralded areas that government officials contend will benefit from Nigerian-Chinese relations. Historically Nigeria has had a high percentage of small business owners. In more recent years, the government has encouraged its citizens to start businesses as a way to help the country develop economically.

I argue that although entrepreneurship is portrayed as the great hope of poverty alleviation, opportunities for upward mobility are greater for those who already have greater access to capital. These are advantages to capital. The chapter explores the stories of these entrepreneurs in relation to social relationships through their interactions with Chinese partners beginning from the initiation of contact; business negotiations and as business is conducted.

Chapter 6-Ni Hao Naija: Elite Futures and Chinese Education in Nigeria examines the last pillar that potentially has the most implications for Nigeria's future: education. The promise of Nigerian-Chinese relationships is particularly focused on aspirations and advancement in society

through education. The chapter examines the perceived benefits of education in Nigerian society along with the introduction of Mandarin Chinese language in Lagosian private and public schools. Performance and ceremony also play a part in instilling children with promise of Nigerian-Chinese relations. Ethnographic fieldwork into school and a university classes provide insight into the experiences of students and insight into what types of students are attempting to take on the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relations.

Chapter 7-Conclusion is where I review the main findings of each chapter. I then explore the themes that emerge throughout this thesis: exclusivity; brokerage; ritual, ceremony and performance.

Chapter II- Selling the Chinese Dream to the Nation: Public Discourse and Narratives in Action

China takes from us primary goods and sells us manufactured ones. This was also the essence of colonialism. China is no longer a fellow underdeveloped economy. China is the second biggest economy in the world, an economic giant capable of the same forms of exploitation as the West. China is a major contributor to the de-industrialisation of Africa and thus African underdevelopment.Africa must seize the moment and move manufacturing of goods consumed in Africa out of China to the African continent ... I cannot recommend a divorce. However, a review of the exploitative elements in this marital contract is long overdue. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi (China 2013)

In 2013, when Sanusi Lamido Sanusi wrote an article for the London *Financial Times* critiquing Nigerian-Chinese relationships, he sparked a small diplomatic storm. At the time of his editorial Sanusi was the head of the Central Bank of Nigeria. Sanusi urged Nigerians to view China without rose-tinted glasses and think of China as competition instead of a historical ally. Additionally, he cautioned against repeating old colonial patterns of exploitation. Not only were the comments critical but coming from a high level government official, the comments had the potential to unsettle popular support of Nigerian-Chinese affairs. While Sanusi was the highest level member of the government to publicly question emerging relationships at various levels of Nigerian society (not only in the elite echelons of power), other Nigerians also began to re-evaluate the increasing intimacy between Nigeria and China. Their concerns crystalized around high profile transactions that involved selling off national resources to Chinese firms and the apparent gains these deals netted for Nigerian elite; low quality Chinese products flooding the Nigerian market and a general distrust of China's motives in Nigeria.

Chinese officials did not let Sanusi's comments go unchecked. Less than a month later President Xi responded to Sanusi indirectly at a public meeting with a small group of African Heads of State⁵:

At present, the international situation is undergoing profound and complex changes. China-Africa relations are facing not only unprecedented opportunities, but also the tests of many new situations and new problems. No matter how the international situation changes, China will firmly adhere to the policy of staying friendly to Africa, always be a reliable friend and sincere partner of African countries, and strive to make greater contributions to peace and development in Africa...The Chinese government will take active measures to encourage Chinese enterprises to expand investment in Africa and continue to ask the Chinese enterprises to actively fulfil their social responsibilities.
(Akanbi and Oyedele 2013)

While Xi's statement briefly alluded to the challenges of Africa-China relationships, he mainly focused on friendship, reliability and sincerity. Official statements like Xi's often serve as public relations statements that focus on the positive actions of initiatives and relationships through the

⁵ Leaders of ten countries attended; Nigeria was not one of them.

use of language steeped in camaraderie and trust. What this and other rebuttals to critiques have in common is an enticing story of development and mutual respect where both Nigerian and Chinese citizens benefit from their countries' relationship. How do Nigerian government officials and business elites construct and deploy this narrative of mutuality? How are public discourse and narratives shaped and delivered to the public? Who is the target audience for these messages?

Critical social science literature tends to be concerned with issues that pertain to the growing Nigerian-Chinese narrative, for example state power and how it is enacted and the production of policy as the key site of discourse. However, this focus overlooks the so-called "culture-work" of public discourse, which is as critical to government as it is to business (L'Etang 2012: 167). The Nigerian government's public discourse campaign seeks to reinvigorate the Nigerian dream with narratives of the great development and modernity to come through Nigerian-Chinese relationships. This grand narrative is popularized through the inscription of individual aspirations which are linked to China through business and education opportunities.

I originally planned to research governments' roles in Nigerian-Chinese relationships by directly observing and interviewing Nigerian and Chinese officials. (See Chapter 1-Methodology section) Despite initial promises, my attempts to research Nigerian and Chinese officials did not result in meetings or opportunities for research. Although I attempted to pursue other avenues, I did not successfully gain access to any government officials. Through observations of the representation of Nigerian-Chinese relations in the media and conversations with other research participants, I developed another approach to analyzing the government. This analysis focused on public discourse and the Nigerian government's creation of a narrative that seeks to link Nigerian-Chinese relations with Nigerians' aspirations for upward mobility and elite statuses.

This chapter seeks to examine the public discourse campaign employed by elites, particularly those in government and business, to refute concerns over Nigerian-Chinese relationships. This campaign is utilised in a number of critical areas which the government uses to promote China as the new key player in Nigeria's economic growth. These key pillars: big business; entrepreneurship and education will be explored in detail throughout the ethnographic chapters. I argue that the Nigerian government has created a multi-faceted campaign in order to gain the public's acceptance and desire for Nigerian-Chinese relationships. This campaign includes state level diplomatic meetings; state to state policies that benefit government officials; cultural

performances and rituals and bilateral trade agreements. This chapter is divided into four main sections, beginning by charting an anthropology of public relations. I then explore the kinds of emerging critiques that the public relation's campaign attempts to forestall and navigate. These critiques harken back to memories of Nigeria's previous relationships with foreign investors. As such I include a case study of the Niger-Delta conflict to illustrate what can happen if the public does not support a relationship between Nigeria and foreign investors. This is followed by an examination of the components of public relations as an elite political process. The fourth section discusses the key pillars of the public discourse campaign in depth.

Towards an Anthropology of Public Relations

Public relations are an oft neglected area of research in anthropology due arguably, to its association with elite projects and the related neglect until recently of elite corporate ventures. Nonetheless one of the main proponents for bringing an anthropological approach to public relations, Jacquie L'Etang, has explored the links between public relations and public diplomacy. She argued that both public relations and public diplomacy centre on building and managing relationships (L'Etang 2009). She also argued that public relations is often used in an intercultural context to help bring diverse groups together and it is also used to help promote changes within a culture (L'Etang 2012: 167). As we will examine later, the promotion of Nigerian-Chinese exchanges centres around creating and maintaining relationships both on state to state and individual levels. Before delving into this, the history I will review the history of public relations.

Two recognized fathers of public relations, Edward Bernays from the United States and Lucien Matrat from France, provide insights into public relations which highlights the links between public relations and public discourse as well as public relations and the private sector. Bernays was hired by President Woodrow Wilson to create propaganda in order to gain the American public's support for World War I. Bernays based his public relations theories upon the belief that organisations, including businesses and governments, could not meet their goals without public support (New York Times 2013).

Any person or organization depends ultimately on public approval, and is therefore faced with the problem of engineering the public's consent to a program or goal. We expect our elected government officials to try to engineer our consent—through the network of communications open to them—for the measures they propose. We reject government authoritarianism or regimentation, but we are willing to take action suggested to us by the written or spoken word. The engineering of consent is the very essence of the democratic process, the freedom to persuade and suggest. (Bernays 2-3: 1947)

Starting in the 1920's Bernays laid out his philosophy on what would come to be known as public relations. He argued that democratic processes allowed for government officials to attempt to persuade citizens into supporting government actions. Persuasion came in the form of public relations campaigns. The basic tenet of public relations rests upon creating a campaign which includes events that draw the public's attention to an organisation. Attention is then sustained and converted to support and a clamouring for the organisation's actions.

The press is a key tool in the campaign for public support because it is used as a medium through which to publicise messages. According to Bernays:

Words, sounds, and pictures accomplish little unless they are the tools of a soundly thought-out plan and carefully organized methods.... When the public is convinced of the soundness of an idea, it will proceed to action. People translate an idea into action suggested by the idea itself, whether it is ideological, political, or social..... In a democracy they can be accomplished principally by the engineering of consent. (Bernays 10: 1947)

This "engineering of consent" is done by an elite group, which running counter to the claims that public relations is in fact integral to the democratic process (Ewan 1996). According to Bernays, elites like himself were educated and analytical enough to understand what was beneficial for the public. In an interview with Bernays in the late 20th century, the author Stuart Ewen, stated that:

Throughout our conversation, Bernays conveyed his hallucination of democracy: a highly educated class of opinion-moulding tacticians are continuously at work, analysing the social terrain and adjusting the mental scenery from which the public mind, with its limited intellect, derives its opinions. (Ewen 1996: 10)

Conversely, Matrat viewed the American style of public relations as overrun with propaganda and unethical (Xifra 2012: 565). The 'European' method of public relations was strictly applied to organisations that autonomously managed through the use of self-designated objectives (Xifra 2012: 570). This form of public relations is traced back to the beginning of the interwar years in the 1930's, with the majority of Matrat's research conducted during post WWII economic redevelopment. Matrat and a small group of colleagues developed their ideas while he worked in the public relations department of a French multinational (Xifra 2012: 570). Empirical observations from the workplace shaped Matrat's belief that anthropology and public relations were intrinsically linked and that public relations was based around trust and respect for people. In 1965 Matrat drafted an international code of ethics for public relations practitioners which were later adopted by the International Public Relations Association. The code included direct references to United Nations human rights based principles.

Finally, the code asks professionals to refrain from “subordinating the truth,” circulating information that is not based on “ascertainable facts,” taking any action that is “unethical or dishonest or capable of impairing human dignity and integrity,” and using exploitive techniques “to create subconscious motivations which the individual cannot control of his/her own free will and so cannot be accountable for the action taken of them. (Xifra 2012: 569)

Despite their divergent ideas, both schools of public relations are instructive in providing a framework from which to analyse the Nigerian government’s utilization of public discourse and narratives that are used to promote Nigerian-Chinese alliances. At the heart of Bernay’s philosophy is elite managed public relations. In Nigeria, the elites (government and business) are at the helm of the promotion of Nigerian-Chinese alliance. Matrat’s views on human rights based public relations serve as a basis to examine the tensions between elite desire to gain support and the manner in which this support is cultivated.

The Role of the Nigerian Media within the Public Discourse Equation

Historically the relationship between the Nigerian press and government has been a mixture of contention, puppeteering and grudging tolerance. During colonialism, the Nigerian press was a huge proponent of independence and self-rule (Uko 2004:10). In the early 1900’s Lord Lugard, the British governor-general, fought the press’s critique of British rule through a law that allowed him to “seize the printing presses, confiscate newspapers” and fine publishers (Uko 2004: 13). Journalists were arrested and put on trial for breaking press related laws. But instead of being scared, journalists were emboldened to continue writing stories that challenged colonial power. In response, strict laws were repealed and freedom of the press increased. In 1960’s post-colonial Nigeria the first republic passed legislation which effectively blocked the press from reporting information and from even publishing newspapers in certain areas. Fears of legal retaliation kept the press in fear of publishing stories that placed government officials in a negative light. (Uche 1990: 123). The government that arose from the military coup in 1966 created legislation to overturn bans on newspapers. Nonetheless, these rules were re-established in the next military coup of 1967.

Conversely, journalists have also been accused of being government puppets who used their medium to do the government’s bidding. It has been argued that journalists capitulated to government pressures and were bribed to write false stories that did not tell readers about government officials’ misrule. During the civil war, an international journalist noted that the main two sides of the conflict coerced the press into supporting them.

The press on both sides of the line came out of the war of words badly, succumbing with hardly a token resistance to the pressures exerted on it by military governments...the press lost its nerve and censored itself into a state of grovelling sycophancy. (Uche 1990: 130)

From the second military coup to the 2000's, which saw another republic and a variety of military coups and finally democratic rule, journalists were faced with various decrees that hampered the freedom of the press. Throughout the years, these laws and government's general disdain for the press resulted in the closure of various newspapers as well as the arrests, trials and imprisonment of journalists.

A number of high profile cases arose in which journalists were arrested for trying to provide the public with accurate information of government actions, including corruption. As recently as 2006, two journalists were arrested and charged with sedition after one wrote a story that questioned the age and safety of the presidential jet. The other journalist discussed the story on television and both men were charged with "bring[ing] into hatred or contempt or excite[ing] disaffection against the person of the president" (BBC 2006). Nonetheless the Nigerian media has been praised for being instrumental in publicising and galvanising civil society to fight the atrocities that took place under the Abacha regime, the last military regime in Nigeria (Ngara and Esebonu 2012: 191). While there are newspapers and stories that simply take government press releases and quote them verbatim, there is also a significant strand of media that follows the tradition of press from previous eras in presenting news with accuracy and critical analysis.

Given the government's history with the media, the Nigerian government's use of the media to help shape a compelling narrative about Nigeria-China relations is fraught with tension. While some media reports are simply verbatim quotes taken from press releases, other reports question the benefits of Nigeria's increasingly close relations with China. This growing voice of discontent challenges the carefully crafted narrative of affinity and friendship.

Public Vocalisation of Discontent

In Nigeria, public critique of Nigerian-Chinese relationship captures a gradual shift from a triumphant narrative of post-colonial South-South mutual partnership spearheading a new era of Nigerian development and dominance to creeping concern that the alliance is not nearly as beneficial as advertised. Concerns have come from a number of sectors, ranging from government officials to private parties.

In an editorial, a former Delta State Commissioner for Finance, Chief Bernard Okumagba urged Nigerians to examine the impacts of Chinese-Nigerian relationships on the Nigerian economy:

The position essentially is that China is naturally in competition with any African country that is at the industrial take-off point because China exports manufactured goods for our primary exports. These concerns, mixed with fears of competition in the recent years, have triggered the debate over the dangers of the nature of Africa's partnership with China. Nigeria's trade with China is not much different from the general African scenario. Nigeria was China's third largest trade partner in Africa as at 2013, helped largely by new contracts in transport infrastructure and oil concessions... China is exporting manufactured goods to Nigeria, largely because they are cheaply produced and fill a gap for our economy, which has a higher cost structure on account of infrastructure gaps. But there are growing fears that the Chinese trade invasion may cause damage to our struggling nascent industrial sector. (Okumagba 2014)

Okumagba challenged historical ties and the widely touted idea that China is an ally. Referring to China as simultaneously a competitor and trading partner, he imparts an ambivalence towards the Nigerian-Chinese relationship. China's dualistic position hinges on the trade both countries are engaged in: China's exportation of cheap manufactured goods to Nigeria and extraction and importation of Nigeria's natural resources. This relationship is at the heart of Okumagba, Sanusi and other's critiques. Although Okumagba ended his editorial by calling on Nigerians to focus on making the Nigerian-Chinese relationship beneficial for Nigeria and to learn lessons from China's economic growth, his editorial raised fundamental questions about how or whether this would be possible. As critique, such as Okumagba's grows both within media and amongst some political figures like Sansui, we see the context in which the government's carefully crafted and compelling narrative of a very human and even affectionate relationship between the two countries is all important.

Bashir Yuguda, a high-ranking government minister of the National Planning Commission released a press statement where he called on the Chinese government "to take proactive measures towards discouraging the production of substandard products imported into the country" (NPCR 2014). The press release stemmed from a meeting Yuguda had with the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, Gu Xiaojie. Yuguda also stated:

...that Chinese companies and entrepreneurs are actively engaged in different sectors of the Nigerian economy, especially in agriculture and infrastructure development such as power, railways and road construction. He revealed that there is still room for greater collaboration; explaining that both countries did recently signed many agreements towards deepening their ties" "On our own part, we have been striving to ensure that Nigerian businessmen do not go to China to demand for substandard products. We also try to discourage them by ensuring that as much as possible such products do not cross our borders. We want China to also be able to control things from their end because we believe that there should be a minimum standard for all countries. There is no doubt that fake products have a potential of hurting both economies.... (NPCR 2014)

Yaguda used an official press release both to critique and praise Chinese counterparts. His criticism focused on the issue of low quality products, which is a complaint that Nigerians across the class spectrum have raised for years. The issue is presented as the fault of Nigerian business traders rather than their Chinese suppliers. The quality of Chinese goods is disputed daily throughout Nigerian society. This discussion takes place at markets, retail stores, restaurants and other public spaces. Popular opinion is that when purchasing known Chinese goods, the price might be cheap but the product will not last as long as products made in other countries. In response to these complaints, Yaguda promised that the Chinese government would work on defining a minimum quality standard for its goods. Additionally, Ambassador Gu responded at the same meeting by pledging that his government would increase its vigilance against sub-standard products and referred to bilateral agreements that regulated against these products (NPCR 2014).

There is a pattern among the critiques of Sanusi, Yaguda, Okumagba and others regarding Nigerian-Chinese relations. Each critique makes a direct or implicit warning to Nigerians to avoid acting naively or unduly focusing on individual self-interest when interacting with Chinese counterparts. Nonetheless Nigerians are also urged to think of the nation as a whole and increase interactions with Chinese counterparts in order to learn from them. Chidi Amuta, a well-known journalist urged Nigerians:

...to take long-term strategic view of China's coming if we have any degree of national self-interest left. At this point in time, the best attitude is one of great strategic caution and informed engagement. If we are a serious nation with an eye on the future of our children instead of our present greed, we need to have put in place a team of people who have a capability for strategic thinking to fashion out a China policy. (Amuta 2011)

In this vein Amuta called for further training of Nigerians by Chinese companies and the introduction of Chinese language courses into the Nigerian curriculum in order to increase the competitiveness of Nigeria's next generation in the global marketplace. An emphasis is placed on technology transfer and education, with the hope of creating a new generation of aspirant entrepreneurs better placed to exploit the possibilities and opportunities offered by China. Apprehension over the failure to create widespread hope and popular buy-in to believe they too will share in the boons of investment is ever present.

The grim and intractable conflicts in the Niger-Delta stands as a constant reminder and warning of the imperative to court and command the popular consent for foreign investment and the danger of the failure to secure that social license and popular buy-in to the government

investment agenda. It is against this backdrop that the government's public discourse campaign, the construction of a national narrative of Nigerian-Chinese exchanges, must be understood. Years of increased support for various Niger-Delta forms of resistance against Shell and other foreign owned firms have shown the Nigerian government just how disruptive opposition can be to foreign, investment and government policies. The public discourse campaign aims to forestall, mitigate or deflect such potential contestations of Chinese business. Chinese owned firms are the latest in a long line of foreign firms to take an interest in Nigerian resources. Like their predecessors, Chinese firms have faced opposition in the form of complaints, protests, kidnapping, sabotage, mineral siphoning and killing (Watts and Kashi 2008). A huge source of discontent has been over the destruction of oil rich lands throughout the Niger-Delta, particularly the lands belonging to the Ogoni people. Since the 1950's, when oil was discovered, Shell has extracted and polluted once pristine farm land throughout the Niger-Delta. By the 1990's complaints and protests had risen to an all-time high and received international attention. Community members including the activist and writer Ken Saro-Wiwa were killed due to their continued protests and campaigns against Shell's abuse of their land (Zalik 2004; Idemudia 2011).

As recently as August 2015, in a campaign to clean up corruption and rectify past harms, the newly elected president of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari fast-tracked plans to clean up the Ogoni region of the Niger-Delta. A report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) found that it would take upwards of thirty years to clean the land (Vidal 2011), which includes water pollution at levels 900 times higher than the accepted World Health Organization standards (Esaen 2014). A consortium of members including Shell, the Nigerian government, the UN, and other oil companies are tasked with managing the fund to clean up the area. While Shell originally promised \$1billion to fund the project, it subsequently lowered its commitment to approximately \$330 million (Vidal 2015).

Despite publicly admitting liability for polluting the Ogoni area for nearly half a century, and only after the UNEP's damning report was released, Shell is not paying their share of the required money required to clean the area. Instead, the majority of the estimated \$1billion dollars needed to clean the area will come from Nigerian oil companies, the Nigerian government and other sources. Amnesty International and the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) expressed deep concerns over Shell's low contribution to the fund; Shell's past ineffective cleaning methods; adherence to UNEP clean-up deadlines and other related issues

(Amnesty International 2014; Izeze 2015). After a visit to the Niger-Delta in the summer of 2015, Mark Dummett, a researcher for Amnesty International, stated that “President Buhari’s initiative will fail, and the Ogoni people will continue to suffer, as long as Shell fails to make significant changes to the way it approaches oil spill clean-up” (Amnesty International 2014).

In response to the announcement of President Buhari’s fast-track clean-up plan, the MOSOP stated that:

We will not be part of the behind the scene fast-track unilateral actions... We can’t be ignored, or taken for granted anymore. We will resist any attempt to intimidate or use force against us. The essence of the UNEP Ogoniland Report Implementation ought to first acknowledge the existence of the Ogoni people, and not discount us. (Izeze 2015)

The scars of Shell’s exploitation of the Niger-Delta’s resources are still inflamed and Nigerians are likely to be weary of Chinese extractive firms and Chinese businesses in general. When discussing China’s early foray into the Nigerian oil market, Obi proposed that a possible solution to opposition would include, “a radical democratisation of oil power and the (re)distribution of oil for the benefit of the majority of the people of the Niger-Delta within the context of a transformatory democratic, equitable and developmental Nigerian nation-state project” (Obi 2008: 430). After decades of civil strife, unrest and petro violence in response to foreign extractive transnational firms in the Niger-Delta, the Nigerian government appears to be changing tactics vis-à-vis Chinese investments, by investing heavily in shaping public discourse. This narrative is focused on winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the Nigerian people or at least manufacturing a level of consent and acceptance of Chinese investment and influence. The Nigerian government-led campaign begins with state-to-state exchanges and then progresses to policies that are purported to help society at large. Let us begin with an examination of state level interactions.

State to State Diplomatic Scene Setting: Public Diplomacy & The Art of Persuasion

In 2013, former President Goodluck Jonathan visited Beijing for five days. The following year during a four-nation trip through Africa, Premier Li Keqiang visited Nigeria. The two leaders’ visits were one in a long line of diplomatic meetings between Nigerian and Chinese officials. State visits between the two countries’ officials and citizens took place before a diplomatic relationship was formalised in the early 1970’s; visits became more frequent after formalisation. To date, former President Obasanjo visited China more than any other Nigerian official. During his presidency, Obasanjo visited China four times and he continued to visit China after leaving office.

During Obasanjo's presidency, in the early 2000's, Chinese relationships with African countries were shifting from decades of friendship based on mutual understanding and alliance against the West to an economic relationship with trade and development as the focal point. Obasanjo was one of the earlier African leaders who welcomed this shift. He "...described Chin[ese] investment in Nigeria as part of all the overall reform of the national economy aimed at giving the nation a fresh economic lease, as well as benefitting from China's experience as an emerging super power" (Ekedegwa 2010: 112).

Diplomatic visits between the countries usually involved reports and photos but the most recent diplomatic visits of President Jonathan and Premier Li were publicised to an unprecedented degree. Meetings were surrounded by pageantry, theatre and triumphalism to create a grand spectacle of cultural diplomacy and mutual friendship. The visits were reported across the world via international media sources including the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera* and the *Financial Times*. Local media in China and Nigeria covered both visits in detail while both governments posted information about the visits on their respective websites. Reports were complete with pictures including that of Chinese children greeting President and First Lady Jonathan as they disembarked from the presidential plane. The Premier's visit to Nigeria included a group photo of the two leaders with their wives and a picture of the two leaders hugging. Li's visit to Nigeria was timed to coincide with the World Economic Forum on African which was held in Abuja in May of 2014. The conference's theme, "Forging Inclusive Growth, Creating Jobs" provided both Jonathan and Li an opportunity to publicly pronounce mutual esteem and a desire for Nigeria and its fellow African counterparts to work with China towards further economic development. It is significant that a Chinese leader took centre stage and spoke at a conference devoted to African economic development. Li's presence highlights the importance of the relationship between Africa and China as well as the necessity to promote these relationships throughout the media.

Li's speech included the hallmarks of the public relations script employed by Nigerian and Chinese representatives:

The China-Africa relationship has stood the test of the past several decades and continues to grow from strength to strength. This is a relationship of steadfast mutual support, common development and mutual learning. Our respect for each other, cultural exchanges and sharing of development experience is a blessing for our respective development and global prosperity. (Li: 2014)

Mirroring Xi's response to Sanusi's critique, Li mentioned the historical ties and camaraderie between Nigeria and China. Official statements often include this element. Given the conference theme, Li also spoke about aggregate ways African-Chinese relations aid in Africa's economic development.

What we find encouraging is that China-Africa cooperation has and will continue to drive inclusive growth among developing countries. Given the fact that China and Africa are at similar development stages, they have much to gain from each other's development. Since the beginning of this century, China's robust economic growth has brought along massive exports of African goods and provided strong support for Africa's rapid growth. The enormous potential in Africa's economy has attracted Chinese investment here and provided greater room for China's own economic development. Africa needs infrastructure and industrial development, whereas China has the spare financing and production capacity in these fields. Each has so much to offer to the other side. I am confident that cooperation based on such complementarity and mutual benefit will give an even stronger boost to China and Africa's respective development. (Li: 2014)

Li's speech served as a refutation to criticism by highlighting the mutual gains of African-Chinese relationships. Instead of China being portrayed as the exploitative old friend, China is shown as the old faithful friend who wants to help not only itself but its African friends. By countering arguments against the relationship, Li's speech had the potential to sway critics and gain supporters, particularly those from Nigeria and other African countries.

In former President Jonathan's welcome speech to conference delegates he thanked Li and similarly extolled the relationship between China and Africa as a whole:

I want to thank Premier Li Keqiang for his great speech and use this occasion to welcome him to Abuja, on his very first visit to Nigeria. Africans are quite happy with China because you have shown commitment in helping Africa in many ways. China and Africa have forged strong ties over the years. Ties which are mutually beneficial to us in trade and investments, in agriculture, in education, and in cultural exchange. We hope to continue on this path..... We are learning from the example of other countries - such as China - to see what they have done in this regard to create jobs for their citizens (Jonathan 2014).

Jonathan's statement mirrors Li's in structure and in desired effect: emphasizing the positive aspects of the relationship for Africans and Chinese as the cornerstone of African modernity and good growth. As we will see throughout this thesis, celebrations, performance, and ritual take place through the various levels of the Nigerian-Chinese relationship, including in big business; entrepreneurship and education. On the governmental level, speeches and public meetings between leaders are just one part of the campaign to market Nigerian-Chinese relations to the public. What follows these public performances is the creation of policies and initiatives that demonstrate the words and ideas embedded in speeches. Policies that impact diplomats and serve as a signal to Nigerian citizens that there is cooperation and respect between Nigeria and

China. Additionally, these policies ignite hopes that the basis of this courtship will ripple down to the general public. One such key policy is the updated visa policy for Nigerian diplomats.

In 2013, China and Nigeria signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which called for the “Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports” (Bello 2013). The agreement and subsequent policy allowed Nigerian officials to visit China without visas and vice versa. The then outgoing Chinese ambassador to Nigeria, Deng Boqing, explained the Chinese government’s reasons for the initiative.

We all know that [the] visa issue is very important for the purpose of promoting our countries’ relations. We have, therefore, decided to offer visa exemption for Nigerian diplomats and senior government officials in a first phase. (PremiumTimes 2014)

The visa waiver programme came in effect in February of 2014. By waiving visas for Nigerian diplomats, the Chinese government signalled the importance of the Nigerian-Chinese relationship to Chinese, Nigerians and international counterparts. A Nigerian editorial focused on the international implications:

On the surface, this policy may not be a big deal, given the fact that officials might secure visas at a short notice anyway, and, therefore, whether they have visa access or not may not make much of a difference. However, such a gesture underscores the trust, confidence and mutual respect, a treasure that sovereign nations rarely confer on other nationals. Nigerian senior officials and even well-known figures sometimes get frisked embarrassingly at the entry points of western nations, our long standing traditional partners with a long history of contacts and relationships. Therefore, China’s decision not to require visas of Nigerian officials is a strategic confidence-boosting mechanism that places a premium on trust in our strategic partnership....We are aware that currently China offers the most liberal visa regime to Nigerians wishing to visit that country. (Peoples Daily 2013)

The visa policy creates the perception that although other countries do not treat Nigerian officials and elites with the respect they deserve, China does. Mutual respect and trust are implicitly highlighted in this message. The policy also serves as a message to international audiences that if other countries want to have a relationship with Nigeria on par with that of China and Nigeria, these countries should likewise open their doors and allow free passage to political elite.

Meanwhile Nigerian citizens who want to travel to China continue to find themselves at the mercy of opaque, lengthy and prohibitively costly bureaucratic process. (This is discussed in Chapter 5- The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Nigeria). Nonetheless this policy aids in forming a positive view of the relationships between Nigeria and China by showing respect for government officials who represent the general public. The policy also presents a vision of smooth, unconstrained and free

movement between these two allies. This MOU is a prime example of the symbolically rich value of agreements over and above their economic or logical value for any other than the most elite levels of political officials. State level diplomatic meetings and visa policies for government elites are the first component of the government's public discourse campaign. The second component directly enlists citizens by highlighting direct benefits of the relationship to the general public, firstly through cultural performance and ritual and secondly through potential avenues for economic improvement.

Cultural Courtship: 'Experience China in Nigeria'/'Experience Nigeria in China'

In 1999, China's Ministry of Information launched various "experience" campaigns in European, South American and African countries in order to introduce Chinese culture to people throughout the world. (Beijing Review 2013a). In 2013 the initiative came to Nigeria as the 'Experience China in Nigeria' campaign. In Nigeria the campaign included the donation of a "China Library" with a collection that included Chinese language learning materials and Chinese classic novels written in both English and Chinese (Beijing Review 2013). The same year, China also opened a Chinese Cultural Centre in Abuja. Edem Duke, the Nigerian Minister of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation spoke about the centre not so much as a hub for two-way dialogue, but as a "platform" of cultural education and understanding that would enhance and reflect China's growing influence on Nigeria:

...the establishment of the Chinese Cultural Center will provide the Nigerian people with a new platform to understand China, display China's abundant cultural heritage and tourism resources, and convey reliable cultural information. It will attract the Nigerian public's attention to Chinese culture and raise China's influence in Nigeria. (Ministry of Culture PRC 2013)

As such, cultural understanding serves as a key mechanism of authentication for Nigerian-Chinese relations by providing compelling human values to what is so often viewed as a purely economic relationship. By instrumentalizing cultural understanding, Nigerian officials are attempting to manufacture consent. In order to create cross-cultural understanding Nigeria has established programmes to introduce Nigerian cultures to Chinese people. In 2011, a Nigerian cultural centre was opened in Beijing and an annual Nigerian Culture Week began the following year. These cultural initiatives were promoted in Nigerian and Chinese media (Weili 2013). At one of the cultural week events Duke addressed the crowd of Chinese and Nigerian attendees.

Nigeria is the most profitable business destination in Africa. And being a nation of over 445 ethnic groups, so are the number of cultural values that Nigeria possesses. Therefore, we need one another; we need plenty Chinese investors to come over to explore this vastness, this beauty, these opportunities and more. Since we are the largest travelers and spender in Africa, we know how to

court friendship using culture, using food, using fashion and other forms of creativity... (The Nation 2012)

Duke's statements link cultural exchange with business opportunities through the language of courtship. He emphasised Nigeria's position as an attractive partner and welcomed China's advances. Duke also stressed the reciprocal benefits for both countries, just as Li, Jonathan and Xi did in their public speeches.

Time and again the language of courtship is used by both Nigerian and Chinese officials. In a meeting between Samuel Ortom, Nigeria's Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment and a group of Chinese investors headed by Zhou Dewei, chairman of the Beijing Yeaco Investment Consulting Company, both parties spoke of comradeship and devotion. Ortom stated that "Nigeria is an investment destination because of her landscape, natural and human resources as well as population. Our desire is to have enough investors coming into the country to invest and produce goods in the country that would offer opportunities for jobs and wealth creation for Nigerians" (MITIN 2014). Ortom went on to tell Dewei that "We will stand by you to ensure that you do not regret coming to Nigeria. Opportunities abound in all sectors of our economy and through Nigeria you can reach other African countries" (MITIN 2014). Dewei discussed the various opportunities within Nigeria including "natural resources and [other] areas for investment" and added that his group's visit to Nigeria was made in order "to contribute towards the economic development of Nigeria through investing in the oil and gas sector as well as equipment technology, transportation, energy and building" (MITIN 2014).

Dewei and Ortom both spoke to Nigerian audiences with a message of economic development for the country as a whole and for individuals who can gain work through these alliances. Ortom directly stated that Nigeria is seeking investors who can help provide "jobs and wealth creation for Nigerians". Ortom spoke of contributing to Nigeria's economic development. The press release promoting this meeting was designed to highlight the government's focus on providing economic advancement and alliances with Chinese investors as one method of accomplishing this goal. Additionally, Dewei's comment briefly mentioned Nigeria's natural resources. Various Nigerian-Chinese agreements grant Chinese partners access to natural resources. In order for Nigerian citizens to accept what is tantamount to wholesale selling off of public resources, the Nigerian government has to demonstrate the benefits for Nigerians. Placing the spotlight on jobs and economic development is a way to take the attention away from the issues that could arise if the loss of natural resources was discussed in depth. Ortom's message is targeted to any potential

international partner who is welcomed in Nigeria as long as they are able to promise what China is promising: to aid in Nigeria's economic development. Although Chinese partners are promised fidelity, they are not promised monogamy.

This promise is expressed through a public discourse that is of the language of courtship. A persuasive narrative will lead Nigerians to seek interactions with Chinese counterparts, primarily through the avenues as laid out in the government's grand narrative: big business; entrepreneurship and educational opportunities. Subsequent chapters of this thesis will explore the perspectives of Nigerians who seek to make good on the promise of Nigerian-Chinese exchanges as peddled by the government. I examine more closely the next step in the campaign, the production and presentation of economic and educational initiatives that vow a better future for Nigerians through access to economic development via business; entrepreneurship and educational opportunities.

Big Business, Entrepreneurship and Education: From Diplomatic Performance to the Promise of Development

The public discourse campaign hinges on the Nigerian public's complicity and faith in Nigerian-Chinese relationships as a positive force that can help shape Nigeria's future as a country and the futures of individuals. Belief that China represents a boon not just for national economic growth, but for individual, personal aspiration. Bilateral agreements help move the spectacle and pageantry of elite political engagement to narratives of everyday opportunity for better lives through big business; entrepreneurship; and education. Public relations help translate these bilateral agreements from governmental discourse to public mantras. Okongwu and Mencher suggest that:

The mantras of international competitiveness and corporate profitability have been adopted by national and regional entities as well as by transitional corporations and they have penetrated the discourse of economic, political, and social discussions at all levels where they are used in an uncritical manner leading to the disempowerment of vast numbers of people. (2000: 110)

In the case of Nigeria these mantras and business discourse are presented through bilateral agreements that promise to benefit and empower citizens. If Nigerians claim these mantras as their own and advocate for increased relations without critical assessment and apprehension as to whether or not these policies truly benefit the average citizen, the government's narrative will have been successful.

A key tool in persuading citizen to buy into Nigerian-Chinese alliances, are bilateral agreements which are presented to the public through MOUs. Over the past decade, through the proliferation of MOU's between Nigeria and China, we can chart the evolving narrative of this relationship as told through official agreements.

.....The Government of the two nations [China and Nigeria] initiates and implements programmes and projects that enhance and strengthen the existing ties, which also impact positively on the lives of the people of the two countries. Nigeria has concluded a total of 400 (four hundred) Bilateral/Joint Commission Agreements in various sectors of the economy and has Joint Commissions with eighty-five countries. (Foreign Relations 2014)

These agreements are marketed as positively impacting “the lives of the people” of both countries, especially the agreements which focus on the key pillars of the Nigerian government’s narrative: big business; entrepreneurship and education. The key pillars have the potential to transform the lives of Nigerian citizens and are promoted as such. Since the 1990’s there have been thousands of agreements and MOUs signed by Nigerian and international counterparts. MOUs signees are wide-ranging and include representatives from banks; federal ministries; state and local governments as well as large and small private companies. MOUs between China and Nigeria have led to agreements on Trade, Investment Promotion and Protection; Tax; Consular Affairs; Tourism Co-operation and South-South Co-operation and reduction of fake products exported to Nigeria from China (Egbula and Zheng 2011: 4). MOUs have also focused on petroleum, power, telecommunications, education, health, manufacturing and infrastructure (Egbula and Zheng 2011: 4). They are as much about constructing and reinforcing a narrative about their performative value-as the actual content of individual MOUs.

It has been estimated that less than 5% of MOUs move beyond the planning stages (Brautigam: 2011). “The lesson appears to be that while there is clearly a significant Chinese appetite to finance Nigerian infrastructure and significant Nigerian demand for this finance, the mere signing of prestigious-looking MOUs by Chinese and Nigerian government officials in no way guarantees that the proposed loans will actually materialise” (M t h e m b u - S a l t e r 2009: 24). Despite the low number of MOUs and agreements that move past the initial planning stages, there is a ceremonial significance to signings. Agreement signings are used as public relations events which are heavily publicised in the media and touted as a symbol of strong Nigerian-Chinese relations. It can be argued that in the campaign for Nigerians ‘hearts and minds’, signing of MOUs are more important than the implementation of projects because of the performative nature of publicly signing MOUs; interviewing signees and garnering media coverage highlighting the purported positive benefits.

Technological Vistas Abound: Big Business and Infrastructure Development

In the World Economic Forum-Abuja speech, President Li unveiled a new plan for African development via Chinese partnership. The collaboration promised a vista full of modern technology readily available to all Africans. In Nigeria this would take the shape of a high-speed railway that would connect to a proposed continent wide high-speed railway, linked through each country's capital. Nigeria would also benefit via a regional expressway built throughout West Africa. Another component of the plan was to improve technology and transportation. Before this plan was unveiled other agreements were also signed. Two China Exim Bank funded programmes for a light rail system/ICT infrastructure programme in Abuja and cassava research. These programmes are related to big business, the first pillar of the campaign for Nigerian-Chinese alliances. The campaign seeks to capitalise on citizens "dreamed-of or anticipated future" aspirations (Cross 2014: 8). China as sold by the Nigerian elite, promises a sparkling future full of technology, economic and education opportunities either directly through Chinese firms or through entrepreneurship linked to Chinese partnerships.

While light rail/ICT and cassava research projects seem disparate, they were both funded by China's Exim Bank and represent grand spectacles of modernity where Chinese innovation and know-how are in full display. Additionally, the two initiatives promise technological innovations that will improve the lives of Nigerians. In 2012, a press release and multiple news reports announced a loan for \$600 million to fund an ICT infrastructure programme along with the light rail system in Abuja. The signing of the MOUs was a high profile and public affair with Nigeria's internationally recognized Minister of Finance Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and China's Exim Bank's Managing Director Sun Ping signing on behalf of their respective institutions. During the signing of the ICT/light rail agreement Okonjo-Iweala stated:

When completed, the project is expected to significantly improve the lives of Nigerians, especially those in the lower socio-economic groups who have to travel long distances from their homes on the outskirts to their places of work or business in the city centre...The light rail in Abuja will improve transportation for all residents, especially the working class...The [ICT] backbone will help to improve service delivery in areas like education and health while empowering the youth with better connectivity to the rest of the world. The four new airport terminals will create jobs and ensure that Nigerian passengers enjoy services and convenience. (Francis 2012)

Okonjo-Iweala statement was an explicit appeal to Nigerians. The message is that ICT infrastructure and the Abuja light rail system can improve the lives of all Nigerians irrespective of their social class. This is a direct appeal to people's hopes and aspirations. Okonjo-Iweala also specifically mentioned young people. With a 50% youth unemployment rate, Nigeria is

desperately seeking solutions (Gabriel 2015). Alliances with China have the potential to help Nigerian youth through improved technology and educational opportunities brought by China. Focusing on this potential helps to build support for the projects amongst youth and their families. Along with physical infrastructure development, these agreements also promise the building of relationship infrastructure which we will be discussed in the education section of this chapter and the ethnography as whole.

For years Nigerians have discussed ways to use the plentiful cassava beyond simple consumption. The challenge of developing cassava products prompted the Nigerian government to create a Cassava Bread Development Fund. Exim's loan went towards the purchase of eighteen factory scale cassava flour processing machinery (Ewepu 2013). Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development secured a deal to export \$272 million worth of cassava trips to China. During a press conference Minister Akinwumi Adesina announced the deal.

My interest as a minister of agriculture is to protect Nigerian farmers and provide them with markets to sell their commodities. We are rapidly modernising the agricultural sector to ensure that we match our production rating with our processing rating... (Osagie 2013)

Cassava is proving to be a popular international item. According to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Akinwumi Adesina, "If we move that [cassava chip exports] to Europe, we can earn 1.3 billion dollars, if we supply China, we can earn \$803 million. So as the minister of agriculture, I have great interest in seeing how we can penetrate that market" (BusinessDayOnline 2014). Adesina's message was directed toward farmers and business people. Cassava development is promoted as a double economic win for both farmers and business people. While farmers are sold the idea that they can expand their market to sell cassava, business people are sold the idea that technology can provide methods for them to create products that have an additional value beyond basic cassava. This is another appeal to the wider spectrum of Nigerians. Additionally Adesina is exploring markets other markets outside of China.

What is missing from such press conferences, releases and media reports, is a deeper analysis of the actual benefits to Chinese partners and the real and potential drawbacks to Nigerian society. Exim is China's state owned export-import bank whose main objectives include helping Chinese firms develop "...comparative advantages in their offshore project contracting and outbound investment, and promot[ing] international economic cooperation and trade" (China EXIM

2015). Exim provides loans for numerous projects across Africa. Usually, one of the requirements for Exim loans is that a Chinese firm is a part of the project. Given Exim's objectives, the ICT, light rail and cassava projects will include Chinese businesses. Exim is not just loaning the money to Nigeria to help, Chinese businesses are also gaining by expanding their business operations to Nigeria. In turn, Nigerians are encouraged to seek work with Chinese firms Nigerian national unions have lobbied for the employment of Nigerians in permanent jobs at Chinese ventures, as opposed to the casual work sometimes provided (Okereocha 2014). This brings into question *which*, Nigerians benefit from these alliances?

Charles, one of the entrepreneurs discussed in Chapter 5- The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Nigeria, attempted to create an alliance with Chinese partners in a number of industries including cassava production. They hosted potential Chinese partners and brought them to the Nigerian site; introduced them to Nigerian business people and government officials; had meetings and banquets. Despite spending effort, time and money, the meetings did not result in a concrete plan to develop cassava products. Additionally, while both the Ministers Adesina and Okonjo-Iweala highlighted statements primarily focused on the Nigerian gains with these projects, they did not discuss the potential drawbacks such as if certain Nigerians would benefit more than others. Potential costs for riding the light rail were not even discussed. The projects are presented with general details in a favourable manner that leaves many questions unanswered. What results is a highly constructed and selective image of Nigerian-Chinese partnerships.

Another example of this is the jewel in the Nigerian-Chinese crown, the Lekki Free Trade Zone (LekkiFTZ) (See Chapter 1-Introduction). When the LekkiFTZ was first proposed it was presented as a unique South-South collaboration with Nigerian and Chinese interests at the helm. Other international interests were also welcomed because the zone was going to be an international exemplar of a futuristic enclave. The LekkiFTZ is not the first free trade zone in Nigeria but it is the first to promote itself as a free trade zone that encompasses everything including the future itself. This future promised its inhabitants a self-sufficient zone where one could live, work and socialise. This included state of the art housing, communities, schools, businesses, restaurants, entertainment and an international airport. This literally meant inhabitants could live in Nigeria without stepping outside of the LekkiFTZ. Currently the average price for newly built homes in the Lekki area cost between £48,000 and £3 million. How much will homes in the future town of LekkiFTZ cost? Surely these new homes will be even more

expensive than older homes. Current home prices are already only affordable for a small percentage of the Nigerian population.

Selling the Dream-Entrepreneurship

In 2011, an official report from the Ministry of Information showcased the launch of a two-week training programme for Nigerian entrepreneurs. The programme focused on export promotion and was a joint effort between The Nigerian Export Promotion Council in Partnership with University of Abuja and B&B Limited, a private consulting firm. A variety of speakers participated including Nigeria's Minister of Commerce, a representative of the UN's Institute for Training and Research and China's Commercial Counsellor, Rong Yangson. Yangson spoke about the rapid increase in bilateral trade between China and Nigeria. Meanwhile Professor M. A. Daniyan, a Principal Consultant with B&B Limited, spoke of the imperative to educate Nigerian business people on trade regulations and ways to compete internationally. "According to Daniyan, the programme aimed to not only to provide the necessary knowledge for "Nigerian Exporting Stakeholders", but, crucially, to "[stimulate] interest in the non-oil export sector of the Nigerian economy" (FMI 2011). Although the training programme did not receive funding from Chinese partners, it was created in response to the increase in trade between China and Nigeria. The inclusion of a Chinese government official at the event added credibility to the programme from the Chinese community.

The major message underlying the introduction of the programme was clear: at the vanguard of Nigerian-Chinese relations would be an army of Nigerian entrepreneurs in the making (and in the waiting), who must be equipped to serve as both the catalysts and beneficiaries of Nigerian economic growth. At the same time, an inherent message to Nigerian entrepreneurs is that without them, the relationship itself between the two countries cannot grow and that it is up to them to be successful. Yet this extension of support to aspirant entrepreneurs carries with it its own expectation of reciprocity. Support to small and medium sized business and the broader advocacy of a national dream of individual entrepreneurialism is in itself a component of the government's narrative; an attempt to garner popular support by creating the sense, if not the reality, of a populist economic agenda in which the Nigerian citizenry can equally share in the gains of Chinese investment and trade. This draws attention to the ideological power of the raft of Nigerian policy targeted at promoting entrepreneurship as the cornerstone of Nigerian-Chinese trading relations. As such, the training programme, was just one of a number of emerging programmes created to lessen the effects of disenfranchisement among Nigerians. These

programmes focus on showing ordinary Nigerians they too can have a piece of the economic action being created through Nigerian-Chinese relationships.

In a similar vein, the special advisory office to the president initiated a training programme for youth. This programme was linked to one of the office's mandates to build "a stronger partnership with China in the area of entrepreneurship and skill acquisition to help in the implementation of its economic development drive for the actualisation of the country's push to become one of the major economic forces in 2020" (Akosile 2010). This section of the mandate is ideologically in step with the language used by Nigerian and Chinese representatives. Partnership between the two countries is interlinked with mutual economic development. What is different about this programme and the two week training is the shift in emphasis towards entrepreneurship over and above job creation. Alongside the message that Chinese firms operating in Nigeria provide jobs opportunities, is the louder exhortation for Nigerians to build their own entrepreneurial ventures that benefit from Nigerian-Chinese collaboration; in short, that Nigerian can be the authors of their own future. A key focus on this agenda, as with the new orthodoxy of entrepreneurial development across the continent more broadly, is youth (Dolan and Rajak 2015). With youth bearing the brunt of high unemployment rates in Nigeria (The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics estimates youth unemployment is 50% while the Central Bank of Nigeria estimates youth unemployment in is 80%) the promise of a new order of entrepreneurial opportunity generated through Chinese investment and engagement beckons a large segment of society (Adekunle 2013; Gaskia 2014; Nnodim 2014).

A prime example of this shift from technical training and job creation to the promotion of entrepreneurship is a partnership between the Nigeria-China Business Council (NCBA) and Dongfeng Special Vehicle (Shiyan). NCBA is an organisation that acts as a broker for Nigeria-Chinese business relationships (See Chapter 5-The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Nigeria) and Dongfeng is a Chinese car company. In 2012 NCBA signed an MOU with Dongfeng to provide vocational training and other skills to Nigerian youth. The agreement endeavoured to "enable Nigerian youths to have adequate and specialized training from the company in China which will facilitate technology transfer to Nigeria" (FMI 2012). Under rules of the agreement, the NCBA chooses candidates to send to China for training. However, after successfully completing training, participants had to return to Nigeria and start their *own* businesses. Although the NCBA and Dongfeng were the MOU's primary signatories, Nigerian local and state governments planned to work with the NCBA to help fund the participants' flights to China and other related expenses

(FMI 2012). This MOU is an example of multi-actor agreements, between government, non-governmental and corporate parties. These parties have converged around this campaign which is, ostensibly targeted at democratising the market of Chinese investment and trade, through the development of small and medium-sized enterprise. NCBA leveraged its reputation as a brokerage organisation by lending its name to the MOU while the Chinese firm now has connections to established (many private sector members of the NCBA are entrepreneurs) and future entrepreneurs.

Twinned with agreements which promote entrepreneurship to Nigeria's aspirant youth, is a focus on education which is the last pillar in the government's narrative. As I go on to explore in the next section, a raft of recent policy and MOUs concerned with education collectively conjure an imagined future for students and school children which looks to China, as they might once have done to US or Europe, as the focus of cosmopolitan modernity and opportunity. As I return to explore in Chapter 6-Ni Hao Naija), as key elements in the production of a dominant public discourse on the relationship between Nigeria and China, the vision of education projected through these MOUs has a great power to animate popular aspirations and expectations among the broad base of upper middle class Lagosians: from educators promising to equip pupils with the tools to or a successful future to programmes, to school-children themselves learning mandarin in primary schools, to eager Nigerian students studying abroad in China.

Building the Future: Creating a New Generation in Waiting

Over 1,000 Nigerians students are currently enrolled in Chinese higher education institutions (Abubakar 2013). While most students are self-funded, some have received highly coveted scholarships. This funding is provided to Nigerian graduate and postgraduate students by both the Nigerian and Chinese governments. The Bilateral Education Agreement (BEA) Awards provides the most scholarships. BEA scholarships allow students to study in a number of countries including: Russia, China, Morocco, Turkey, Algeria, Serbia, Japan, Ukraine, Cuba and Macedonia. China, Romania, and Cuba are the only three countries that have reciprocal agreements for students to study in Nigeria. Tuition and accommodation are paid for by the host country, while the Nigerian government pays a monthly stipend and other incidentals. The scholarships last for the duration of students' degree programmes, with the first year spent studying the host country language since classes are taught in the host country's official language.

Since 2000, an estimated 600 Nigerian students have received BEA scholarships (FMI 2010). In 2014, thirteen Nigerian doctoral and master's students received BEA scholarships to study in China. The scholarships ranged from four to nine years. A 2014 press release announced the 2014/2015 BEA cohort to China.

The [current] Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Dr. MacJohn Nwaobiala congratulated the awardees for the rare opportunity and enjoined them to make Nigeria proud. 'The People's Republic of China is one of the countries that grants scholarships to Nigerians annually in spite of the global economic problems and the onus is on you, scholars to appreciate them by making the best use of this rare opportunity.' Nwaobiala thanked the People's Republic of China on behalf of the Government of Nigeria, for the kind gesture and consistency in offering scholarship to Nigerians under the BEA; noting that this contributes immensely to Nigeria's manpower development. While advising the awardees to always obey the laws of the host country, he enjoined them to remain focused and 'keep in mind the aim of being in that country'. (FRN 2014)

The press release promotes the benefits of the BEA by explaining that students have this 'rare opportunity' despite a shaky economic environment. Students are also reminded that they represent Nigeria and receive the scholarship for specific purposes which they should not squander. China is commended for offering 'the kind gesture' of scholarships. The Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education, Professor Oladapo Afolabi, described "the [BEA] partnership as a great source of strength for accelerating development of the Nigerian education sector" (FMI 2010). BEA scholarships are promoted as a way for Nigerian students to gain an international education and provide leverage when looking for work in an increasingly competitive market. Young people and their families can view the BEA as an option to broaden their horizons and improve their future economic opportunities.

In addition to press releases, the BEA is advertised online in various blogs, nation-wide newspapers and on an official government website. The official government website features profiles of past recipients of the BEA award. One example is that of Mukhtar Habib, a student who received a scholarship to study in China. Habib's profile highlighted his best paper award at a Chinese geological association. The profile also features pictures of Habib alongside high ranking Chinese members of the geological association and the Nigerian ambassador to China. Habib serves as an exemplar of how much Nigerian students can achieve by studying in China; not only can they excel, but they can also interact with influential people.

Studying abroad differentiates students from cohorts who stay in Nigeria to study. Another initiative that allows Nigerian youth to study in China is through a government sponsored academics initiative. Both the Chinese and Nigerian governments provide scholarships for young

people to study acrobatics in China. CCTV English⁶ interviewed a Nigerian teenager while she studied at a Chinese sponsored acrobatics programme. The student, Tammy Aiya, described her experience as follows:

It's a rare opportunity. And I grabbed it, and I am going to use it well... I am here in China right now, studying acrobatics. It's a good opportunity to learn something different, to learn different culture and to learn a different language. (CCTV 2014)

While Tammy's interview focused on the more immediate benefits of studying in China, Ms. Li, the head of the school's foreign student department discussed future prospects for international students studying acrobatics:

Many former African students at the school have gone on to become star circus performers in their home countries....."It has been a successful move to promote our traditional art for foreign friends," he [Li] says. "Now our project has become a famous one in African countries, attracting friends and families to come back." A former student who trained at the school in 2003 went on to become the coach of Tanzania's national circus and later sent his 15-year-old daughter to the school. And a former student from Ethiopia sent his younger sister for training even though she did not receive sponsorship, says Li. "Many of them can earn a salary of more than 300,000 yuan [£31,000] every year. It can be a changing point in their lives..." (Zheng 2013)

Stories of travelling to China and learning a skill that can help a young person make a good living are tantalizing. China's participation in the BEA and acrobatics scholarship programmes provides another image of China. This image portrays China as a country that is interested in training Nigerians who will return to their country and work in a capacity that utilises the language or skills they learned in China. Similarly to entrepreneurs, students are rendered as both the beneficiaries and catalyst of future economic development in Nigeria. The education chapter (Chapter 6-Ni Hao Naija) discusses the stories of two Nigerian students who received scholarships to study in China one through the BEA and the other through an acrobatics scholarship.

Other educational programmes for young people have focused on educating students living in Nigeria. Two of these programmes were created under the umbrella of the Nigerian government's Growing Women and Girls in Nigeria (GWIN) initiative. Both of the programmes, Digital Girls and 1,000 Girls ICT Training, focus on providing technological training to young women. Additionally, both programmes triangularize the professed benefits of

⁶ CCTV English is a Chinese state run news station that is shown across the world.

Nigerian-Chinese alliances for Nigerians: employment [via big business], entrepreneurship and education.

Like most countries around the world, there is a significant disparity between men and women's access to technology. With ICT contributing to an increasingly higher percentage of GDP each year, the Nigerian government is interested in attracting more women to the sector. Both programmes strive to "demystify" technology and encourage young women to consider future careers in the ICT industry (Darabidan 2015). Digital Girls, is a secondary school programme that trains girls in a wide range of ICT modules including: web development; coding; mobile app development; PC hardware; operating systems; game development; and film making. Although the programme is solely funded by the Nigerian government, the goal of the programme is to prepare young women for jobs with IT firms in Nigeria. An increasing number of IT firms are owned by internationally headquartered multi-national firms, including those founded in China. After completion of the programme, participants receive certificates and prizes. Completing such a high profile programme can provide young women access to high tech and high paying jobs.

The second programme, 1,000 Girls is a joint initiative between The Ministry of Communication Technology and Huawei. Huawei is a multinational Chinese IT firm. The aim of the 1,000 Girls initiative is to reduce the digital divide between men and women, thus improving women's future employability skills. The initiative began in 2014 and was promoted throughout the media in news articles, blogs, social media as well as press releases and reports from Huawei and the Ministry. In a report highlighting its international efforts to bridge the digital divide, Huawei noted that it invested "US\$1.3 million which was matched by the Nigerian government with US\$1 million" (Huawei 2014: 5). Newspaper articles on the initiative included specific details including the costs for Huawei and The Ministry; benefits to the public and plans to increase the range of the programme. The Minister of Communication Technology, Omobola Johnson's, inspiration for the initiative was discussed in detail.

Mrs. Omobola Johnson is passionate about developing technology skills among women. She is worried that Nigerian females are not exposed to technology training like their male counterparts. The ratio of male to female studying and practicing engineering and other technology related courses in the country is widening daily. (This Day: 2014)

Johnson's description aims to speak right to the heart of young women and parents alike. Johnson is presented as passionate about lessening the technological gap between men and women; something that could impact young women's futures for the better. The 1,000 Girls programme

trains 1,000 young women of university age in groups of fifty. Each cohort receives training in a range of technological areas including telecommunication and transmission networks. The initial training takes place over a three day period at the Oriental Hotel, a Chinese owned hotel in Lagos (see Chapter 3-The Family Firm). Each participant receives a stipend of ₦10,000 (£35) for daily transportation and food. At the end of the year's training, the top 200 students receive additional training and "the attainment of certification as [a] Huawei Certified Datacom Associate (HCDA). The top achievers with the HCDA certification, will have priority access to Huawei Human resources pool and will stand the chance to be employed by Huawei..." (This Day: 2014).

From this group of 200 young women, the top twenty students are selected for further training in China. Huawei's West African region Vice-President Hover Gao was interviewed and his statements revealed the benefits of the initiative for both the participants and the firm. *"All the participants will be recommended by Huawei to Huawei Channel partners such as operators, ICT solutions providers and ICT departments in enterprises..."* (This Day: 2014). These initiatives help Huawei directly train and gain access to a pool of qualified employees. Huawei's investment in the programme is an investment into the firm's future as much as it is an investment into Nigeria's future. Huawei's investment aids in cultivating a strong workforce and it gains access to the best employees before competitors. Minister Johnson planned to expand the 1,000 Girls programme to partnerships with other ICT firms such as Cisco, an American headquartered IT equipment multi-national and MTN, a South African headquartered mobile telecommunication multi-national. (Iftikhar 2015). One of the 1,000 Girls participants was interviewed and her glowing quote was featured in an article about the programme

...the training is a step in the right direction. It has really exposed me to the basic knowledge on telecommunication, GSM, computer appreciation. The training has made me to be digitally included. I thank the Federal Government and Huawei for this opportunity. I urge every Nigerian girl to be part of digital inclusion in the knowledge economy. It is a way to leverage on the opportunities in ICTs.
(Vanguard 2014)

Testimonies are a key component of the public relation campaign. When a participant discusses how the initiatives such as the 1,000 Girls and the BEA scholarships have changed her life, a young person, parent or teacher reads the testimony and envisions a similar transformation occurring for themselves or a young person in their life. Participants' quotes present a particularly enticing vision of modernity and a testimony from an ordinary Nigerian helps other Nigerians connect their aspirations to the initiative and thus Nigerian-Chinese relations.

The government promotion of these initiatives helps to garner public support and interest. Parents and students will demand to participate in the programmes and seek to work in Huawei and other Chinese firms. Public support is key in the development and growth of Nigeria-Chinese relations in various sectors. Support leads to less conflict and more citizens seeking the purported benefits of engaging with Chinese counterparts.

Conclusion

This chapter laid out the multi-tiered public discourse narrative that the Nigerian government has constructed in order to gain its citizens' support for an increasing Chinese presence in Nigeria. The campaign begins with the public display of state level interactions and rests upon key areas that are used as focal points to promote the idea that aspirational Nigerians can transform their lives through interactions with China. These areas are big business; entrepreneurship and education. The campaign masterfully takes Nigerian's aspirations and turns around to sell these same aspirations in a package of Nigerian-Chinese relationships as the vehicle to make citizens' dreams come true. The campaign raises a number of questions: Is this future available for any Nigerian who wants to partake? Are these programmes inclusive or exclusive? Do they end up replicating current patterns of benefits for elites with rare slices of inclusion for the majority? These questions will be answered throughout the thesis.

The following ethnographic chapters provide insight into how Nigerians, particularly aspirational and elite Nigerians, are responding to the promises of what a future intertwined with China can bring. Each ethnographic chapter focuses one of the key areas for Nigerian engagement. I begin with big business, which is covered in two chapters that take us inside Great Northern Industrial Manufacturer's (GNIM), a Chinese firm headquartered in Lagos. There I explore the role of Nigerian senior management and GNIM's operations in Nigeria including its use of kinship and brokerage to establish and maintain relationships.

Chapter III-The Family Firm

Security guards admitted passengers of luxury chauffeured in Land Rovers, Fords and Toyota Land Cruisers through the factory gates at the Lagos headquarters of Great Northern Industrial Manufacturer (GNIM). Cars drove up to a loading bay which had been transformed from its workplace function into a party space. The effect was startling; the industrial materials were replaced with a lavish faux wooden veranda; a stage appeared covered in Chinese New Year decorations; a large flatscreen television with a karaoke system was mounted; and sumptuously laid dining tables surrounded numerous food booths. As guests stepped out of their cars they were ushered into a VIP section while others sat at tables throughout the bay. Attendees included GNIM's owners and managers; the firm's business associates; members of the Lagosian Chinese community as well as family members and guests of each group. Business associates were a mixture of people who provided goods and services to GNIM and members of foreign consulates (Chinese and Germans). The group included various nationalities including Chinese, German, Nigerian, Latin American, and South-East Asian.

As guests arrived at the party they were given a raffle ticket along with a book of vouchers to exchange for food at various booths stationed throughout the loading bay. While food was served two cultural presentations began. The first presentation was a kongfu performance given by a Chinese kongfu and language teacher at the Lagos Confucius Institute (See Chapter 6- Ni Hao Naija: Elite Futures & Chinese Language Education in Nigeria). The second was a cultural performance from a Nigerian dance and musical troupe. While the audience was enthusiastic about the kongfu performance it was the Nigerian troupe that drew guests to gather around the stage and take pictures. Guests used the latest tablets and smart phones to record the performance along with the rest of the day's proceedings.

These performances were followed by the bestowing of awards for food booths and the dispersal of raffle prizes for guests. All of the booths competed against each other for awards that ranged from most popular to best decorated. Awards and raffle prizes were handed out by the MCs along with distinguished guests: representatives from the Chinese and German consulates as well high ranking GNIM officials and their wives. During the award presentations, a nephew of the GNIM's directors along with his new wife came up to the stage to hand out prizes and certificates. Earlier in the event the newlyweds were publicly acknowledged and it was explicitly mentioned that they were in Nigeria for their honeymoon. The nephew is a part of the third generation of

GNIM but most of his work takes place in Hong Kong. By stating that the couple was in Nigeria for their honeymoon, the firm's top management sought to demonstrate to their guests that despite living in Hong Kong, the couple was invested in the future of GNIM. As the prizes for food booths were given out, representatives from each booth came to the stage to receive their certificates. The Nigerian booth was awarded twice for its cuisine and Eniafe, the Nigerian wife of one of GNIM's directors, took both opportunities to wish the company "...continued success". The German booth received a few awards due to its popularity with party goers.

There was a heavy emphasis on food, awards and gifts. Food booths served copious amount of food, some of which held special meanings in commemoration of the New Year: Chinese chicken dishes; noodles; soups; suckling roast pig; desserts and drinks. Additionally, the German booth served alcohol and bratwurst and the Nigerian booth served traditional soup/stews, rice and fried bean fritters. Most booths were run by Chinese employees with a few Nigerian employees and represented different subsidiaries within the organisation. The Nigerian booth was coordinated by Alhaji, the only Nigerian chairman of GNIM, and Eniafe. Eniafe ran the booth with the help of a few Nigerian women. The German booth was operated by diplomats from the German consulate and their spouses. The abundance of food served as a way to secure... "relationships; its giving expresses tenderness, unites groups and, and serves as an appeasement gesture to potential enemies" (Eible-Eibesfeldt quoted in Deal and Key 1998: 145). Furthermore, by providing such a sumptuous banquet, GNIM demonstrated its success as a company. As Deal and Key stated:

A bountiful table is a symbol of wealth. Food contributes to ceremoniousness in many ways-its volume, order of presentation, difficulty of procurement and preparation, economy or extravagance, degree of seasoning. (Deal and Key 1998: 145)

As was manifest that day, this is as true for companies as it is for domestic hosts. The loading bay symbolically becomes the hearth where the company directors and their wives host the booths which provides food to their guests. Indeed, from food and hospitality to ceremonial awards and cultural performance, the reciprocal role of ritual gift exchange runs through the event and underscores the central place of social and familial/virtual kin relations in the firm's operations. The firm's bountiful display did not end with food; there were also numerous raffle prizes that ranged from iPhones and Android phones to blenders and kettles to flat screen and televisions to small refrigerators and microwaves. There was a performative nature to the party, which began close to the scheduled time of twelve noon and ended un-organically when the MCs announced the event had come to an end a few hours later. While there were a few stragglers, most people

left almost immediately. Deal and Key discuss “orchestrating the event” and liken occasions to theatre complete with scripts, props and actors. (Deal and Key 1998: 140). GNIM’s Chinese New Year celebration is a highly choreographed from the opening dragon dance to the final closing announcement.

What GNIM is signalling is not just that the firm is a major, very profitable and successful company, but that GNIM is at the same time a family firm which uses the same rituals of feasting and generous hosting to celebrate Chinese New Year as a family. Beneath the celebratory surface of happy families and enjoyment are the micro-politics of Nigerian-Chinese relations within a Chinese firm located in Nigeria. Critical elements of this relationship are race, kinship, networks and power. The extremely complex politics of a Chinese owned family firm plays out through the organization, but particularly through the experiences of Nigerian upper management. Nigerians represent the majority of GNIM’s employees but they are a minority within the firm’s management.

In the previous chapter I presented the government’s grand narrative for Nigerian-Chinese interactions. This narrative promotes big business as the first avenue for Nigerians to achieve their aspirations. In this chapter I seek to analyse the promise of big business ethnographically. GNIM is a prime example of Chinese big business with headquarters in Lagos and its various subsidiaries located throughout Nigeria. Whereas an increasing number of Chinese firms have recently entered Nigeria, GNIM is not one of them. The firm has operated in Nigeria for over forty years and has continued to expand with a third generation of the family preparing to take over the reins of the firm. What role have Nigerians played in GNIM’s success? How do Nigerians benefit from working for the firm? How has GNIM been successful in Nigeria? What tools does it rely upon to ensure its success? I argue that GNIM utilises social relations, performance, ritual, ceremony, gift giving and kinship to ensure its operations in Nigeria. The tableau of the Chinese New Year party on the grounds of GNIM’s encapsulates the intersection (and at times tension) between kinship relations of a family firm and the increasingly international outlook of younger managers that are at the heart of GNIM’s elite exchanges.

Flexible Kinship-Inclusion & Exclusion

Family Tree

Many of the early Chinese firms in Africa were created by immigrants from Hong Kong. Great Northern Industrial Manufacturers (GNIM) was one of them. The firm was founded in Lagos in the late 1960's by 'Papa' Yang, along with his sons and two nephews. What began as a small business that produced and sold ceramic tiles has developed into a multi-industry manufacturing and service corporation. There are over twelve subsidiaries under the GNIM umbrella of businesses including: ceramic tiles, metal nails, roofing sheets, steel pipes, residential and industrial wood products, and more recently a power plant and a luxury hotel. GNIM also has a farm designated for internal use. Except for a tile company, the rest of the businesses have always been privately held. As a result, the firm is not required to publicly report financial details such as annual revenue. Matti, a member of the third generation of GNIM, describes annual turnover as "significant but confidential".

GNIM factories and businesses are located primarily in South-Eastern Nigeria. It also has an office in Hong Kong and is exploring the possibility of expanding to other African countries. All finished goods from each factory are transported to headquarters by land and distributed for wholesale purchase. Although transportation in Nigeria is challenging due to poor infrastructure, GNIM management insists upon this method in order to maintain direct control of product distribution. The headquarters in Lagos, in addition to being the administrative command centre of GNIM, also houses the sales office as well as the company's production line for rolled steel. Wholesale customers come in person to the headquarters to purchase goods. These transactions are frequently still paid for in cash. GNIM's headquarters covers a city block from front to back. The complex also includes the residences for Chinese employees and two clinics: one for Nigerian employees and one for Chinese employees that are staffed by Nigerian and Chinese health care professionals, respectively. All expatriates who work at the headquarters live within the compound including the top directors. The boundaries of domestic spaces for expatriate employees and managers are tightly connected to the managerial headquarters. Expatriate employees who work on other sites live at their worksites but regularly visit the company headquarters for special occasions and thus establish and maintain the company's centralized social configuration which seeks to cultivate a strong sense of cohesion across the firm's various sites.

GNIM is described throughout media and public discussions as a ‘Chinese company’. Examining the firm in historical and political contexts provides insight into the complexities associated with this identity. Papa Yang came from Hong Kong to Nigeria in the 1960’s. At the time, Hong Kong was still under British rule and Nigeria had recently gained independence from British rule. China was yet to begin formal diplomatic relations with Nigeria until the 1970’s. The common ties of British rule meant that it was not uncommon for citizens of Hong Kong to move to former or current British colonies, including Nigeria. Some of these business men first moved from mainland China after the civil war, primarily from Shanghai to Hong Kong. They set up businesses in Hong Kong and then moved abroad (Chen et al 2016:3; Liu 2017).

Nigeria became the home to Hong Kong expatriates who set up businesses in various industries including textiles and steel mills (Broggi 2016:130). Two major advantages of setting up a business in a current or former British territory was that these businesses received less trade barriers than they did at home and “... it was easier for the colonial government and British banks to obtain information about local conditions” (Hong Kong Memory 2012). Armed with this information gained through a social network in government and banking, business people like Yang came to Nigeria.

GNIM’s approach to navigating changing political tides by working with ‘Any Government in Power’ (AGIP) (discussed in this chapter) has helped the firm to maintain and expand its business in Nigeria for nearly half a century. During this time, Hong Kong also went through political changes, primarily the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule in 1997. As of 2010, one of GNIM’s directors, a member of the Yang family, served on the board of the West Africa Council for the Promotion of China’s Peaceful Reunification (WAPCPR). The council’s philosophy is that China is one unit made up of mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. (Xinhua 2004). To have a member of its board serve on the council highlights GNIM’s deep connection to the Chinese community in Nigeria and abroad.

As I will discuss later in chapter four (“Our Friend for Eternity”: Guanxi, Brokers and Corporate Gift-Giving), GNIM utilizes several social networks including Nigerian, Chinese, and German business partners. I argue that while GNIM’s identity as a Chinese firm is strong and deeply rooted in its relationships with the both Chinese community and government in Nigeria, the firm also has other another important facet to its identity. The firm is headquartered in Nigeria and is staffed by mostly Nigerian employees. Although most Nigerian employees are not in leadership or managerial positions, the firm must think of their needs and the labour regulations which are mandated by the Nigerian government. The firm operates in the Nigerian business environment and as such must remain adaptable to this environment. GNIM is a Chinese firm, but it is also a Nigerian company and it is through the lens of this dual-identity that I examine the role of Nigerian upper management in GNIM as well as the role of brokerage in its operations.

Today Papa Yang is in his nineties. He has retired and moved back home to Hong Kong. GNIM is now led by three Chinese directors and one Nigerian director: Yang’s son Eric; two nephews Antonio and Stephen; and Alhaji Lateef. None of the Chinese directors are referred to by their Chinese names, but instead use anglicized first names and most employees refer to them as ‘Mr’ in addition to their anglicized first name. As Papa Yang’s son, Eric owns more shares than his

cousins Stephen and Antonio. He also serves as the firm's managing director and frequently travels back and forth between Hong Kong and Nigeria. Eric is often interviewed on behalf of the firm. Antonio arrived in Nigeria in his teens and spends most of his time in Nigeria. Stephen who is the eldest of the three cousins is in his seventies and is extremely popular amongst the organisation's employees. He spends most of the year in Nigeria and travels the country visiting the organizations various subsidiaries. The Nigerian chairman Alhaji Lateef, has been with the firm for over forty years and worked his way up from mid-level management.

GNIM's second generation has begun to focus on succession and training an emerging third generation to take over the family firm. One of Eric's children Evan, works for the firm in Nigeria. Stephen has four children. Mattias (also known as Matti), one of Stephen's children also works in Nigeria. Antonio has no children. The firm has an office in Hong Kong where other members of the family work. As discussed earlier, GNIM has a complex set of social practices that it uses to operate in Nigeria. Broadly speaking, GNIM is structured according to a centralized vertical hierarchy with second generation directors and third generation management at the top.

Although some firms bring a cadre of Chinese employees over to Nigeria and only hire a small number of local workers, an increasing number of Chinese firms operating across Africa hire a majority of their employees from host countries, including Nigeria. The majority of the employees within Chinese enterprises that Mohan and Lampert studied in Ghana and Nigeria, were local workers (2013). "While management positions tend to be dominated by Chinese staff, having at least some locals in these roles is often considered useful, particularly in negotiating the demands of government agencies and officials and in recruiting, managing, and motivating local workers, agents, and subcontractors" (Mohan and Lampert 2013: 105). GNIM follows a similar pattern with the majority of the firm's 1,000 plus employees originating from Nigeria. Nigerian employees work in low level positions while the minority number of Chinese employees work in some form of management (floor, factory, etc...) or as office workers. Some Nigerians also work as team leaders who serve as liaisons between teams of blue collar employees and their Chinese managers. This is usually as far as Nigerians can rise in management at GNIM.

There are a few exceptions of executive level Nigerians who work with GNIM such as a quarry foreman and external lawyers who are on call for each director. Within the firm there are four senior level Nigerian executives: Solomon, Alhaji, Segun and Matti. Matti is a grand-nephew of Papa Yang and the son of Stephen and Eniafe. Stephen is the eldest director of GNIM and Eniafe is a Nigerian business woman. As such Matti is a part of both the Chinese and Nigerian

upper management groups of GNIM. GNIM's Nigerian upper management, particularly Solomon, Alhaji and Segun, negotiate on behalf of the firm with unions, government officials, community members and other high level associates. Alhaji has been informally nicknamed 'the Nigerian face' of GNIM due to his role as GNIM's chairman in which he brokers on behalf of the firm at various senior level meetings. Solomon and Segun's roles involve interacting with external and internal parties on behalf of the firm. Matti is in training to take up a directorship when the second generation retires.

The Nigerian Face(s)?

In the 1970's when former President Obasanjo was first in power he mandated that all foreign firms in Nigeria have at least one Nigerian director as part of the indigenisation process.

The Indigenization Decree, an important element of the national development plan, seeks to arrest the exploitation of the Nigerian economy by outside forces. For instance, it excludes foreigners from all but the largest wholesale enterprises, and even in these, Nigeria is to control 40 percent of the shares. (Jarmon1988: 37)

The decree was meant to reduce the degree of foreign control over the Nigerian economy, primarily British, Indian and Lebanese interests, which were dominant in the country at the time. There were exceptions for people of Lebanese descent born in Nigeria. They were allowed to apply for Nigerian citizenship which entitled Lebanese merchants to operate smaller firms in sectors excluded to foreigners. Additionally some Lebanese business people made deals with Nigerian business people or government agencies in order to become business partners (Collins 1980: 146). The decree resulted in a variety of changes to investment and business in Nigeria; this included mandating local incorporation of all foreign firms in Nigeria. Additionally, thirty three types business were restricted from foreign ownership if they had less than ₦4,000,000 [£14,916] in capital and turnover exceeding ₦1,000,000 [£3,721]; and all foreign firms were mandated to have 40% Nigerian equity (Collins 1980: 141). These regulations were applied to a wide range of industries including newspaper publishing; rice milling; blending and bottling of alcoholic drinks; meat and fish companies; supermarkets and department stores; and manufacturing industries including furniture, matches, paints and cement (Collins 1980: 141). The indigenisation process was not an easy one and it consisted of delays from foreign firms. Nigerian elites also ensured that their friends either purchased foreign firms outright or purchases shares in firms before the general public had access to them. In some cases Nigerian and foreign business people worked together to create the appearance that they met the government's criteria

that required 40% of Nigerian interests in firms; when in actuality they did not (Collins 1980: 153).

The decree mandated that foreign firms have at least one Nigerian director. Some firms began to focus on placing Nigerians in various senior management positions, particularly as human resources directors, managing directors and board chairpersons. GNIM hired Solomon as the human resources manager and Alhaji was promoted to chairman of the board. These are key positions of brokerage where the firm is represented by Nigerians to negotiate on its behalf with fellow Nigerians. But does Nigerian senior management serve as tokens who are simply put in place to abide by government regulations and create the illusion of inclusion? I utilise Murray's research into the use of black empowerment firms to examine this point. In her example, black empowerment firms were used to improve economic opportunities for black South African's with the support of white company directors.

The white directors' motive for embracing black empowerment is to improve their company's 'white only' corporate image, to improve their distribution networks, to get blacks to control difficult black labour, to get blacks to make black redundancies, to gain control of black workers' pension fund monies and to generally improve social stability whilst benefiting the status quo. (Murray 2000: 197)

Nigeria's indigenisation decree had similar effects on non-Nigerian firms. Companies were viewed as having a vested interest in Nigeria through the use of high ranking Nigerian employees. These employees interacted with Nigerians outside of the company on their firm's behalf. Additionally, Nigerian directors and managers could discipline the workforce and serve as internal brokers to handle challenging situations on behalf of foreign management. It could almost be believed that the firm was rooted in Nigeria instead of having foreign links. GNIM's usage of Nigerian top management follows a similar path: the firm has the image of keeping Nigerian interests in mind with Nigerians in key positions that provide brokerage links between the firm and the government as well as the firm and employees. From this perspective, Nigerian upper management are mere instruments that are utilised to provide authenticity to foreign firms. I argue that Murray's research reduces Africans' roles to tokenism and black washing; and in the Nigerian context, a 'Nigerian-face'. Murray's research ignores the more complex and significant use of kinship and powers dynamics at play within a firm like GNIM. As we will see through the following discussion of Nigerian senior level management within GNIM, this not a black and white issue.

The Old Guard

As the head of GNIM's human resources department, Solomon handled the hiring and employee affairs for all Nigerians throughout the most of the firm's subsidiaries. His offices were at GNIM headquarters where he worked alongside his deputy manager, who was also Nigerian. Solomon, his deputy and the rest of the human resources department in Lagos hired Nigerian employees while Chinese employees were hired by the Hong Kong office. Solomon's work revolved around understanding, implementing and negotiating issues related to wages, trade union regulations and recruitment. Like Alhaji, a large amount of time was spent away from headquarters, attending meetings with government officials, unions and other organizations in relation to labour regulations. During the fuel subsidy strikes in January of 2012, Solomon and his deputy were in contact with trade union officials and oversaw the stoppage of production at GNIM's headquarters when industrial action was unanimously called by trade unions state wide. As a country with over three hundred ethnic groups, workplaces in Nigeria are extremely diverse. GNIM's choice of a Nigerian human resources head signalled the firm's sensitivity towards this diversity and other issues within the Nigerian marketplace.

When his brother suggested Alhaji interview for a job at GNIM in 1968, Alhaji was not enthusiastic about working for a Chinese firm. "I gave him [Alahaji's brother] a tough time because I didn't believe in working for a Chinese firm". Nonetheless after an interview with Papa Yang, Alhaji felt comfortable enough to accept GNIM's job offer. In the early years, Alhaji was the only Nigerian in management. Because the company was still young, Alhaji found himself doing work well beyond the scope of his role in public relations. "I was doing all the PR [public relations] and all...I was the one who went to the airport" to greet Chinese employees as they arrived. Alhaji distinctly remembered picking up Matti's father, Stephen when he first arrived in Nigeria over forty years ago. Throughout the years Alhaji held various jobs including public relations manager, personnel manager and administrator. Today he serves as the chairman of the board. Alhaji's promotion to his current position came after the indigenization decree was created. The terms of the decree did not apply to GNIM vis a vis the goods they manufactured or the size of the firm, but like all most firms GNIM had to have a Nigerian on its board of directors. When the decree was first established, Nigerian directors and chairperson were usually drawn from one of three categories: "professional career managers, some of whom had put [in] many years" at the same firm; "highly-placed persons who had retired from public service and individuals with relatively substantial equity interests in their respective firms" (Adejugebe 1984: 586). Like most of the Nigerian chairman in foreign firms, Alhaji came from the first category of Nigerian employees who "ascended gradually to the top, to be appointed chairman and/or

managing director in the wake of the Nigerian indigenization exercise” (Adejugbe 1984: 586). Although Alhaji became chairman of GNIM, he acknowledged that he had less say in company matters than the other three directors who are blood kin. This places Alhaji in an ambiguous position where he fully contributes to the firm yet does not receive the same rights as his fellow directors. This uncertainty has continued for decades and relates to the low numbers of Nigerians in senior management.

Matti explained that the reason for low numbers of Nigerians in senior management is because of fear of theft and misappropriation of money. “Having Nigerians in senior management is a trust issue... Give some of these guys power and they’ll embezzle and connive”. While visiting GNIM offices I heard stories of when GNIM used to hire Nigerians as mid-level managers. Every story painted Nigerian managers as opportunistic people who colluded with Nigerian subordinates in order to cheat the company. Even when the stories did not directly involve GNIM, they were used as cautionary tales for GNIM senior management to take heed and learn from. One such example was a story that both Matti and his father Stephen recounted on separate occasions. Once upon a time, another Chinese firm that entered the Nigerian marketplace around the same time as GNIM hired a Nigerian employee. The Nigerian employee rose in the ranks of the firm, from an assistant “errand boy” to hold a position in senior management. After his last promotion it was discovered that the man embezzled enough money “to open up a restaurant and buy a car for his girlfriend.” When this story was related to me several years had passed but the firm still referred to the “betrayal” and held it up as a reason to not hire more Nigerian management. This story and similar stories I heard from various research participants paint an essentialised, uncontested picture of Nigerians. This picture characterizes Nigerians as corruptible and ready to forfeit loyalty as soon as a profitable situation arises. Alhaji, Solomon and Segun have been deemed as the rare few. GNIM upper management, particularly those in the Yang family have a Highlander mentality where there can only be a limited number of Nigerians allowed to ascend into the firm’s inner circle.

Alhaji is currently in his 70’s yet he still maintains a busy schedule and starts most of the day at GNIM headquarters with meetings and breakfast. He also fulfils his obligations as a community leader back in his home village. Alhaji’s work in his village and at GNM both involve brokerage and mediating between parties. As the first executive level Nigerian employee Alhaji became the Nigerian face of the firm and interacted with the government and the public on behalf of GNIM and continues to do so. He does this by connecting GNIM with multiple arms of the Nigerian

government. Since GNIM's inception in the late 1960's there have been numerous regime changes (presidential and military dictatorships). In order to continue operating and growing, the firm decided to remain neutral and create relationships with whatever government happened to be in power. GNIM upper management colloquially referred to this as the 'Any Government in Power' (AGIP) policy. In this vein directors served on various public and private boards. For instance Alhaji serves as a trustee on Ogun State's State Security Fund board. Ogun state is Alhaji's home state as well as the location of a number of GNIM's subsidiaries. This is a common practice for firms to have their high ranking members serve on the boards of other organizations which have some connection or benefit to them (Collins 1980: 154). In the case of GNIM, its role as a business leader has given the firm some political entry and access to other organizations which in turn helps to serve its business needs.

The link between business and social capital emerges as a central trope in the story of GNIM. Alhaji stated that:

Psychologically speaking [you] lay your cards on the table and tell people what are really your problems. And along the way people we come across, people who become our friend for eternity. As a result if we are looking for anything we do not struggle.

This highlights the centrality of the firm's use of guanxi (networks of relationships) and 'social work' (making connections and maintaining relationships) to its business practice and the mutual dependence of moral and economic relations. GNIM's use of brokerage and its social relationships will be discussed in Chapter 4-'Our Friend for Eternity'. Will the third generation of GNIM upper management take on the social practices and management styles exhibited by the second generation?

Young Bucks-The Third Generation

Family firms mobilize family members. But family members surely do not permit their own mobilization as purely unproblematic extensions of kinship obligations. Members are not, after all, purely kinship beings bereft of tactical intentions of their own. Clearly, not all family members prefer to work for the family firm. (Stewart 2003: 389-390)

GNIM's second generation leadership extends beyond Papa Yang's children and includes other family members. As such, the third generation of the firm's leadership will follow a similar pattern. Succession within family firms decreases as generations go by, with only 30% of family firms continuing after the first generation and only 10-15% continuing between the second and third generation (Collins 2012b: 5). GNIM's second generation directors are keen to ensure that the firm survives into the third generation and beyond; consequently, the third generation is being

groomed to take over from the second generation. Traditionally one of the major predictors of succession is birth and position, but these factors do not always play a role in succession planning. Matti and Segun are not the oldest in their respective families, but they are in the first line of succession for the third generation. As with other family firms, not all Yang family members participate in the business; some family members have worked in the business and stayed and others have never worked for the firm. In family businesses, family members can leave by choice or through force after conflict (Collins et al. 2012). For example, Matti's eldest brother previously worked with the firm in Nigeria, but he didn't enjoy working in Nigeria and subsequently moved abroad. Matti, who is the youngest of his father's children, is the only one of his siblings directly working with GNIM in Nigeria.

Succession in GNIM is cultivated through a mixture of education, guidance, experiential learning, and freedom. I will explore the process of cultivation through the examples of Segun and Matti. As the quote above from Stewart asserts, family members are not emotionless pawns solely acting on behalf of the family. Even when working on behalf of the firm, family members bring their own motivations and ideas to each situation. Successive generations, like the third-generation members of GNIM, work to build upon the firm's success while simultaneously attempting to change ingrained behaviours and protocols created by previous generations.

At least one of Alhaji's children was expected to follow in his footsteps and work at GNIM. The one child who did so, is his son Segun. At the age of ten Segun moved to the States where he lived for over seventeen years with his twin brother and an older brother. After graduating from university in the States, where he studied management and marketing, Segun returned to Nigeria. Segun described his return as a "culture shock" on two levels: readjusting to Nigeria and working within a Chinese firm. He declared "It's not easy working for a Chinese organisation". Although Alhaji is not a blood member of the Yang family, the family considers him to be kin. Therefore kinship is extended to Segun and he has been enfolded into the Yang family. After he moved back to Nigeria Segun initially worked as an apprentice with Eric, one of the directors, in overseeing all of the firm's worksites and factories.

His first position was as a trainee manager/director of sorts. His apprenticeship entailed routinely travelling to various GNIM subsidiaries, where he learned about how each site functioned from top to bottom. Segun stated that "they [the top management] expect you to know everything from the littlest detail". At one point he was asked to figure out why a large piece of construction

equipment stopped working. This was not something Segun expected he would need to understand as a manager. GNIM's approach to training new generations is not uncommon.

Family managers may no longer work their way up from the shop floor, but an exposure to varied aspects of the business is still seen as having a great value. Many family businesses consciously give their family managers a breadth of professional experiences by moving them through a sequence of jobs in the organization. (Kenyon-Rouvinez and Aronoff 2005: 25)

Although Segun had experience working in the States; a business degree; and a high level position within GNIM, it took time for the second generation to let him work independently. According to Segun, "little by little they [directors] trust you to negotiate deals". In 2008, Segun was given a new position as head of public relations for the Eastern Jewel Hotel, GNIM's luxury hotel. The hotel was a perfect place for Segun given his interest and education in management and marketing. This position is reminiscent of his father's early work with GNIM which also included public relations duties.

Segun also shared similarities with Solomon. At the time of research, Segun had been promoted to work as the hotel's human resources manager, but his day to day duties went beyond human resources. He often acted as a quasi-manager of the entire hotel by solving problems between hotel upper management and blue-collar employees. Segun also acted as the intermediary between the hotel's management and GNIM's directors. He was later formally promoted to a position which formalised all of his duties: co-manager of the Eastern. Segun's co-manager was Alfred, a German employee who started off as the manager for the hotel's restaurants. Again, it is important to note that Solomon was the head of human resources for all other areas of GNIM; meaning that all human resources management for GNIM besides the hiring of Chinese employees was handled by Nigerian employees. This positioning of Nigerians in human resources roles indicates the crucial role top Nigerian employees play as an intermediaries between GNIM upper management and Nigerian employees; the Nigerian government and other external actors.

As the son of another director, Matti's story provides an interesting counterpart to Segun's. Matti's father Stephen, is one of Papa Yang's nephews and a director; his mother is Eniafe, a Nigerian business woman. The pair met over thirty years ago when Eniafe's mother was a distributor for one of GNIM's product lines. Although she trained as a nurse Eniafe helped her mother by coordinating different facets of her business. During one of Eniafe's buying trips she

visited GNIM where she met Stephen. After the pair married Eniafe created her own business, which she still owns. Part of her product range includes GNIM goods.

Matti, who is in his early thirties, was born and raised in Nigeria. He moved to Canada for university, where he earned bachelor and master's degrees; then subsequently worked in the construction industry in order to gain experience before returning to Nigeria to work for the family firm. Although he still owns a home in Canada and travels back and forth a few times a year, in 2011 Matti began to spend most of his time back in Nigeria. Similarly to Segun, Matti took some time to adjust to working within a Chinese firm in Nigeria. Matti also went through an apprenticeship with the firm before carving out his own area of expertise. Mentoring and apprenticeships are ways older generations try to guarantee successful continuity between generations (Nicholson and Björnberg 2006: 113). Matti's mentor was his father Stephen. Stephen is the director that travels the most around Nigeria. He is well liked by both Chinese and Nigerian employees as well as the local traditional leaders who allow GNIM to setup operations in their villages and towns (See Chapter 4-'Our Friend for Eternity'). After completing the apprenticeship Matti began to focus on his area of expertise. He described his position and those of other members in the third generation like Evan and Segun, as "...flexible...you do your own [project] and claim what you want to work on." Matti's area of interest is construction and sourcing and as such he oversaw sand/quarry developments and granite projects.

Kinship-Boundaries & Limitations

The inclusion of Alhaji, Solomon and Segun as kin provides the three with some familial privileges. They are invited to family events and are treated as members of the firm's inner circle. Concepts of family are "flexible and permeable" and as far back as the 18th century family "included kin, but they were not necessarily exclusively comprised of kin, and there were also 'families' which included no kin at all" (Tadmor 2001: 272). White argues that in some groups kinship is "...not necessarily a correlate of biogenetic or agnatic ties but rather a culturally defined domain. What is shared is not blood, but labour and obligation" (White 2000: 125). Carsten lobbied for anthropologists to go beyond the narrow confines of traditional kinship research and explore 'relatedness' (Carsten 2000). Relatedness allows for a much richer and nuanced understanding of how people define family and relationships with others.

Kinship based on relatedness has been traced back to both Chinese and Nigeria as well as other West African countries. Chinese traditional usage of relatedness can occur for a variety of reasons. “Chinese valued kin relations so much that they frequently extended them by creating fictive kinship bonds, pretending that nonrelatives were kinsmen to expand the circle of trusted intimates.....Historical Chinese manhood is inseparable from this dense network of real and fictive kinship ties” (Hinsch 2013: 7). Schak describes a form of kinship where men are adopted into a family to avoid not having a male heir (Schak 1988: 133). Stafford's research into kinship in China focused on relatedness as a complex and inclusive approach to understanding key relationships in Chinese society. He argued that solely focusing on traditional anthropological conceptions of patrilineal descent ignores equally important roles of “.... ‘the cycle of yang’ (which centres mostly on parent-child relationships) and ‘the cycle of laiwan’ (which centres mostly on relationships between friends, neighbours and acquaintances). In both cycles, the production of relatedness (often through rather everyday and/or domestic transactions) is clearly seen.....” (Stafford 2000: 57).

Nigeria and other West African countries also rely on relatedness to expand upon and delineate the boundaries between those inside and outside of the family and friends circle. In Nigeria, Yoruba culture “....include[s] networks of alliances and fictive kin is a form of social, capital, cultural and economic ‘capital’.... They operate the popular kin networks to enhance their ‘access to opportunities, information, material resources and social status...’ ” (Agwuele 2009: 60). This use of kinship also extends to the other Nigerian ethnic groups. Meagher’s research highlighted Igbo traders’ use of relatedness helps to mitigate the risks of long distance trading by including a wide ranging group of people in kinship circle. (Meagher 2010: 35). GNIM utilises kinship in a similar manner.

Chabal and Daloz’s research linked relatedness and kinship to economic needs.

The basic reference unit in Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, remains family- and kin-based: it is the fundamental ‘circle of trust’ within which individuals operate. Political elites seek to establish principles of mutual aid, of patron-client reciprocity, based on the model of kin and family relations. (Chabal and Daloz 1999:27)

The similarities between Chinese and Nigerian kinship practices allow for GNIM to use relatedness in a manner which is familiar to Nigerian management. The firm’s approach to kinship extends to relationships created through a mixture of both blood ties and those that are based on “labour and obligation” (White 2000: 125) which are utilised to help operate the firm. Despite this approach, the opportunities for other Nigerians to become a part of the Yang family

are severely limited with few opportunities for Nigerians to become mid-level managers let alone become senior managers. Alhaji is acutely aware of his unique position as a Nigerian member of the Yang family whose son is a part of the firm's succession.

I started with their father; the Yang family and the Lateef [Alhaji's surname] family have become one. If you get to my house [in the village] you see [Papa] Yang's photo with his wife; we get on well with them. We're [now] passing the management to the third generation.

In 2011 when Daniel, a member of the third generation who works from the Hong Kong office, married in Hong Kong. The Yang's invited Alhaji; some business partners and dignitaries including the governor of Alhaji's home state to the wedding. Alhaji's visit was the latest in a number of visits he made to Hong Kong since becoming a member of the Yang family. While Alhaji mostly spoke positively about his relationship with the Yang family, he acknowledged that the firm did not hire enough Nigerians in upper management.

"It's high time we start hiring managers from outside." Alhaji

Alhaji, Solomon and Segun all expressed a desire to see more Nigerians in management. According to Stewart, when a firm utilises 'kinship logic', where the reliance on family hiring supersedes market logic this ultimately impacts various areas of the business including recruitment and hiring (Stewart 2003: 386). A focus on kinship logic can lead to the reduction of "...the ability of non-kin and disadvantaged kin to make optimal use of their talents in the internal labour markets" (Stewart 2003: 386). Although most of GNIM's senior management thinks that they are protecting the firm from potential fraud and cheating which they associate with Nigerian managers, GNIM risks missing out on talented employees who could positively impact the organisation.

Solomon interrogated the stories of mistrust of Nigerians in society at large and questioned Chinese business practices. Solomon questioned the ethics and trustworthiness of Chinese management in general. "What they practice there [China] they can't practice here...." As the human resources head Solomon's concern was with labour practices. In his professional capacity he heard stories of Chinese organization who sought to ignore Nigerian labour laws and prevent Nigerian workers from forming unions. Nigerian labour unions work to ensure that businesses meet the minimum wage of the city/state where they operate. The minimum wage for Lagos is ₦15,000 Naira a month (£50). Some Nigerian and Chinese firms try to avoid paying employees minimum wage. Solomon argued that this behaviour made Nigerians mistrust Chinese firms. He

also noted that the mistrust was mutual. “Chinese view everything bad [as coming] from the Nigerian” side.

The recounting of cautionary tales served to legitimize fears on both sides of the relationships. When Solomon spoke of Chinese attempts to break Nigerian laws, he stated concerns I heard from other Nigerians. As a high ranking employee of a Chinese firm, Solomon mixed these concerns with the positive and negative experiences he had as a senior manager within a Chinese firm. This led him to conclude the Chinese presence as necessary and manageable through the vigilance of Nigerian governance. Solomon believed that Chinese business interests were helpful to the Nigerian economy. “Without the Asians we would [economically] collapse...even with corruption the Chinese are necessary business partners. The benefit to working in a Chinese firm is job security; with Chinese firms there is continuity.” He stressed the role of Nigerians including himself in making sure foreign firms followed labour laws.

Solomon’s statements compared to Alhaji’s sentiments of being a member of the Yang family highlight the liminality of Nigerian upper management with GNIM. After years of working for the firm, ascending to upper management and being included in the family, the sense of otherness still exists. The fears that the three Chinese directors had about hiring more Nigerian managers seemed to face no reflective interrogation from the directors themselves. Instead the stories are referenced as solid proof for past and future Nigerian behaviour. Despite this, Alhaji, Solomon and Segun all voiced the need for more Nigerians in higher positions within the firm.

I now move from the discussion of kinship and succession to an analysis of GNIM’s social relations with internal and external actors. I argue that the firm utilises social capital and paternalism in order to navigate the Nigerian marketplace.

Networks-Using & Building Social Capital

The Sagamu *industrial complex*, located in Ogun state, is less than an hour and a half away from GNIM headquarters. The land for the industrial complex *was* acquired in the early 2000’s. Around that time former President Obasanjo took a tour of OmoIgbara, GNIM’s wood factory located in Ogun state. Obasanjo was impressed with the factory and suggested that the then governor of Ogun state, Olusegun Osoba, provide land for GNIM to expand into another business. Matti stressed that GNIM “still bought it [the land]” but through Osoba’s help the firm

was able to secure the land for purchase. Osoba's successors have been less welcoming to some new Chinese firms which have had their land seized by the government. A Chinese firm's land that was located near the Sagamu complex was seized despite fencing off the property and planning to build on the land. Property values increased not long after GNIM acquired its land and the area quickly developed.

The Sagamu complex holds a fifty-two megawatts power plant, tile factory, nail factory; a steel rolling mill; housing for Chinese employees and a forest which GNIM plans to develop along with another steel rolling mill in the future. The firm was also considering whether or not it should transfer its pipe factory to Sagamu. GNIM received an Independent Power Producer licence to build and run the power plant which it ran using a total of six industrial generators. The firm contracted a German purchasing house to buy the generators and computer program used to control the generators. The power plant was funded in part through a loan of ₦ 1 billion [over £3.6 million] from the Central Bank of Nigeria's Bank of Industry Intervention Fund for Power Firms (Alli 2013). In order to help stimulate the economy, the intervention fund is given to businesses in various sectors. Loans are repaid at low single digit interest rates. According to a survey of Nigerian business people, the fund was difficult to attain due to a number of issues such as a "cumbersome application process, not meeting requirements and financial constraints", and not even knowing that the fund existed (Oniyitan 2012). This is where Alhaji's aforementioned statement re-emerges.

Psychologically speaking [you] lay your cards on the table and tell people what are really your problems. And along the way people we come across, people who become our friend for eternity. As a result if we are looking for anything we do not struggle.

A firm like GNIM with its size, years in business and connections, would be in a far better position than smaller businesses to hear about the fund through its network; understand how to navigate the bureaucratic application process; and present a viable plan.

The Sagamu industrial complex is surrounded by residential developments whose residential organisations negotiated with GNIM to provide infrastructure for the area. The firm considers such projects to be a form of community relations. On the surface, the firm's response to its Sagamu neighbours is reminiscent of when it entered Cross Rivers State. In the 1990's GNIM opened a logging firm in a rainforest in Cross Rivers State. The logging operations spanned over 200 square miles and included a plant on the bank of a river (Oates1999: 171; Madeley 1999:

79). In negotiations with local villages GNIM offered “to build clinics and schools, provide college scholarships and support football teams” (Oates 171). Despite agreements with some local villages and local and international NGO’s, some community groups heavily opposed the logging operations due to environmental damage. GNIM was also faced with accusations of bribery and other misconduct. (Oates1999: 171; Madeley 1999: 79; Earth Island Journal). In 2004 after years of campaigns against GNIM’s logging operations, the governor of Cross Rivers States ordered GNIM to close its operations. Conversely, GNIM’s interactions with its Sagamu neighbours are embedded in brokerage. In order to gain tacit approval for the project, GNIM utilised brokerage in its interaction with the community. I return to this discussion in the next chapter which explores GNIM’s complex use of brokerage.

As a firm operating in Nigeria for nearly fifty years, GNIM has developed connections to various communities within the country these are primarily Nigerian, Chinese and German communities but they also work with other counterparts as needed. These communities are wide-ranging but usually involve business and government actors. For instance the firm has an interest in the Africa Finance Corporation, a private bank which focuses on economic development of Africa through business. GNIM is one of the shareholders along with the Central Bank of Nigeria; top pan-African banks and other organisations. Eric and Antonio, two of GNIM’s the three Yang family directors, serve on the board of directors.

Additionally, the firm conducts business with companies from other countries like the German firm that helped to acquire the generators and computers for the power plant. GNIM is also a highly respected member of the Chinese community in Lagos. In the Chinese community. In 2012, The Eastern served as the venue for a Lagosian Chinese community events including a reception for the Chinese Consul General and a Chinese Moon (Autumn Festival) celebration. Both events were attended by prominent members of the Chinese community in Lagos. Additionally, Chinese consulate officials attend GNIM’s annual Chinese New Year party.

GNIM also participates in Nigerian events in Lagos and Ogun states. In the autumn of every year a delegation of GNIM employees attends one of the largest festivals in West Africa, the Ojude-Oba festival in Ogun State. As a member of the larger expatriate community GNIM operates a charity food booth at an exclusive festival that celebrates Lagos’s various expatriate communities. Each year the expatriate community of Lagos holds the festival on the grounds of the private British International School to support Nigerian charities. Most of the attendees are either

expatriates or elite Nigerians. One of the newer community events the firm participates in is the China Bridge language competition. (See Chapter 6- Ni Hao Naija: Elite Futures & Chinese Language Education in Nigeria). The competition was first held in 2012 and representatives from the firm attended and served as judges. GNIM's success and longevity is due in part to the firm's various community relationships which in turn form a number of social networks. GNIM was one of the rare firms that focused on community relations from early on in its operations. This is an area that newer Chinese firms initially ignored.

Outreach to local communities has also shifted. Early Chinese business engagement into Nigeria featured limited contact with the local community, with the exception of the customer interface. In the new era of Chinese enterprise, trading has been a larger part of the picture with big Chinese retail markets increasingly making contact with local African communities. (Utomi 2008: 54).

GNIM's focus on building social networks is a part of the firm's complex use of brokerage. Chapter four examines GNIM's brokerage practices.

Paternalistic Management- Managing Trust & Distrust

The Great Eastern

GNIM's foray into the hotel industry was due to a combination of a desire to diversify business interests and to avoid land seizure. The firm owned the land where the hotel complex now sits since the 1980's but left it vacant. The land became prime real estate as Lagos continued to expand. In the 2000's, the Lagos state government campaigned to encourage land owners to build on vacant property or face seizure. GNIM's response was to build a luxury hotel, The Eastern Jewel, which opened in the early spring of 2009 with an additional building completed in 2013. While GNIM's headquarters are located on mainland Lagos, the hotel is located across town on the edge of Victoria Island (VI) near Lekki Peninsula. VI is popular with both wealthy Nigerians and expatriates. Across from The Eastern is a popular shopping mall frequented by aspiring middle class Nigerians; middle/upper class Nigerians and expatriates. Nearby is the *British International School* where the children of wealthy Nigerians and expatriates attend school. The hotel hosts a clientele of upper-middle class and upper class Nigerians as well as expatriates. Per night, higher end suites cost \$3,500 [£2,050] and above. Some guests have stayed for periods spanning one to six months.

The first building of The Eastern is twelve stories and has just over sixty large rooms and penthouse suites, while the second building which Matti and other company members call "phase two" has standard size hotel rooms. According to Matti, the "motivations for building phase two

is that the politicians [and other big men] need rooms for their entourage”. VIPs stay in the first building while their entourages stay in the second building. The hotel restaurants serve Chinese, Japanese, Nigerian and Western cuisine; fish is imported from Norway and steak is brought from South Africa. Eric, one of the four directors, enlisted his wife Sarah, an interior designer, to decorate the hotel and design its logo. The décor is a Nigerian-Chinese fusion with Nigerian masks decorating doors and Chinese motifs decorating the fixtures on wooden cabinets in guestrooms. All of the wooden furniture and wooden components for fixtures, doors and the like were made from Nigerian timber. This is a fact that has been discussed in the Nigerian press and the firm has been lauded by local politicians for its use of local resources. Again this in contrast to the opposition the firm faced with its now defunct Cross Rivers timber operations. Since that time, the firm has not received such public opposition and appears to focus on cultivating relationships that help it maintain and expand its business operations. (See Chapter 4- ‘Our Friend for Eternity’)

Segun managed the hotel in a paternalistic fashion that was similar to the management style of the top directors. Paternalism was present in a variety of ways, starting with how the directors and managers are referred to by employees. When people mentioned the founder, they call him ‘Papa’ Yang. The three Chinese directors were called by their English names which were prefixed by ‘Mr.’. Solomon, other managers and office workers throughout the organization were also called ‘Mr.’, ‘Ms.’ or ‘Mrs.’ Alhaji’s name is inherently respectful as it is an honorific term, according to West African Islamic practice, for someone who has visited Mecca on pilgrimage. Nigerian cultures are tied to hierarchy and respect for age and rank. GNIM directors are also from a culture which places importance on both of these areas. Therefore paternalism is not uncommon or unwelcome from the perspective of some employees. In the case of The Eastern which has employees from outside of Nigeria and China, the firm’s paternalistic management style has proved challenging. One of Segun’s top priorities was to understand the “different backgrounds and different thoughts” of his employee’s and colleagues. He hinted towards issues with some European employees who felt “superior” to their colleagues; felt they were not paid enough and were unhappy with the work environment due to having little flexibility and strong oversight from the directors.

Wright described “paternalistic management [as] a way of controlling employees through the use of family imagery, thus providing space for the manager to as ‘caring and protective’ head of the industrial or commercial ‘household’” (Wright 2004 :133). GNIM owners provided housing and

security for all expatriate workers throughout the firm as well as upper management. At headquarters a cook prepared Chinese food for employees. When Chinese employees ventured out of GNIM's gates, they usually travelled in groups and were chauffeured to their destination. But GNIM also made provisions for Nigerian employees, particularly senior level management. The firm's headquarters had two clinics, one for Chinese employees and another for Nigerian employees. Additionally, Alhaji, Solomon and Segun lived in company housing near headquarters. According to Alhaji he and Solomon who are both in their seventies, are "retired but not tired". As the chairman Alhaji still received benefits while Solomon did not. But as a working retiree, Solomon was eligible for GNIM's housing scheme. Under the programme, GNIM provided housing to Solomon but upon retirement the firm handed over the title and ownership to Solomon. Since Solomon formerly retired but still works for the firm on a contract basis, he was eligible for the housing scheme.

Segun complained that he often encountered employees who asked for permission to come to work late or to rearrange their schedules due to family obligations. He felt relationships with Nigerian employees were different because they asked "to borrow money" and made requests that made Segun feel like they wanted him "to be their father". Unlike their expatriate colleagues at the Eastern and other GNIM enterprises, Nigerian employees commuted to work, sometimes from great distances. Many of The Eastern's employees did not live near the hotel and had to navigate through Lagos's notoriously bad traffic. Segun stated that "as a Nigerian I understand when my employee is late due to traffic". As such he felt that occasional incidents of lateness were reasonable and did not merit dismissal.

Segun did acknowledge that if he had to fire employees it would be easy to find replacements. After advertising a handful of positions The Eastern received over 1,000 CV's. By 6am the following Saturday morning, 50 jobseekers were camped outside the hotel's gates waiting for the hotel to start accepting CV's at 7am. Nigeria's high level of unemployment and underemployment (23.9% for all working age adults and 50-80% for youth) mean many people including new graduates sought employment (Adekunle 2013; Gaskia 2014). While there is a sense that individual blue-collar employees can be easily replaced, these workers as a whole are crucial to not only The Eastern's success but that of GNIM as a whole.

Managing Mistrust

As with other GNIM businesses, the majority of The Eastern's employees are Nigerian. Chinese employees are in positions such as chefs and maintenance workers. There are a few Nigerians who work at the reception desk but over 200 Nigerian employees primarily work in service positions. Their jobs range from doormen to wait staff to housekeepers. What differentiates the hotel from other GNIM subsidiaries is the inclusion of European and South East Asian employees. These employees usually work in mid-level or managerial positions in various parts of the hotels including: on reception, in administrative/office positions or in the restaurants. Despite the challenges of juggling the management of a diverse group of employees whilst meeting customers' needs, Segun believed the biggest issue he faced as a manager was the micromanaging style of GNIM's top three directors. "It [GNIM] is big, big but it is managed like a Mom and Pop" business.

Serrat describes micromanaging as "...direct[ing] and control[ling] a person, group, or system with excessive or unnecessary oversight or input....By so doing, micromanagers take decisions away from those who should be making decisions' (Serrat 2011:2). Two examples of GNIM' micromanagement style are the mandatory review of reimbursement requests from all employees throughout the firm's subsidiaries by a central office at headquarters and directors' approval for regular orders that managers and high ranking management such as Matti and Segun place. Segun's typical work day started at GNIM's headquarters in mainland Lagos, which is near his home. After a daily meeting Segun travelled to The Eastern to collect paperwork including hotel supply orders and took the paperwork back to GNIM headquarters for a director's approval. The directors mandated that all goods for each business within the organisation including the hotel, be distributed from headquarters so during his trips to headquarters Segun picked up hotel supplies including perishable goods. The Eastern is 19 miles away from headquarters near Victoria Island and Lekki Peninsula. Without traffic the trip can take 25-35 minutes but with typical busy Lagos traffic it could take upwards of one hour minimum.

Given the inefficiency of this system what is the reason GNIM directors chose to micromanage? One major reason is distrust. (Porterfield 2003: 21; Wells 2001: 601) The company has used past experiences with theft and disloyalty to guide their management of daily practices. Segun explained that: "This organisation has been burnt so much....trust is limited. "I understand everything they do but..." Fear of these past occurrences help the directors remain hyper-vigilant and this vigilance is maintained through strict protocols. But trust is not just an issue pertaining

to Nigerian employees. Matti recalled times when he visited one of worksites in Ogun state only to find that the head Chinese manager was not on duty and had overslept. He investigated and found that this occurred multiple times. In turn some Nigerian employees learned their manager's pattern and used these opportunities of to delay work and arrive late. Lower level employees faced the constrictions of working in a micromanaged system where respect to immediate bosses was key but they also enjoyed moments of laxity. While this delay in work was an issue for upper management, the situation seemed to benefit both the factory management and workers.

Matti's attempts to correct the situation were met with resistance by both factory management and workers. Matti explained that many Chinese managers were from the "country" and lacked exposure and interactions with non-Chinese people. Additionally they never worked in such positions of power before working for GNIM. Combining these two issues is a way to understand the interactions between Chinese managers and their Nigerian subordinates. The Chinese managers displayed a mixture of positive and negative paternalism. At the Ogun site, the Chinese managers spoke down to employee but they also colluded with Nigerian employees in order to work less. While this collusion resulted in a tentative comradery between managers and employees, it also had a negative impact on the firm as whole due to the delays in work.

Additionally, the managers did not view Nigerian subordinates as individuals with something to contribute. Instead they viewed them with an air of inferiority. Stories of Chinese employees' misconduct are rarely told and the focus is often placed on Nigerian employees. According to Matti, Chinese managers were usually low level employees in the firms they previously worked for, or they were country-side workers who never interacted with Africans before coming to Nigeria. Alden classified three major categories of Chinese people who go to Africa to work: "laid-off workers as a result of the down-sizing of Chinese corporations, persons displaced by large infrastructure/dam construction" and migrants "who were 'already floating'" in China (Alden 2007 referenced in Spring and Jiao 2008: 57-58). Hiring a minority of Chinese managers to supervise a majority of Nigerian employees helped create a situation of tension and mistrust which GNIM upper management sought to manage.

We Are Actually Your Fathers-Paternalistic Management within the Family

GNIM's use of paternalism is not strictly authoritarian but there is a high level of micromanagement due to distrust. This paternalism extends to the third generation of management. Matti described the firm as informal. For family and those in mid-level managerial positions and above there is a degree of informality in terms of the freedom to interact with top management. Furthermore, Matti and Segun also have a level of autonomy within the micromanaged structure. Nonetheless, there is conflict between the second and third generation. This conflict doesn't exhibit itself in an aggressive manner but in the way Matti and Segun try to assert themselves as well as how they discuss management. The third generation asserts itself through using different management styles than the second generation and expressing a desire to lessen the bureaucracy within GNIM. They talk about 'management' as if they are not a part of management. While they are younger and not directors, they have an influence on the direction of the firm and over the employees. When researching family firm's Wong found that with paternalism came knowing the appropriate time to express opinions.

In the first place, it [paternalism] demands formal obedience from subordinates. The emphasis is on outward deference to one's superiors in the organization.... Dissenting views and personal opinions may be advanced by executives, and are sometimes even demanded of them, but they must be made at the appropriate moment so as not publicly to contradict the superiors. (Wong 1988: 135)

As Matti and Segun carved out their own areas of expertise they also attempted to adopt their own management styles. This was accepted by the directors but only up to a point. When one of Matti's brothers, who no longer lives in Nigeria, "tried to implement lots of Australian style change [s]" to GNIM that he learned while living in Australia, his ideas were not accepted. Matti faced similar issues when he tried to implement Canadian style business practices. "They will humour you and agree in front of your face, but continue on". The 'they' Matti referred to are Chinese and Nigerians, from employees to management in the second generation; essentially, most of the firm. The firm's directors are particularly resistant to new management ideas. This was highlighted through the visit of Karl, a white Canadian consultant. Karl and Matti worked together in the Canadian construction industry.

Matti brought Karl in on a trial basis to advise the firm in a variety of sectors including farming and construction management. Karl faced resistance from both Chinese managers and low level Nigerian employees alike. The latter were more cooperative than the Chinese on-site managers. "Karl was making enemies left, right and centre. We like what he was doing-making people work and making people accountable, but he was butting heads with people." Although Matti agreed with Karl's ideas he sided with the directors in so far as that Karl's methods for enacting change

were considered too drastic and radical to fit into the GNIM system. Karl's case highlights the tensions that arise in the firm, between the second and third generation and between low-level management and blue-collar employees.

Despite the freedom to carve out their own areas of expertise, the third generation faces tension between the desire to change and the desire to respect and maintain some facets of GNIM's dominant management style. Despite a clear distinction of 'us' and 'them' when discussing the directors and 'management', Segun and Matti are not only a part of the firm, but they are being groomed to fill their father's positions. "Family members also internalize familial values, such as long-term reciprocity, filial obligation and hard work for one's family" (Collins 2012: 72). The third generation's commitment to the family business has been engrained in them since childhood. Change is inevitable and in some ways desired, but to mitigate change that could ruin GNIM's continuation, the second generation continued to mentor and monitor Segun and Matti.

Conclusion

In the Nigerian government's public discourse campaign, Chinese big business promises to serve as a path for Nigerians to fulfil their hopes and dreams. Great Northern Industrial Manufacturer is an example of Chinese big business. Although the firm is not a huge MNC, its heavy focus on Nigeria, throughout a number of industry, highlights the firm's importance to Nigeria's economic development.

What has emerged from this chapter is the complicated transformation of the grand narrative of Nigerian-Chinese relations into reality. Although the majority of GNIM's employees are Nigerians, only a few are allowed to reach executive level management. However, these rarefied few are not just tokens utilised to place a 'Nigerian-face' on GNIM. Instead GNIM uses kinship through relatedness to indicate those who are allowed within the family fold and senior management. Segun's employment and grooming for succession demonstrates the strong familial bond between the Yangs and Lateefs. As a member of the family Alhaji has the rights of succession which have in turn been conferred unto Segun. GNIM's reliance on kinship helps the firm maintain and grow its operations. As the firm continues to grow and move into a third generation, the family also continues reproduce its elite standing in both Nigerian and Hong Kong. The firm also applies paternalistic management styles in order to navigate issues of trust and mistrust in its daily operations. Nigerians are able to find success through Chinese big

business, but due to negative perceptions of Nigerians, these opportunities are limited to a small number.

The next chapter further explores GNIM's operations and how Nigerians benefit from aligning themselves with the firm. GNIM's use of performance, ritual and ceremonies as demonstrated in the chapters opening vignette at the Chinese New Year party, is a part of a complex set of brokerage practices. I seek to analyse the firm's use of brokerage, which includes guanxi and corporate gift giving, and the role of Nigerians in brokerage. I argue that brokerage is an essential component to GNIM's maintenance and expansion of its position in the Nigeria.

Chapter IV- “*Our Friend for Eternity*”: *Guanxi, Brokers and Corporate Gift-Giving*

Grand Opening

The opening of Sagamu, GNIM's industrial complex in Ogun State was heralded as a spectacular opportunity for growth in the state and Nigeria as a whole. The complex included what was projected to be the largest steel rolling mill in Africa; separate nail and ceramic tile factories; a power station and acres of land for further development. GNIM marked the opening by inviting dignitaries and media to witness the industrial complex's grand opening. During the event, GNIM's managing director, Eric Yang stood next to then president Goodluck Jonathan who cut the ribbon to symbolize the factory opening and pushed the button to start the steel production line. Pictures of the day featured Yang and Jonathan alongside other national and local dignitaries like Ibikunle Amosu, a senator for Ogun State. Media from across Nigeria covered the event and reported President Jonathan's commemoration speech. Jonathan told the crowd:

By constructing this 700,000 metric tonnes per annum cold rolled steel here to compliment your existing investments in the country, [GNIM] has demonstrated strong belief and confidence in our economy. I thank you for keeping faith with our country (2013: Public Affairs).

President Jonathan's speech highlighted the importance of GNIM to the state and country. Over \$2 billion [over £1.3 billion] was invested in the project which was estimated to provide over 5,000 new jobs to Nigerians (Komolafe 2010). Over £3.6 million pounds was loaned to GNIM from the Central Bank of Nigeria's Bank of Industry Intervention Fund for Power Firms, for the power plant (Alli 2013).

As discussed in the previous chapter, GNIM is a Chinese owned firm that has operated in Nigeria for over 40 years and has its headquarters in Lagos. While the Sagamu complex was still in development stages a new Chinese firm bought land nearby. The government subsequently seized the land and resold it for a higher price. Not only did GNIM not encounter this issue, but the firm was able to garner support from local and national political connections via brokerage. In fact, as Matti, one of the members of GNIM's third generation explained: it was upon former President Obasanjo's own urging that the previous governor of Ogun State allowed GNIM to purchase land for the Sagamu complex. In order to operate and develop its business concerns, GNIM utilises both public and private brokerage; the firm also serves as a key point of brokerage

for others. Brokerage is an integral component to Nigerian-Chinese relations as a whole in helping to create and maintain relationships.

This raises a set of important questions. How has GNIM been able to sustain and grow its operations in Nigerian for such a long period in comparison with the reversal of fortunes faced by other multinationals? To put it another way, what allows for the apparent smoothness and ease with which GNIM has established and maintained such a prominent position in the Nigerian economy? More specifically, how does a large Chinese firm like GNIM utilise social connections for itself and for others? How is such a high and effective level of political patronage achieved? What role do Nigerians play in GNIM's complex deployment of brokerage practices? Which Nigerians benefit from GNIM's brokerage practices?

As discussed in the previous chapters, Nigerian-Chinese business relies upon social relationships. This chapter explores how those social relations extend beyond the firm, focusing on the key concept of brokerage. Following on from the last chapter, here I use GNIM as a lens through which to analyse how social relationships are initiated, cultivated, nurtured and sustained through networking, brokerage and indeed gift-giving. Brokerage is at the heart of the formation and maintenance of relationships between Nigerian and Chinese counterparts. As the ethnography below shows, brokerage is heavily reliant upon social relationships and reciprocity which in turn play a crucial role in the various elements that contribute to GNIM's "social work". Interrogating the critical "social work" of the firm as it were-the business of relationship building-helps in further understanding GNIM's position in Nigeria. Furthermore, while the shifting and varied role of brokers is becoming ever more central in mediating both the social life and capital flows of Chinese engagement in Nigeria, there is a striking continuity in the forms and practices of contemporary brokerage with the rich history of brokerage in Nigeria against which my analysis of brokers must be contextualized.

In this chapter I seek to understand GNIM's set of brokerage practices and the role of Nigerians in the implementation and performance of brokerage. The firm's approach to brokerage includes traditional forms of brokerage; gift-giving and *guanxi*, a multi-layered Chinese approach to networking. GNIM's approach to gift-giving is intimately connected to brokerage. As I will discuss later, GNIM strategically uses gifts to broker various needs including access, introductions, services and more. I begin this chapter with a historical and contemporary analysis of brokerage in Nigeria. This is followed by a discussion of corporate gift-giving and *guanxi* which

are elements of GNIM's approach to brokerage. Guanxi contributes to GNIM's practices of corporate gift-giving and overall brokerage strategy. I then move on to an ethnographic analysis of GNIM's brokerage, firstly in a discussion of royal brokerage provided to the firm by a king in a strategic area of the firm's investments and operations. GNIM's daily use of brokerage through guanxi and corporate gift-giving are then explored. The chapter ends with an interrogation of corruption and the often normative manner in which it obscures discussions in relation to brokerage. In this analysis, I question the precise definitions used in international development circles and groups like Transparency International. These definitions often lack nuance and displace local understandings of corruption and the ways brokerage benefits Nigerians. This is why I find the concept of brokerage a much more productive analytical tool as it enables us to apply an ethnographic approach which allows for the examination of the multiple nuanced social relations forged and used in the process of enterprise.

Brokerage in Context: Past & Present

Brokerage can be traced back to pre-colonial times when it was utilised in various parts of Africa including Nigeria. Brokers had various duties including putting "... technical knowledge and linguistic skills at the service of inexpert prospective traders and helping traders who needed help finding customers in new places" (Jones 1970: 189). Brokers were primarily used for trade and government business. In an economic history of 19th century Africa, Zeleza described the reliance upon intermediaries by international merchants. In North and West Africa, traders that did not have links to local networks or diasporic communities used local brokers

Using these intermediaries had several advantages, especially in the light of the restriction on the foreigners' freedom to move and trade locally. Moreover, the local traders and brokers were more likely to be better informed about local consumption trends and tastes. (Zeleza 1993: 271; 281).

Additionally, brokers helped with logistics such as accommodations and storage facilities as well as finding local sellers for traders to purchase goods from (Zeleza 1993: 281). But colonial times brought a different form of brokerage where elite Nigerians with higher levels of education and connections acted as intermediaries between Nigerian citizens and British officials. Intermediaries worked primarily as interpreters, translators, and clerks. A smaller number served as traditional rulers. Brokers of this era were "perceived within a dichotomy of collaboration and resistance" (Pratten 2006: 221). Working with colonial forces branded brokers as collaborators because they worked with the very forces who subjugated their fellow citizens. Conversely,

brokers were also viewed as subversive agents who worked within the colonial system in order to weaken it and find ways to help themselves and others. For example in the latter half the 1860's African intermediaries well versed in Western life came to the forefront. These intermediaries were a small group of former enslaved Africans and their family members who returned to Freetown and Libreville, and worked in positions associated with middle/upper class status (Hopkins 1973). "Essentially, their role was that of cultural intermediaries, men who straddled the frontier between Europe and Africa, interpreting, in the broadest sense of the word, one to the other" (Hopkins 1973). Although these brokers were viewed negatively by both Europeans and Africans, Hopkins asserted that they served a necessary role by mediating the flow of cultures between Westerners and Africans.

Pre-colonial times in the land we know as contemporary Nigeria was ruled according to ethnic groups and corresponding kingdoms. Under British rule, various ethnic groups were placed together. Despite colonialism, many traditional kingdoms remained virtually intact. Those with "chiefs who presented themselves as being open to the new were regarded as important partners on the supposedly long way to self-government and independence" (Eckert 2006: 259). Chiefs were utilised to help with administrative duties such as tax collection and other local government affairs (Eckert 2006: 259). Chiefs brokered peace and engaged in daily governance on behalf of colonial officials. Today traditional rulers still play an important role in some communities due their influence in people's lives and access to community resources like land. Additionally, rulers serve as patrons that helped their people solve a variety of disputes including: land, familial and inheritance issues. Rulers also help their subjects find employment and gather money during financial difficult periods. Chinese companies much like colonial era British officials, work with traditional leaders because of their standing in community.

But a major difference between the current era and the earlier one is that while previously it was generally clear what the broker was mediating between, the village and the national capital, or, more generally, encapsulated political structures, in the contemporary context of unbounded fieldsites this is not immediately obvious. (Lindquist 2015:9).

The boundaries between areas for mediation have blurred and brokers are mediating between communities and conventional parties such as local and national governments, as well as new players such as local and international firms; development agencies; local charities and civil societies. According to de Sardan, contemporary brokerage, particularly in the context of international development is "any social process that brings localized low-level actors or groups into relationship with global structures (the town, the state or the market being the most obvious

of these) requires the service of go-betweens or mediators who occupy a clearly strategic function” (de Sardan 2005: 173). While this is a useful definition in the context of this research, situations which require brokers do not solely centre on connecting “low-level actors” with “global structures”). Therefore, the definition of brokerage used in this chapter, relies upon de Sardan’s definition of the facilitation of relationships between two parties but with the caveat that the people being discussed have greater power and access to resources than “low-level actors”. In the case of GNIM’s use of brokerage, both GNIM and its brokers, like the king who will be discussed in this chapter, come from elite circles and hence meet on an equal footing. Additionally, James argued that although brokers were maligned for acting with greed and interfacing between “powerless people and the externally imposed power of the modern state”, brokers are more complex than this commonplace caricature portrays (James 2011: 335). I will explore this in the discussion on GNIM’s forms of corporate gift-giving regarding GNIM’s gift exchange with communities which host its operations.

The contemporary development landscape in Nigeria includes private business; professional and business associations; government ministries; media consultants; and traditional large and small donors (Dada and Oyediran 2016: 258; Dibia and Okonkwo 2000). Lindquist discusses the re-emergence of the broker as a person of interest in anthropological studies in relation to a number of areas including development aid industry; transnational activism; tourism; finance and transnational migration (Lindquist 2015:9). In the South African case of brokerage, James found that “elements of state, market, and patrimonial/patriarchal-style political authority intersect” (James 2011:318). This highlights how brokers must have connections to multiple areas and in turn, those utilising brokerage services must have access to intermediaries in various arenas. Furthermore, the intersections between private and public roles in development continues to be blurred due to the interaction between a numbers of actors with national and international links. While James and de Sardan have analysed the enterprising nature of brokers and to a lesser degree, the institutions who act as key brokers of opportunities and resources in development, large MNCs are rarely considered to play a key role in brokerage. I contribute to the study of institutional brokers by examining the way in which an MNC, GNIM, utilises various forms of brokerage to expand upon its long standing position in Nigeria. As we will observe, GNIM benefits from brokerage conducted on its behalf while it simultaneously acts as a broker for others.

The role of brokers in the contemporary landscape of development and foreign investment is inevitably an entrepreneurial one. As Boissevain explained, brokers should be seen as acting not only in the interest of others but also fundamentally for his/her own benefit (Boissevain 1974 cited in Bierschenk et al 2002: 12). Boissevain went further in describing brokers as entrepreneurs whose power comes not from ownership of capital (property, land, money etc...), but from the mobilisation of people who actually own resources (Boissevain 1974 cited in Bierschenk et al 2002: 16). As I explore in the ethnography below, this entrepreneurial dimension is key to brokerage; this highlights the capacity of successful brokers to seize opportunities by staying attuned to others needs and demands. At the same time, alongside this social capital and the less tangible resources of opportunism and power, the brokers discussed here also have significant levels of financial capital which they leverage in their international role and parlay into greater income. As we shall see in the ethnography that follows later in the chapter, brokers often occupy a position that balances politics, leadership, business and high or prominent social status with significant financial resources (alongside social capital vis a vis brokerage).

Boissevain's definition simultaneously reflects similarities and changes in contemporary brokerage from colonial days. Contemporary brokers tend to come from elite positions just as colonial brokers who worked in positions of clerks, interpreters and other jobs. Contemporary brokers have the capital, whether it be education, financial or social, that are essential to working as a broker. But perhaps most importantly, today the dichotomy of collaboration and resistance has been transformed into an opaque continuum with collaboration and partnership merging together and resistance flowing into self-interest. The brokers and processes of brokerage that occupy this chapter are not working on behalf of colonial masters but they are helping to facilitate the relationships of a powerful investor, namely GNIM, with parties who do not always have the same level of power or interest. Power relations are often cloaked in the language of partnership which obscures the level of equality between parties. Partnership is a component of brokerage because a broker can connect people of equal footing; also the more powerful party in the relationship can attempt to focus on the benefits of working together for both parties, despite the skewed power dynamic. Against this analysis of historical and contemporary brokerage I now move on to two unique features of GNIM's brokerage practices: corporate gift-giving and guanxi. GNIM's incorporation of these two components has helped the firm establish, maintain and expand its various operations.

The Corporate Gift and Guanxi

The gift has been debated from various perspectives, from what constitutes a gift to the purpose and meaning of gifts. An anthropological analysis of the gift rests on social relations and reciprocity. The act of giving a gift serves as a signal to the recipient that the giver wants to initiate or maintain a social relationship (Sherry 1983: 158; Bowie 2011: 3). This relationship is dependent upon reciprocity in some form. Although gift recipients may have differing levels of access to capital (education, social, financial) they have the ability to reciprocate in a way that benefits the giver. As Laidlaw asserted in his discussion on gifts, “It seemed to Mauss, and has seemed to anthropologists since, that a genuinely free gift-one, as we say, with no strings attached-would play no part in the creation of social relations, for it would create no obligations or connections between persons....” (Laidlaw 2000: 617). Corporate gift-giving follows this pattern; organizations give gifts with the aim of enacting a social relationship with the recipient, whether the recipient is another organization, group or individual.

Recent anthropological research into the corporate gift has focused on interrogating organizations corporate giving practices and the language of corporate social responsibility. (Rajak 2011; Rajak, Dolan and Garsten 2011; Kirsch 2014). Organizations are moving away from traditional philanthropic patterns of gifting as charity and instead utilise the language of partnership and empowerment (Dolan and Rajak 2016: 13). I take this analysis further and argue that the corporate gift also serves as a form of brokerage. Corporate gifts are reciprocated in some manner and include access to resources [people, land, financing, etc....]. The reciprocal nature of gifts is what transforms the corporate gift into a form of brokerage. Corporate gifts serve as way to initiate a relationship between the organization and the recipient. The recipient’s reciprocation through access to resources, is an acknowledgement of the social relationship.

Despite reciprocity, this form of brokerage is associated with power dynamics which leave the recipients subject to undesired interest from the corporation. In Rajak’s research into Anglo American’s corporate social responsibility programmes in South Africa she argued that these programmes can create a form of moral authority and dependency through familiar forms of brokerage (Rajak 2011).

Schools and HIV/AIDs programmes funded by Anglo American demonstrate their corporate largesse but also bind recipients to their givers, fostering relations of patronage and clientalism and giving rise to new forms of regulation and surveillance. (Rajak 2011 as referenced in Cross 2014a: 126)

Gift recipients, in this case employees are open to the firm's intrusion into their work and home lives. Conversely, recipients can also use power dynamics to their advantage. In Cross's analysis of corporate gifts he asserted that corporate gifts can place both parties into distinct categories where employees act from a place of "creative action" and "cultivate a sense of themselves as active agents in a wage-labour relationship and strive to constitute a field of exchange with those who employ them" (Cross 2014a: 140). Cross's analysis provides new insight into the potential agency of gift recipients as does Gardner's research into Chevron's relationship with neighbouring communities. Gardner found that gift givers and recipients can come to the relationship with different understandings of what each party is obligated to do as well as varying interpretations of the meanings of gifts. In the case of Chevron, the firm acted from a neo-liberal, self-help and empowerment perspective while the community looked to the corporation to serve as patrons who could help provide "...modernization and economic growth and all the good things that these might bring" in exchange for the "use of local resources" (Gardner 2015: 512). Providing corporate gifts can highlight disparities in power between the giver and recipient or bring a sense of empowerment to the recipient. Additionally, corporate gift-giving practices can be a part of a long term approach to building social relationships. GNIM's use of gift-giving as a form of brokerage is embedded within guanxi; which helps the firm build and maintain relationships between itself and others. This multi-layered approach to brokerage is unique to GNIM and has not been reflected in previous literature.

Guanxi is an often misunderstood Chinese terminology for gift-giving related to building and sustaining social relationships in familial and business settings. In the business realm, two of the most common utilisations of guanxi is to form connections amongst businesses and between businesses and governments. Guanxi can be used in order to create trust between parties who are working together for the first time. According to Park and Luo, the beauty of guanxi is that it is a "valuable entrepreneurial tool to bridge gaps in information and resource flows between unlinked firms and between firms and important outside stakeholders" (Park and Luo 2001: 457). Guanxi can be traced back to Confucianism:

...in Confucian ideology "using" friends for personal gain is lauded as the path to true friendships. In this view, genuine relationships are built through transactions that benefit one individual more than the other since this type of interaction puts the first person in debt to the second and sets up the rationale for further interactions (Nuijten and Anders 2007: 170).

Although the "using" of friends is reciprocal and each party takes turns helping the other, guanxi can be used to reaffirm the hierarchy of patron-client relations. Guanxi was transformed both

during the introduction of Communism in the 1940's and during the reform state from the late 1970's onwards. Throughout the years, guanxi spread beyond family networks to help actors gain greater access to economic security, particularly through employment and business opportunities that could be gained by navigating the complex and sometimes adversarial Chinese "legal and financial institutions" (Nuijten and Anders 2007: 174). Barbalet described guanxi as a "practice of social exchanges, expressed through reciprocal favour seeking and provision of benefit" (Barbalet 2015: 1039). Kipnis and Yang had similar descriptions of the actions related to guanxi. Yang delineated between guanxi and guanxi practices where guanxi are the intangible social ties amongst people while guanxi practices are all the things people do in order to cultivate these relationships (Yang 1994). Kipnis discussed "practices of guanxi production" which includes "social actions....by which people created, manipulated, and at times eradicated human relationships" such as hosting and attending events; giving and receiving gifts; providing and receiving assistance (Kipnis 2002:22).

Two of the essential components to guanxi is reciprocity and repetition. Relationships are created to last for an extended period of time during which the relationship is built and maintained through the various "practices of guanxi production" (Kipnis 2002:22). The result of these practices can include social capital. According to Bourdieu, gift-giving similar to that of guanxi which entails continued exchange of gifts, creates a gift debt which in turn creates a form of social capital (Smart 1993: 395). Barbalet and Lin both stressed the importance of guanxi's ability to be converted into social capital through reputation. "Also, the benefits of guanxi relations are not only substantive in the form of material gifts, official preferment, or some other instrumental advantage but also normative and especially reputational" (Lin, 2001, p.157). The reward for the giver "of a guanxi favor is enhancement of their public standing as a person of material means and moral capacities" (Barbalet 2015: 1040). This social capital extends beyond the immediate relationship of the two parties practicing guanxi and enhances their reputations throughout their respective social networks.

Guanxi at its best is a set of social practices conducted under the auspices of facilitating a continual and mutually beneficial relationship. At its worst guanxi is associated with bribery, nepotism, blackmail and other forms of corruption. Luo argued that the boundary between guanxi and corruption is shrinking. "As guanxi is progressively intertwined with corruption, its public perception is deemed to change from a tradition-embedded culture to a rent-seeking practice involving corruption" (Luo 2008: 189). Luo blames what he terms, "a demoralized society" where

Confucian values have been replaced with greed, and the accumulation of power is preferred over the exchange of reciprocal favours and sustained relationships (Luo 2008: 189). There have been attempts to delineate guanxi from forms of bribery and other definitions of corruption. For instance, money can be and considered guanxi or bribery. Bribery occurs when one-time payments of money are made without context. Money can be considered guanxi in the pursuit of continued relations and in the context of an occasion [birthdays, holidays, weddings, funerals, etc...] (Solinger 1984; Smart 1993). What is crucial in the categorization of bribery is the lack of a purpose or occasion that associates would usually commemorate together. Additionally, the lack of reciprocation which aids in creating a long-term relationship indicates bribery. Reciprocity and long-term relationship are at the heart of guanxi.

Nuijten and Anders ethnographic research into guanxi and corruption in China found that local definitions of guanxi were theoretically couched in terms of warm connections between actors while corruption was associated with highly negative connotations. Despite this, the basis for whether behaviour is positive (guanxi) or negative (corruption) was not based on one's behaviour but instead on the one's intent. (Nuijten and Anders 2007: 169). The growing debate over what constitutes corruption and guanxi is linked to perceived gains for the parties involved and the impact on society. Additionally, business people themselves make distinctions as well. Keister's research into over forty of China's largest business groups in the early 2000's found a less positive view of utilising guanxi to conduct illegal ventures. Managers spoke of moving away from reliance on social ties to circumvent the law. Instead respondents utilised social networks in order to build alliances with strong partners. Keister 2002). Additionally, there are distinctions between guanxi and corruption when businesses interact with the government. Dunfee and Warren's research into guanxi differentiates corrupt and non-corrupt relationships between companies and government.

A very different use of guanxi is to apply it to overriding government rules and regulations. It may be the equivalent to coarse public sector bribery where payments are made to avoid environmental or safety regulations. Or it may be used to obtain licenses or capital controlled by self-interested government bureaucrats. Because of the significant role that government plays in the Chinese economy there are many approvals required and the opportunities for extortion are great. ...One way to avoid extortion or to cope with required permissions is to build up guanxi with the relevant officials who will give special treatment to certain firms.

(Dunfee and Warren 2001: 200)

Dunfee and Warren's explanation is similar to that of Chinese business managers who attempt to differentiate guanxi. These business managers view guanxi as positive or negative depending on the purpose it is used for. To them, guanxi which helps businesses to bypass laws is negative while guanxi that helps parties build relationships and provides small favours is positive. This research seems to indicate that for many, as long as there is not outright greed and laws are not flouted, guanxi is more likely to be accepted.

Similarly to guanxi and gift giving in China, gift giving in the Nigerian context is a part of social relations and can serve as a way to make connections and facilitate relationships. Contemporary gift-giving draws upon traditional practices and includes giving gifts on a number of occasions. These occasions include "...weddings, naming ceremonies,...traditional festivals,...burial ceremonies or the conferment of a chieftaincy title or as a demonstration of love and affection" (Bello 2014: 289-290). de Sarden describes gift giving in West Africa as balanced with gift givers and recipients ranging from... " 'superiors , equals or ' inferiors' " (de Sardan 1999: 39). Another overlap between guanxi and Nigerian gift-giving practices, is that there are local delineations between corruption and gift-giving. Bello states that various Nigerian ethnic groups employ proverbs that emphasize the cultural understandings of the differences between gift-giving and corruption (Bello 2014: 286-287). The boundaries between gift giving and corruption can be breached when the gift is given by a person in a position of authority in order to gain access for themselves and or members of his or her familial and social network to the detriment of others or society at large. (de Sardan 1999: 41-44).

Later in this chapter I discuss GNIM's use of guanxi which includes providing and receiving help; hosting an annual Chinese New Year's party for members of its social network and giving corporate gifts to a variety of people within its social network. Due to the firm's large social network, at any given time GNIM is constantly engaging in guanxi and simultaneously giving and receiving help. I first discuss brokerage in action, through the example of royal brokerage provided for GNIM. Village elites like chiefs and kings interact with an increasingly large number of external groups on behalf of their people; in the hope of gaining external resources that can lead to economic development.

Royal Brokerage

On a mild Saturday afternoon, a group of men gathered in a private dining room at The Eastern hotel. (See Chapter 3-The Family Firm for further discussion). As waiters served various courses, the group spent a few hours having lunch and discussing issues amongst themselves. As one of the most sumptuous and expensive hotels in Lagos, the GNIM owned property hosts a range of upper-middle class and upper class clients including government officials and royalty. This group of dignitaries were *obas/kabiyesis* (kings in the Yoruba language) from neighbouring Ogun State; the home of a growing number of GNIM enterprises and other Chinese owned businesses. The *obas* play a crucial role in GNIM's operations because they serve as brokers between their communities and GNIM.

Traditional leaders serve as brokers between their people and external groups, including state and national governments; NGO's; community groups and businesses. However, relationships between traditional leaders and external groups do not go uncontested, particularly those in the political and business realm. One of the biggest issues the public has with traditional leaders is when leaders openly support political candidates instead of remaining neutral and simply supporting the democratic process. This was most recently evidenced during the 2015 Nigerian elections when state and federal candidates made a point of visiting traditional leaders "to receive royal blessings and endorsements" (Akinfenwa 2014), in hopes of gaining votes from the subjects of traditional leaders (BluePrint 2014). Additionally, politicians have the power to veto traditional leadership nominations, which means that politicians can interject themselves into community matters and choose leaders who they believe will be easier to work with.

There has also been criticism in the media and in society that some *obas* have focused on accumulating connections and resources for themselves through bribes and shady business deals with multinational firms (Allen 2014: 112; Manby 1999: 107). In order to maintain a more transparent atmosphere, many states have created Ministries for Local and Chieftaincy Affairs (MLCAs). MLCAs are mandated to conduct local government activities in adherence with federal law in an open and accountably manner. Despite these concerns, traditional leadership still plays a major role in the lives of many Nigerians. According to Agbese, "These institutions [traditional political institutions/rulership] elicit greater confidence and legitimacy in the eyes of many Nigerians than the institutions of the modern Nigerian state" (Agbese 2004). As such external actors realise the importance of creating relationships with traditional leaders. GNIM utilises the brokerage of a group of *obas*, from The Ijebu Kingdom in Ogun State.

The Ijebu Kingdom is one of Nigeria's various kingdoms. The kingdom has a number of obas who rule over specific areas within the kingdom. These obas are overseen by a paramount oba who is the leader of the entire Ijebu Kingdom. One of Ijebu's obas is His Royal Highness Tajudeen Oduwole. Like a large number of traditional leaders, Oba Oduwole had a senior level professional career before becoming a king. Oduwole attended the University of Lagos for undergraduate studies and completed postgraduate studies in the United States. For years Oduwole worked as an engineer throughout Nigeria as an employee of the state's former power company, National Electric Power Authority (NEPA). His work also took him abroad including time in France. Oduwole rose high within the ranks of NEPA before retiring.

The oba's title is hereditary and has been in his family for decades. His father held the title as did his uncle. According to practice, the oba's family chooses successors to the crown. The oba was chosen and the family notified the government of their choice. After the government agreed, Oduwole was crowned in May 2001. The family has chosen one of the oba's sons as his successor. It is more than likely that the oba's son will continue in his father's footsteps in conducting brokering between his community and GNIM.

Over thirty towns and villages are within Oduwole's kingdom. His work as a king revolves around ruling his people which means mediating disputes between community members; liaising between the government and his people; and liaising between companies and his people. During a visit to his palace, the oba took a break from hours spent receiving subjects who sought his aid in solving various issues. He explained that one of his primary goals is to improve the economic and social lives of his subjects. In order to accomplish this, Oduwole meets with firms that are interested in coming to Ijebu lands to conduct business. Usually, these firms seek Oduwole out. When GNIM came to Ijebu lands in the 1990's it was the firm that sought out the previous oba, Oduwole's uncle. The firm negotiated with the then oba for permission to operate in Ijebu realms and to purchase land. The land was freehold land which GNIM purchased from the king's domain and the firm owns the land "for life". As the next ruler in line, Oduwole met with GNIM officials for the first time in 1999.

Oduwole described his work with GNIM as "in the capacity [of] a traditional ruler with the intent of having them [these firms] work with my community". This work primarily focused on creating employment opportunities for his people. Oduwole also granted access to community lands to GNIM and other firms. Firms either bought free-hold land or owned it jointly with the

community; usually with 60% going to the Chinese partner. The majority of ownership goes to Chinese firms due to their investment in equipment. As recently as 2014 and 2015, GNIM purchased new freehold land from the oba's realm for the purpose of farming. The oba's chief role during land sales is to negotiate a fair deal for the community. GNIM representatives, the oba and one of his chiefs attend negotiations. Citizens are not present but the chief serves as a witness for the community. According to Oduwale, he tells his people "...that GNIM is purchasing the land and this is how much we have agreed [upon].... And a chief is present at signing". The land sale is announced to the public and the king is responsible for accounting for how the money is spent. Although the public is not present, Oduwale stressed his use of transparency by having the chief present as a witness and publically sharing information with community. Oduwale understood the faith his people placed in him and as such focused on being transparent and used this focus to further legitimise his role as king. From GNIM's perspective, working with a trusted leader is the easiest way to enter a community. But just as the firm provided infrastructure development for the community neighbouring the Sagamu complex), GNIM also provides services for the oba's community. (See Chapter 3-The Family Firm and the GNIM-Out & About section in this chapter for a discussion on Sagamu.)

The oba worked with various Chinese firms but he enjoyed a close relationship with the second generation directors of GNIM. From late 1999 onwards, GNIM paid a yearly tribute to the king in the form of ₦50,000 [£200] in addition to electronics such as air conditioners and refrigerators. Under the framework of *guanxi* and gift-giving as well as traditional Ijebu laws, these tribute and electronic goods are small tokens that serve to facilitate a larger goal and a long-standing relationship. The tribute is a fairly nominal amount even when compared with monthly salaries the average GNIM employee receives which is upwards of ₦100,000. Furthermore, before becoming a king, the oba worked as an engineer and executive netted him a far higher salary than what he receives in tributes from GNIM. I argue that the fact that the tribute is paid is more significant than the nominal monetary figure and electronic gifts.

Another particularly instructive point is that early on in his reign, the king visited GNIM's wood factory, located within his domain, to pick up the tribute. In more recent years as the relationship between him and the second generation of GNIM developed, Stephen-a member of the second generation of GNIM directors- began to visit the oba's palace to present him with the tribute. The oba has become a part of GNIM's close social network and his importance is demonstrated by the visit of a director to personally deliver the tribute. The oba has also received invitations to

GNIM social events including the wedding of a third-generation GNIM family member in China. The oba accepted these invitations and spoke fondly of his two visits to China.

Ogun State hosts a number of Chinese firms including a pharmaceutical firm; GNIM's wood factory and Sagamu complex and wood factory as well as the Ogun Free Trade Zone. According to Oba Oduwole, Ogun State welcomed Chinese firms because "they help feed" people. Representatives from these firms were regularly invited to participate in the annual Ojude Oba festival. All of the domains within Ijebu join up and the region has one of the largest festivals in West Africa, the Ojude Oba. The festival, which is estimated to have been held for over two centuries, celebrates the Ijebu kingdom and the paramount oba-who is the king of the entire region. Ojude Oba is a mixture of a reunion, cultural celebration; and royal homage. In 2015, the festival had over 50,000 attendees who came from across the world and included the paramount oba; all of the region's obas: dignitaries from both the private and public sector; community members; Nigerians from across the country and Ijebu expatriates who specifically returned for the occasion.

The prestige attached to the Ojude Oba has attracted a number corporate sponsors from a variety of sectors including: beverage; telecommunications, banking, construction, government and manufacturing. GNIM is one of the festival's sponsors. Oduwole explained that "they [GNIM] don't give us money, but they give us something in kind-something for the community". "We always remember it's GNIM that did this". The firm has provided a range of goods and services for Oduwole's people, including health care; road tarring; and scholarships for primary and university students. In his role as a broker, Oduwole's communicates the needs of the community to GNIM and the firm provides gifts for the community with little fanfare. As the oba put it, "All these things I'm telling you they will not tell you as a visitor" or even promote throughout the community. Instead Oduwole informs community members who in turn spread the information throughout the area. GNIM's seeks to continue a relationship with the community and demonstrates its intent through these gifts. The community reciprocates via the oba by selling its natural resources-land. GNIM's guanxi does not stop at services, it also employs local residents.

The oba pursued employment and economic development for his subjects through brokerage between Chinese firms like GNIM and the community. In contemporary brokerage, companies are increasingly taking on the role of international development organizations. Therefore, instead of intermediating between NGOs and the community, the oba brokers between the community

and companies. (Knierzinger 2011). His image as a good leader is strengthened every time he is able to create an opportunity for economic and social development. Hence, an integral part of the brokerage between the oba and Chinese firms like GNIM, is that they provide jobs to community members. Whenever there are job openings at GNIM subsidiaries in the area, GNIM informs Oduwole and other local obas first. The oba stressed that GNIM looks for qualified employees above anything else, including affiliation with the Ijebu region. Therefore, the employees at GNIM's Ijebu sites were a mixture of employees from inside and outside of the region.

The firm has provided jobs for Ijebu residents throughout its various locations but Oduwole noted that only a few Chinese firms hired Nigerians in high level positions. He lamented that most firms wouldn't "even teach skilled Nigerians to use machines". To illustrate his point, the oba recounted the story of a local Ijebu man who attempted to work with a Chinese pharmaceutical firm. The man had recently returned to Nigeria from China and was fluent in Chinese. He expressed interest in working at the organization but the local office called its headquarters and rejected any further application. From the Nigerian perspective the repatriate was a perfect candidate because he was a local man who understood Chinese culture. Rumours soon circulated that the company didn't hire him because they feared he would sell company secrets to Nigerians. This story is reminiscent to those I heard from upper management at GNIM. There is a rampant fear among Chinese firms and other expatriate communities that Nigerians are corrupt and cautionary tales of Nigerian corruption circulate throughout society (Smith 2007). There is a perception that "even one's most trusted employee could not really be trusted" (Smith 2007: 92). Oba Oduwole worked towards developing and maintaining relationships with Chinese management in order to improve his people's economic opportunities, including the chance to work within GNIM. But how this permeated down to the upward mobility of his people remained to be seen.

GNIM-Out & About

Similarly, to businesses operating in China, GNIM's utilisation of brokerage like *guanxi* is also used to reduce the amount of bureaucracy involved in conducting business in Nigeria. The firm was able to secure the land for the Sagamu complex through government connections, starting from the head of Nigeria itself, former President Obasanjo. Many firms both domestic and international do not have these forms of connections to draw upon. This help filtered down to

local government who allowed the firm to purchase land at a discounted rate. While another Chinese firm had its land repossessed, GNIM faced no such issue due to its social connections. What has GNIM done to build a relationship with officials? Apart from a short mention of “brown envelope” full of money being passed from GNIM officials to government official, as Matti briefly mentioned in a discussion on the necessity of meetings with government officials, GNIM officials did not speak about payment or financial gifts. This is where the question of bribery and corruption enters the picture. The unifying definition of guanxi allows for gifts whether they be financial or otherwise, if they are given in pursuit of long-term and reciprocal relationships. If these brown envelopes of money are being given as a part of a long-standing reciprocal relationship, then under the rules of guanxi, this behaviour could be viewed as acceptable. But if these envelopes were given in order to bypass laws and as one-time gifts this would be considered as negative guanxi (corruption) as discussed in the analysis of guanxi.

Nigeria has national corruption laws and the nation is subject to a number of international anti-corruption laws including the OECD’s Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Under Nigeria’s Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Act 2000, government officials cannot accept gifts of any kind for doing their jobs but they “are allowed to accept personal gifts or benefits from relatives or personal friends to such extend and on such occasions are as recognised by custom” (FCPA Blog 2013). Therefore whether gifts such as envelopes full of money are illegal, depends upon the recipient, the purpose and amount. I will analyse corruption and its links to brokerage later in the chapter.

GNIM’s annual Chinese new year party described in the previous chapter, is the highlight of a corporate calendar filled with events geared at nurturing and celebrating the firms “friends”. The party brings together various members of the firm’s social network and serves as a venue for the firm to show its largesse which was partially built with the help of the guests. The party has similarities to potlaches.

These ceremonies had the dual function of redistributing goods and creating prestige for the donor group.....They were also occasions when groups and sub-group renegotiated or reaffirmed their status through the act of presentation. (Bowie 2011: 6-7)

GNIM’s presentation of copious amounts of food and gifts not only demonstrates the firm’s gratitude and reciprocity for deeds done by members of its social network but it also creates

future obligations for guests to pay the firm back through future help; and thus the circle of reciprocity continues. As discussed in chapter three, the gift of the party helps to build guanxi between GNIM and its social network. GNIM is able to call upon help as needed. This help can include access to land, machinery and more; thus the firm is able to convert its social capital into other forms of capital. For example, the firm has collaborated with its German associates in purchasing German made equipment for its operations. German associates were able to help steer the firm towards quality materials and to navigate the German business market.

GNIM's work as a broker relies upon the firm's command of numerous resources. As such the firm's brokerage work is embedded in their broader business activities. For example, GNIM serves as leader and figurative home away from home for different segments of the Chinese community in Lagos. A number of Lagosian Chinese community events have been held at GNIM's Eastern hotel. Other Chinese firms also use the hotel to host their business events. (See Chapter 2- Selling the Chinese Dream to the Nation: Public Discourse and Narratives in Action) The firm also acts as a patron to the Chinese government in Nigeria by importing Chinese rice and other perishable goods on the consulate's behalf. The reciprocal nature of GNIM's relationships with the Chinese community and government are implicit and can span decades. Helping fellow Chinese expatriates bolsters GNIM's standing in the community and the firm is able to obtain assistance as needed. For example, GNIM helps members within the firm's trusted network apply for visas. The Chinese consulate helps GNIM by accepting these applications and fast-tracking them based on the friendly relationship the consulate and GNIM have developed. In turn, when GNIM helps members of its trusted network to apply for visas, GNIM strengthens its ties with these network members.

When GNIM's associates apply for visas, the firm vouches for their reputations and submits the applications to the Chinese consulate on their associates' behalves. This is similar to the services provided by Nigerian Friendship Association (NFA) and Nigeria-China Business Council (NCBA) but unlike those organisations GNIM does not require a direct membership (See Chapter Five-The Entrepreneurial Spirit). Although Barbalet argued that guanxi is "nontransitive" I assert that one can use personal guanxi to help another person and in turn build more guanxi (Barbalet 2015: 1045). GNIM does this when helping members within its trusted social network acquire Chinese visas. As Matti explained, "if we say we know you, that helps" with visa applications. The firm is very wary of extending this connection, and only does so with people they have an established relationship with. In this scenario, GNIM is simultaneously

taping into a cache of guanxi with Chinese officials in Nigeria and building up a cache with the member of its network such as a supplier or business contact who seeks help with a Chinese visa. In order to become a member of GNIM's trusted social network, guanxi of some form takes place. In the next chapter on Nigerian entrepreneurship, I discuss the issues of visas not as a straightforward and mundane administrative process but as a process fundamental to potentiality or impossibility of entrepreneurial opportunity with China. Here in its role as a broker we see GNIM also playing a key part in mediating the flow of visas to potential beneficiaries and clients. This demonstrates that what we often assumed to be purely technical administrative processes are part of patron-client relations.

The firm's brokerage also extends to non-government and business parties. Due to an ethos of humility, GNIM does not publicly discuss its community programmes let alone refer to them as corporate social responsibility (CSR) but there is a concerted effort from the firm to do things that benefit the community. I argue that although these programmes have strong CSR components they should be seen as a key dimension of the corporate gift and therefore a form of brokerage with the community. In Welker's research into corporate security and community relations in Indonesia she found that organisations focused on creating strong relationships with communities in order to maintain safety for its operations. (Welker 2009). By gaining community support, a corporation is ensured that the community will not interfere with success of its operations.

As discussed in chapter three, GNIM's attempts to garner community support for its logging operations in Cross Rivers State were unsuccessful. GNIM appeared to have learned from this incident and engaged with its Sagamu neighbours early into the project. The Sagamu industrial complex is surrounded by neighbouring residential developments whose residential organisations negotiated with GNIM to provide drainage and other infrastructure for the area. The firm considers such projects to be a form of community relations. GNIM is not legally required to help neighbours but does so in order to have smoother operations and to work with the community. Although the firm did not need the permission of its neighbours to build the complex, the firm wanted some level of approval or at least, minimal conflict with neighbours. Therefore, the corporate gift was moderated between GNIM and the beneficiaries. The infrastructure development helped ease the firm's path into the Sagamu area with little opposition. And yet, GNIM could have entered the neighbourhood with or without the consent of the neighbours particularly since it had the support of national and local government officials.

Nonetheless the Cross Rivers state experience taught the firm to engage with neighbours early and to also operate in a manner that would receive little complaints from neighbours. The gift creates varying strands of power dynamics between GNIM and its neighbours. Similarly to Cross's assertion that the recipients can "compel" givers to provide a gift, GNIM's neighbours were able to prompt GNIM to improve their neighbourhood (Cross 2014a: 140). The neighbours exercised a level of power by seeking a relationship with GNIM. They leveraged GNIM's need to have a peaceful relationship with its neighbours to receive the gift of infrastructure. This gift helped broker a peaceful existence between the neighbourhood and GNIM. The organisation's brokerage centres on creating relationships whether they be with government officials; business associates; community members or community leaders. As Alhaji, the only Nigerian/non-blood relative director of GNIM stated:

Psychologically speaking [you] lay your cards on the table and tell people what are really your problems. And along the way people we come across, people who become our friend for eternity. As a result, if we are looking for anything we do not struggle.

GNIM's goal is to have longstanding friendships in place that will serve to the firm's benefit. These relationships are consistently renewed through brokerage.

Conclusion-Unravelling Brokerage and Corruption

There is a continuum rather than a gulf between bribing someone and thanking someone for services rendered. Between obtaining a favour from a friend in the civil service, which favour will be 'returned' later on, and slipping a bank note in return for the same favour to a civil servant whom one does not know, there is only a difference of form, be it monetary or not, in the exchange. (de Sardan 1999: 35)

This chapter has explained how a Chinese firm, GNIM, navigates the Nigerian marketplace through the use of brokerage. I also highlighted examples of Nigerians who benefit from associating with Chinese big business, the king and members of communities that surround GNIM operations. The firm's brokerage includes corporate gift-giving and guanxi and it extends to the members of its wide-ranging social network. Underlying this discussion on brokerage is the shadow of corruption. Brokerage is often intertwined with corruption because there is a perception that brokerage can help to create an atmosphere that is "conducive to" corruption (Blundo and de Sardan 2006). Corruption has multiple definitions that include: embezzlement; fraud; extortion; abuse of discretion; nepotism; patronage; diversion of public funds for private gain and use of corporate funds to bribe public or private official (Sowunmi et al 2010; OECD

2013; Kumar and Landy 2009; Transparency International 2015). Eicher cautions against confusing corruption with legality; meaning that what is deemed as corrupt in some places is not necessarily illegal. “Until recently, it was legal in many countries to use foreign-paid bribes as tax deductions. It was legal, but it was arguably unethical and corrupt. Paying a bribe was a crime only inasmuch if it violated a law in the country in question” (Eicher 2012: 2).

In public political discourse, Nigeria is perceived as facing rampant levels of corruption throughout its society. The UK’s former Prime Minister David Cameron’s was caught on video referring to Nigeria as “fantastically corrupt” (BBC 2016). Nigeria has been viewed as one of the world’s most corrupt nations, with a ranking of 136th out of 167 countries on Transparency International’s index of corruption efforts; improving by eight places compared to 2013 score of 144th (Transparency International 2014; Alade 2013). A 2012 World Bank report estimated that “80% of Nigerian businesses offer [ed] bribes to government officials” while more recently the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria found that 80% of Nigerian “corruption-related issues” could be traced back to the oil and gas industry (Ogunde 2012; Business News Staff 2015).

Anthropologists have called for research to expand beyond commonplace definitions and delve into the lived experiences of those who are impacted by corruption both negatively and positively (Harrison 2010; de Sardan 1999; 2005). Harrison argued that the well-established definitions of corruption imply “a firm dichotomy between the public/impersonal and the private/personal spheres, and the importance of keeping the two separate” (Harrison 2010: 259). Nowhere is this more evident than in GNIM where brokerage through festivals, gifts, hosting, parties and more are all integral to quotidian aspects of the firm’s operations. These events entwine the public and private and enfold members of GNIM’s social network into a kinship circle that interacts in order to strengthen and expand GNIM’s operations. The ways corruption takes place in daily life highlights the fluidity between both personal and private domains and between privately owned corporations and governments.

de Sardan analyses corruption through the framework of the ‘corruption complex’ which stretches “beyond corruption in the strict sense of the word, to include nepotism, abuse of power, embezzlement and various forms of misappropriation, influence-peddling, prevarication, insider trading and abuse of the public purse...” (de Sardan 1999: 27). This definition hints at the fluidity of brokerage and corruption and allows for nuanced explorations. In their research into

entrepreneurial forms of corruption, Lauchs and Staines argue that brokers are instrumental in furthering, negative and positive activity.

Brokerage is a desirable position in a network as it allows the broker to administer the information flow between groups as an 'opinion leader'. The broker can restrict the flow of information to pursue his own advantage...Very importantly in dark networks, the broker is able to communicate reputations. (Lauchs and Staines 2012: 113)

This line of argument centres on the role of brokers as integral components in the establishment of social relationships. Brokers own self-interests are also a part of the equation. Forms of brokerage like clientalism and patronage have been criticised for having higher potentials of corruption due to the focus on favouritism. Here I return to two of the questions I sought to answer in this chapter: What role do Nigerians play in GNIM's complex deployment of brokerage practices? Which Nigerians benefit from GNIM's brokerage practices? As I showed through the ethnographic discussion of brokerage, leaders like Oba Oduwole serve as brokers for GNIM by providing access to land. In turn GNIM provides gifts to for the community and some individuals attain jobs at GNIM subsidiaries while others receive scholarships. The oba's brokerage and continued relationship with GNIM's senior management, reaffirms his role as a leader. When the oba negotiates deals with the firm and notifies his people of the gifts GNIM has provided the community, the oba demonstrates his worth to the community. This is an element of self-interest; in order to maintain his people's support he must be perceived as a good leader who brings economic development to his community. Therefore the oba benefits from GNIM's brokerage practices as do some of his people. As I discussed in chapter three and in this chapter, opportunities for Nigerians to work in senior level positions at GNIM are quite limited. Consequently the benefits of GNIM's brokerage practices for Nigerians are also limited.

These last two chapters have discussed big business, the first pillar of the Nigerian government's attempt to shape public discourse and create compelling narratives that positively portray Nigerian-Chinese relations. I have explored how Nigerians benefit from aligning themselves with GNIM. These chapters also analysed GNIM's use of kinship, ceremony, performance, ritual and brokerage in its quest to maintain and expand its operations in Nigerian. The next chapter continues exploring the Nigerian government's grand narrative through a discussion of entrepreneurship and how the promise of business trickles down from the corporate level to individuals to animate the ambitions of aspiring entrepreneurs.

Chapter V-*Doing Business with China: The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Nigeria*

Entrepreneurship means Africans no longer have to find a job or be trained to be employees. Instead, it will enable our young people to create their own jobs, become employers, and take charge of their futures, instead of letting the future happen to them.

(Tony O. Elumelu 2016, African's #31st Richest Man and Founder of the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme)

Young people eagerly awaited a call from the stage to receive certificates verifying their admittance into a professional business organization. They had recently completed the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and while in service they were given the opportunity to take examinations for professional organizations. With a few exceptions based on age, all Nigerian university graduates are mandated to enrol in the NYSC programme for a year and work for the country in a variety of industries. Upon completing the programme graduates are allowed to join the Nigerian workforce. One of the objectives of the programme is “that employers are induced partly through their experience with members of the service corps to employ more readily and on a permanent basis, qualified Nigerians, irrespective of their States of origin”. (NYSC 2013). While many graduates looked forward to future employment with organizations they worked for during their NYSC terms, the keynote speaker introduced the idea of an alternative future: working for themselves as entrepreneurs.

Although this appeared to contradict the final objective of the NYSC programme, that firms who utilised NYSC workers should employ them after the programme ended, the speakers point reflected two key issues: Nigeria's unemployment rate and the historical role of entrepreneurship in Nigerian society. The estimated rate of country-wide unemployment in Nigeria is 23.9%, but the rate for young people is much higher. Youth unemployment is estimated to range between 50-80% (Adekunle 2013; Gaskia 2014). The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics estimates youth unemployment to be just over 50%, while the Central Bank of Nigeria estimates it at 80%. When young people enter the job market they are faced with a high level of competition and without connections (or luck) they usually join the ranks of the unemployed. By starting their own businesses young people are led to believe that they can avoid this fate. Even before graduation, students are not unfamiliar with student enterprises. On the campuses of universities across Nigeria, students earn extra money by running small businesses: selling clothes to their peers; doing hair; selling cell phone credit; cooking for events and more. Entrepreneurship is

lauded not just as a defining feature of the national spirit of industry, but as part of Nigeria's cultural values and seen as the cornerstone of growth and development.

Indeed, entrepreneurship is held out as a key component of Nigeria's economic rise and power as a MINT⁷ country. Entrepreneurship in Nigeria has been promoted for years and it is estimated that at some point over 67% of the population has thought of starting his or her own business. (Naudé 2011; Rocah 2004). According to the entrepreneurial dream, entrepreneurship can not only help the individual (like the young people at the NYSC ceremony), but society at large. With growing connections between China and Nigeria, Nigerian entrepreneurs are increasingly looking to China as the catalyst for their entrepreneurial ambitions as they seek to forge relationships between themselves and Chinese counterparts in order to develop and expand their businesses. Entrepreneurship is highlighted as the second pillar in the national narrative of partnership with China.

As discussed in Chapter 2- Selling the Chinese Dream to the Nation: Public Discourse and Narratives in Action, entrepreneurs are sold the dream of Nigerian-Chinese exchanges through partnerships with Chinese associates. The Nigerian government creates MOUs that allow for Chinese businesses to enter the Nigerian marketplace and these MOUs include mandates for Chinese firms to partner with Nigerian entrepreneurs (FRN 2014; Nabine 2009). Additionally, Nigerian entrepreneurs are encouraged to take advantage of China's growing dominance in Nigerian and across the world. What role do entrepreneurs play in Nigeria's economic development? What initiatives does the Nigerian government offer to help stimulate entrepreneurship? How do Nigerian entrepreneurs establish and maintain relationships with Chinese counterparts? What are the benefits and challenges for Nigerian entrepreneurs who conduct business with Chinese counterparts? Which entrepreneurs are able to convert the grand narrative of partnership with China into reality?

This chapter traces the inspirations/ambitions, successes and challenges of a range of Nigerian entrepreneurs seeking to make good on the promise of doing business with China. These actors operate businesses in a variety of industries and represent a range of business sizes. Their stories illuminate the dynamics, hopes/expectations, possibilities, contradictions and setbacks that are associated with the entrepreneurial promise of conducting business with China. I argue that the

⁷ MINT [Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey] is a group of countries that are predicted to be the latest "emerging economic giants" (BBC 2014).

entrepreneurs most able to conduct business with China do so by building and drawing upon various forms of capital (critical social networks; financial and educational capital; patronage and familial relations). In turn these entrepreneurs use this capital to access the Chinese marketplace primarily to purchase goods and services that cater to Nigeria's burgeoning middle class. Entrepreneurs are multi-focused, they must pay attention to the day to day operations of their businesses while meeting the needs of customers and managing relationships with business associates. I begin the chapter by exploring the significance and evolving conceptions of entrepreneurship within Nigeria from a historical and contemporary perspective. This is followed by an ethnographic exploration of the experiences of Nigerians who conduct business with Chinese counterparts. These experiences are presented through an introduction to their businesses and discussions of the various issues they face as a group, which includes bureaucratic challenges and management of social relations between themselves and Chinese counterparts.

A Nation Full of Entrepreneurs

Definitions of Entrepreneurship

I rap and sing, got my short film, graphic artist, agriculturist, limitless gee...this goal getter needs more cheddah..... Invest in your dreams keep up the grind you gon' shine later.

"Hustle Over Feelings" by Feko (2015)

Images of Nigerian entrepreneurship are showcased throughout the country, on television; in newspapers and books; songs and daily conversation. As a recent song by Nigerian hip-hop artist Feko attests, entrepreneurship is a hustle full of numerous ventures which requires dedication and the delay of gratification. In 2004, "97% of all business in Lagos State used the umbrella 'small business'. The micro and small enterprises sector provides, on average, 50% of Nigeria's employment and 50% of its industrial output" (Osotimehin et al 2012: 179). In a 2010 country wide survey, the National Bureau of Statistics and the Small & Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria found that Nigeria had 17,261,753 micro enterprises; 21,264 small enterprises and 1,654 medium enterprises (NBE & SMEDAN 2010: 107). While the majority of Nigerian firms are small scale and informal, there is a government push to help businesses develop into formal enterprises.

Entrepreneurship remains the main vehicle of facilitating the "graduation" of informal sector ventures with realistic business prospects to better-established and better-endowed enterprises as well as the principal means of promoting economic diversification, export to niche markets, future growth, and higher living standards. (Luke 1995: 149)

Converting an enterprise from the informal sector to the formal sector can be challenging for a variety of reasons, including lack of access to financial, educational and social capital needed to grow and navigate the increased levels of bureaucracy required to become a part of the formal sector. The entrepreneurs discussed within this chapter, are within the lauded small-medium enterprises (SME) category. Businesses within this category have assets, excluding land and buildings, ranging from ₦5 to ₦200million [£12,000-£1.2million] and hire up to 199 employees (Tom et al 2016). The economic benefits of SMEs are praised for increasing employment through enterprises that rely upon “labour intensive technologies” and for their role in helping to achieve “wider economic and socio-economic objectives, including poverty alleviation” (Cook and Nixon 2000).

Definitions of entrepreneurship vary from ‘starting and running informal or micro enterprises’ to ‘starting and running a business entrepreneurially (i.e. innovatively, independently, committed, seeking growth, adopting strategic business practices)’ (Olomi 2009: 3). Generally entrepreneurs are described as embodying a variety of characteristics including motivation, grit, competitive spirit, calculation, discipline and a high level of busy savvy. Garba argued that categorizing all entrepreneurship as positive can be dangerous and that “the existence of entrepreneurs is not a guarantee that everyone is acting productively to advance economic growth” (Garba 2012:167). Negative entrepreneurial ventures can bring wealth to the entrepreneur and employees but have ill effects on society through subversion of the law. It is suggested that in more politically unstable environments, negative entrepreneurial ventures can thrive due to the lack of enforcement of laws and potential collusion from government officials. In the context of Nigeria, this ethnographic study of entrepreneurship challenges Garba’s argument. Distinct categories of positive and negative are displaced by complex and more nuanced categories that suggest that the boundaries between negative and positive; informal and formal; illicit and licit are more fluid and negotiable than proposed.

Nigeria’s history of entrepreneurship dates back to pre-colonial times. (Hashim and Meagher 1999; Rotimi and Ogen 2008). “On the eve of independence in 1960, officials estimated that there were already more than one and a quarter million [Nigerian owned] enterprises in Nigeria, which some social scientists believed was an understatement” (Schatz 1979: 78). Official government intervention into business ventures was rare until the late 1950’s when the first business incubator was established in Lagos state. Business incubators were created for business people to utilize for up to five years in the hopes of promoting “indigenous entrepreneurship by

providing entrepreneurs with a superior base of operation in fully built up factory buildings with the supporting infrastructural facilities as well as technical/management support services” (Adegbite 2001: 160). The majority of the businesses participating in this scheme were not successful in the transition from incubator status to independent entrepreneurship. Adegbite attributes part of this failure to poor support and management from the government. (Adegbite 2001).

After the Biafran War (1968-1970) the Nigerian government became increasingly involved in developing entrepreneurship (Thaddeus 2012: 32). In 1972 the Nigerian government created the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree which is colloquially known as the ‘indigenization decree’. It was further modified in 1977 and in 1989. (See Chapter 3-The Family Firm for a discussion on this decree from the perspective of foreign firms like GNIM.) The decree’s aim was to increase Nigerian business ownership and participation in the business sector which would in turn place Nigerians in the economic driver’s seat as opposed to the economy being driven by external forces. As Jarmon described it:

With respect to commerce and industry, it is designed to provide Nigerians with opportunities for major participation in many fields, such as administration, banking, manufacturing and construction. But Nigeria lacks trained manpower and is forced to rely too heavily upon outside experts. (Jarmon1988: 37)

Weaknesses of the decree included the fact that it enriched a small percentage of the Nigerian population, namely elites, who were in financial or social positions to take advantage of new opportunities. The decree also did not include provisions for training entrepreneurs in areas where they faced challenges: marketing; technology and organization (Schatz 1979: 81-84). Despite the indigenization decree, entrepreneurial ventures stalled due to a lack of resources and training. Nigeria’s indigenous decree insured that Nigerian interests were served on some level, although these interests were generally limited to Nigerian elites and did little to solve larger economic issues like reducing poverty.

Research on Ghana’s entrepreneurial class development found that, in order to alleviate poverty, from the mid-1980s onwards, governments and donor agencies refocused previous policies and invested in small entrepreneurial ventures (Arthur 2005: 428). Nigeria also experienced a similar approach. After mandating that Nigeria participate in structural adjustment programmes, the very same donors directed their efforts towards stimulating the Nigerian economy through

investments into small entrepreneurial ventures. (Thaddeus 2012: 32). By the mid-1990's, James Wolfensohn, then head of the World Bank, began to laud the use of entrepreneurship, which he credited with helping millions of people.... "work their way out of poverty with dignity" (Dolan and Scott 2009: 205). Additionally, micro-credit programmes were increasingly praised as market based tools that help lift women and their families out of poverty (Dolan and Scott 2009: 205). Entrepreneurial development focused on SMEs due to the perceived benefits that SMEs have on a country's economy. "SMEs represent a veritable vehicle for the achievement of national economic objectives of employment generation and poverty reduction at low investment cost as well as the development of entrepreneurial capabilities including indigenous technology" (Ogbo and Nwachukwu 2012: 95).

In Nigeria, specific bodies such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) and the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Association of Nigeria (SMEDAN) focused on helping entrepreneurs establish businesses (Ogbo and Nwachukwu 2012: 95). The NDE provided training through the organization's Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDPs). EDPs were "designed to expose participants to the rudiments of modern business management techniques, as well as motivating their latent entrepreneurial talents" (Ogechukwu and Latinwo 2010: 57). In order to receive financial assistance participants were mandated to attend EDPs. For example, the Graduate Job Creation Loan Scheme provided participants who attended EDPs with loans of "up to ₦35,000 [£130] repayable over [a] 5 year(s) period with one year moratorium" (Ogechukwu and Latinwo 2010: 57). While a great deal of focus was placed on young people, there were programmes for older citizens such as the "Mature Peoples Scheme" that helped retired and redundant workers start new businesses (Ogechukwu and Latinwo 2010: 57).

In the 21st century the ideal of entrepreneurship became further entrenched in Nigerian society with the introduction of new training programmes and the inclusion of entrepreneurship studies into the country's higher education curriculum. An example of this, is The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED). The CED has a mandate to teach "students of higher institutions (especially in science, engineering and technological (SET)) to acquire entrepreneurial, innovative, and management skills" so that they "create job opportunities for others and....generate wealth" upon graduation (Thaddeus 2012: 32). In 2011, former President Jonathan created YouWin, another entrepreneurship programme aimed at young people. The programme proved to be quite successful with 24,000 applicants in the first year and 65,000

applicants by 2013. Each year 1,200 grants are given and they range from ₦1 to ₦10million [£2,800-£28,000] (Federal Ministry of Information 2013). After the first round of YouWin received a low number of female applicants, the second competition focused on cultivating female entrepreneurship. YouWin is jointly managed by the World Bank, the Pan-Africa University in Lagos, and the Plymouth Business School in the UK. (Abdulhamid 2012). In 2014, the government created the Nigeria Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP) and National Enterprise Development Programme (NEDEP). The initiatives were created to help further develop the Nigerian manufacturing sector, specifically local owned firms in the micro, small and medium categories. During the launch of the programme, former President Jonathan stated that the NIRP “will fast-track industrialization, accelerate inclusive economic growth, job creation, transform Nigeria’s business environment and stop the drain on our foreign reserves caused by importing what we can produce locally” (SMEDAN).

Entrepreneurship has gradually become the major focal point in the toolkit of Nigerian economic development. This intensified focus on entrepreneurship can be attributed to a combination of factors including a shift in programme funding from donors, “the increasing rate of unemployment, a growing service sector, a reduction in regulatory control, increasing privatization/competition, and the introduction of a [new] poverty eradication program in 2001” (Thaddeus 2012: 32). Entrepreneurial discourse is consistently linked with the ideal of job creation for individual entrepreneurs and with time, job creation for fellow citizens through employment. Wider aims of entrepreneurship embrace country-wide development and national economic independence (Ovat 2013: 37-39). Entrepreneurship is held up as a golden beacon and an effective panacea for Nigeria’s economic and social ills. Ogundele and Abiola advocate educating Nigerians throughout society in entrepreneurship.

The widespread level of unemployment in the country could have been minimized if Nigerians of varying age groups and backgrounds were exposed to entrepreneurial education, training and development across levels.... The evangelistic agenda will not be complete if any segment of the society is not catered for. Everybody must be an entrepreneurial crusader from the urban to rural areas. (Ogundele and Abiola 2012: 144)

Some researchers argue that entrepreneurship can be born out of necessity by people who cannot find work or are employed in jobs that do not pay them enough to sustain themselves (Olomi 2009: 47). This argument ties into Nigeria’s high level of unemployment rates. On the other hand Rosa et al (2006) found that entrepreneurship out of necessity wasn’t the case for the majority of entrepreneurs they studied in Uganda and Sri Lanka. Instead they found that entrepreneurs

were ...”progress and status driven to improve their social and economic standing so that they can contribute and enjoy the benefits of development. In doing so they will lessen any state of necessity, but this will be a consequence rather than a driver of their entrepreneurship” (Rosa et al. 2006: 9-10). Research into South African women entrepreneurs found that despite facing economic issues, generally the women “were relatively better educated than the general population” and “often possessed more assets, television, telephone, internet access, electricity, running water, and so on-than the percentage reported in the wider community” (Dolan and Scott 2009: 206-207).

On average, most new businesses in Nigeria fail within the first five years of operations (Ogbo and Nwachukwu 2012: 104). Some of these failures are due to the challenges of doing business in Nigeria. In a survey of Nigerian SMEs Ogbo and Nwachukwu found that these challenges included “lack of easy access to funding/credits”, trade barriers, and “lack of adequate managerial and entrepreneurial skills” (Ogbo and Nwachukwu 2012: 99). Other challenges to Nigerian entrepreneurs ranged from poor infrastructure to corruption to inconsistent government policies and security issues (Ihugba et al. 2013: 28-29). Although some of the previously discussed government programmes attempt to combat a number of these challenges, many of these issues are deeply entrenched in society and require larger long-term and intensive solutions. But despite these issues, Nigerians continue to create businesses.

The spirit of entrepreneurship is filled with aspirations and goals not, just for the individual, but for Nigeria as a whole. These hopes and dreams are exactly what the Nigerian-Chinese narrative taps into. Nigeria’s future is linked with entrepreneurs as the literal hope of the nation and the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relations as a path towards modernity and economic development has the potential to compliment Nigerian entrepreneurship. This chapter explores the world of entrepreneurs in Nigeria, specifically those that have taken up the government’s promise of Nigerian-Chinese relationships. Through this analysis we see that entrepreneurs, particularly those with more privileged backgrounds are most successful at engaging in business with Chinese counterparts.

Here I follow their struggles and successes as they engage with Chinese business associations in an attempt to realize the Nigerian entrepreneurial dream. I have selected five accounts to demonstrate the numerous ways Nigerian entrepreneurs connect with China (as buyers; sellers;

and partners) and highlight the key themes of aspirations, class, and advantage; social networks; trust and mistrust.

Entrepreneurial Aspirations and Hope

From Company Men to Boss Men

Dante is an energetic man in his late thirties who spoke about his business and travel experiences with enthusiasm. His journey from artist to international entrepreneur is one he was keen to share. During university Dante was an art major and along the way he had a few art exhibitions and sold some of his abstract art abroad. After observing that graphic artists were in high demand Dante studied graphic arts to supplement his income. After university Dante applied aesthetic knowledge in the business world where he was hired to work in the corporate gifts department of an energy firm. The firm was well known across industries for its corporate gifts [swag] that they gave to employees, customers and partners. These gifts were wide ranging from bags to customised diaries to engraved items and cufflinks. The energy company bought gifts from a variety of European and Middle Eastern countries which provided Dante with a chance to engage in business on an international level. Dante termed his time with the large corporation as an introduction into the “proper business world” and after a few years he and two business partners started their own business. His firm did business with the energy company and other organisations. Due to their knowledge and connections via previous employment, the firm quickly became “THE source for corporate gifts and branding”. But after a year Dante decided it was time to become the sole proprietor of his own business.

The first year out on his own was challenging and there were days where Dante did not have enough money to eat up to three meals a day. He eventually borrowed money from a friend to buy office equipment and started pitching his services to potential clients he found via his social network. As time progressed Dante began to build a clientele and added his previous university work, graphic design, to his business offerings. At one point Dante was considered the “image maker for GTBank”, one of the largest banks in Nigeria that has branches in other West African countries and the UK. He provided his corporate gift and graphic design services to the bank. He also has other clients including large corporations in the fast food industry. A major part of Dante’s work focuses on helping clients “[who] didn’t know what they want but [know] they want something unique.”

When Dante travelled to Dubai to purchase products for his business, he found that most of the items he bought were from China, Taiwan and Turkey. After a while he concluded that it was wiser for him to go directly to the source and travel to China. Dante's first trip to China was in 2008 when he attended the Canton Fair which he called "the corporate gift centre of the world". One of Dante's more recent ventures was to provide larger graphic installations for education fairs. Dante's work for the education fairs comprised of designing the materials for each booth including banners and displays; creating business cards and lanyards for attendees; and designing billboards advertising the fairs. The fairs are a chance for universities in a number of Western to recruit students from developing countries and these events usually fairs have taken place in the home countries of students. University representatives collaborate with Dante on installation ideas. According to Dante, the "jobs keep getting bigger and we are introducing new concepts over the years".

The Security Business

In the spring of 2012, the International Fire and Security Exhibition and Conference-West Africa (IFSEC) held its second annual conference at the upscale Eko Hotel in Lagos. The hotel was full of Nigerian and international patrons. Eko is one of the most expensive and well known hotels in Lagos. Although some say it is living on its past laurels and competition like GNIM's Great Eastern and international firms (i.e-Radisson and Sheraton) will outpace it, the Eko still hosts events like the security conference. The security industry in Nigeria is growing as Nigerians spend more money on safety ranging from personal safety at home and on the road to security for businesses and institutions. Itoro, the managing director of an international private security firm headquartered in Nigeria, was one of the conference attendees.

As a child, Itoro dreamt of joining the military but his mother did not approve, so he attended university and earned a degree in agriculture. When he graduated in the 1990's, Nigeria was under military rule and the only employment Itoro could find was in the security industry. One of his first security jobs was as a security guard for a church. Throughout the years, Itoro moved from providing personal security to managing an entire security firm. After his experiences working for others, Itoro decided to open up his own firm in 2009. He is both the owner and managing director of Prestige Security. Itoro operates the firm alongside his wife, a writer, who serves as the firm's executive director of communications. Prestige also operates in other countries in Africa, Europe and the Middle East. When this research took place, Prestige had over forty contracts for companies, hotels, schools and individuals. The firm provides electronic

security systems as a part of its security services. These systems, which are used to secure houses and buildings, are purchased from China. For Itoro working with a Chinese partner is essential to his business.

The firm offers personal security for clients ranging from individuals to families conducting personal business or groups on diplomatic missions. Prestige's roster includes real estate moguls, managing directors and chairmen. Itoro describes some clients as "people you read about every week; we're not talking of small fish". As such clients are promised top services such as swift pickups from airports which are comprised of a swift immigration process and retrieval of luggage within fifteen minute. This is compared to the one hour plus it takes the average person to navigate immigration and retrieve their luggage. Prestige's services extend to offshore oil and gas firms where it provides security to clients roundtrip from land to sea. Itoro's philosophy is that the "comfort of the principal [the client] must not be compromised". The firm's high level of service has led to a positive reputation in the security industry and garnered Itoro opportunities to speak at various conferences like a maritime security and piracy conference in Nigeria. Additionally his firm helped build a facility for the Nigerian Navy to monitor pirates off the coast of Nigeria. Although many of his clients are a part of the upper echelons of Nigerian society, Itoro believes that security is an important issue for everyone in Nigeria. As such Prestige provides free 'security clinics' to teach the public about staying secure and ways to analyse risk in a variety of situations. "Security is not only for the good; it's for the bad [too]. Good people also get involved in bad [situations]."

The Beauty Business

Nigerian women have been involved in some form of entrepreneurship for centuries. Due to a lack of encouragement for formal education, women usually engaged in business in the informal sector, specifically in markets. By the 1920's, enterprises led by women "were so profitable that the colonial government elected to tax the profit [through a] flat tax" (Anyansi-Archibong 1996: 500). Decades later in 1984, under Nigerian military rule, the government once again imposed a flat tax on women led enterprises (Anyansi-Archibong 1996: 500). Since then female entrepreneurship has become recognized as a driver of economic and social development. To this end, various initiatives have been created to encourage women entrepreneurs. Additionally, women's access to education has improved significantly. Nonetheless 80% of women led enterprises in Nigeria are micro-enterprises (Okafor and Amalu 2010: 74). An increasing number Nigerian female entrepreneurs have a minimum of secondary level education and as

well as university level education (Halkais et al 2011: 221; Mordi et al 2010: 15-16). The challenges for female entrepreneurs include balancing family and entrepreneurial responsibilities; subjection to sexual harassment and lack of access to financial capital (Mordi et al 2010: 15-16; Ukonu and Tafamel, 2011: 236-237). Teniola, known as Teni, is a Nigerian female entrepreneur. As the owner of a growing beauty and cosmetics company based in Lagos, Teni is a part of the 20% of Nigerian female entrepreneurs who own small to large businesses.

During university Teni started her entrepreneurial ventures by paying attention to trends in Nigerian society. She observed that an increasing number of women had their makeup applied professionally. Although Teni graduated from university with a degree in social anthropology and dreamt of working for the United Nations she always felt an ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ lurked inside of her. Teni began to experiment with makeup and developed a “flair for cosmetics” which she expressed in her work as a makeup artist. After marrying and becoming a mother Teni focused on creating a business where she could have enough time for work and family. Out of all of the entrepreneurs I spoke with, Teni was the only one that discussed the need to balance work and family. Having the support of her husband helped to balance these issues. This support included financial support. Most female entrepreneurs rely on personal savings or contributions and loans from family and friends due to low access to bank loans (Lincoln 2012).

In 2009, Teni formally established her business. The firm primarily focused on wholesaling cosmetics and cosmetic cases to fellow makeup artists. Teni purchased the cosmetic cases from manufacturers in China. The professional makeup artists’ industry continues to grow as Nigerians, particularly those in the middle class and above, hire makeup artists for dates and special events, especially weddings where brides require makeup for both wedding ceremonies-traditional and religious. These are costly services and makeup artists require equipment which withstand heavy use. Makeup artists routinely work with various clients on a weekly and even daily basis and they often use the same makeup brushes on numerous clients. While developing her business Teni saw not only a need for cosmetics cases that had enough room to carry all the tools makeup artists used, but she also saw a need for hygienic makeup tools including a brush cleaner. Teni also began incorporated training events into her business. She presented trainings in conjunction with international makeup companies and taught makeup artists hygienic makeup practice.

As the business progressed Teni enrolled in a programme to earn a Certificate in Entrepreneurial Management program at the Lagos Business School to gain more business knowledge. “A lot of what I’ve learned in the class were from fellow entrepreneurial colleagues.” Her main goals were to set herself apart from the competition and create a product which clients valued. She felt the course was a key component in helping her meet this goal and to create a business strategy while improving her marketing and distribution channels. Teni used social media-primarily Twitter, Facebook, BlackBerry Messenger, and WhatsApp to advertise products and upcoming events.

The Mineral Whisperer: Selling to Chinese Clients

Preston is in his late thirties and the owner of a natural minerals business. Although he sold to wholesale clients from Nigeria; Tanzania; the US and Germany, the majority of his clients were from China. Despite Preston’s parents’ desire for him to become a doctor it was his long standing interest in geology, which he began during his childhood, which led to Preston’s entrepreneurial ventures. Preston studied briefly at the University of Lagos but eventually quit due to a lack of interest and boredom during continued university strikes. After starting his business he took a professional course in Corporate Administration through the Chartered Institute of Administration. Entrepreneurship is not uncommon in Preston’s family. Besides his father who worked in senior management for two international corporations, his mother owned her own business where she sold soft drinks. Additionally, Preston’s sisters work with their husbands on individual entrepreneurial ventures.

Preston started his business by selling quartz through Alibaba.com, an online marketplace for business to business commerce that is headquartered in China⁸. He also focused on promoting his business through social media via Twitter and Facebook. Preston made additional business contacts through existing clients or on his own because due to his good deals, “some [customers] don’t want to share [him] as a contact”. At the time I conducted my research, Preston had over twelve regular Chinese customers; the majority were either jewellery makers or gem dealers. Most of his clients went to Nigeria and conducted business face to face. As time went on Preston branched out to sell a broad range of minerals due to the variety of gemstones found within Nigeria.

⁸ Alibaba.com has offices in various countries including Japan, India, the United Kingdom and United States. A large number of the transactions has one party in China as either the buyer or seller.

He primarily focuses on sourcing products from mines or markets in the south of Nigeria as well as in Jos state in Northern Nigeria. Part of Preston's business involves directly buying minerals from the mines or markets then selling them to Chinese clients. Many mines are jointly owned by management and miners, 70% by Nigerian owners and 30% by employees respectively. Instead of a salary employees were provided with food and maintenance while the owners purchased gems directly from employees. Although Preston sometimes took clients to the gem markets, he learned early on that Chinese wholesalers preferred to go directly to the mines and buy from the miners, thus eliminating middlemen like himself. While some of his wholesale clients attempted to do this, most found it difficult to make direct contact with mine management or miners so they often relied upon Preston to acquire minerals and gems for them.

Building Homes for Well to Do Nigerians

Charles, also known as Pastor Charles, is the CEO of a real estate and construction firm located in Lekki, Lagos State. Lekki is one of the largest growing areas in Lagos State and is home to the Lekki Free Trade Zone (LekkiFTZ), a Nigerian-Chinese development. (See Chapter 1- Introduction for a brief discussion on the LFTZ) By the end of construction, investors boasts that Lekki FTZ will be a town of "world class" (Nigeria Summit 2011) proportions that has business and residential areas as well as an international airport. Even before the LekkiFTZ was created, Nigerian entrepreneurs like Charles were drawn to the area. Charles's business ranges from property management to construction of residential developments. He opened his firm in 2007 after leaving another real estate firm which he cofounded. Charles received much of his formal business education through various professional training programmes. Some of these programmes have international links, like The Thames Business School of Singapore (TBS) and a Global CEO programme that is jointly designed by two internationally ranked business schools- IESE Business School in Madrid and Wharton School in Philadelphia. Charles attended the TBS satellite programme in Lagos and he travelled to Philadelphia for the Global CEO programme.

One of his more recent projects is a private estate geared towards upper middle-class Nigerians and was advertised as "designed for high net worth and medium income level residents" (Property Index 2013). Further advertising describes the property as providing:

...the appropriate blending for all aspects of interactive human activities which include residential, commercial, educational, institutional, and recreational, inclusive of services...It is a rich package of treasured buildings and state-of-the-art infrastructure in a sustainable environment...The general

atmosphere guarantees adequate security under a very efficient management system. (Property Index 2013)

The firm's client base are upper-middle class and upper class Nigerians, therefore "the goal of the company was not just to build affordable houses for Nigerians, but also to create excellent environment that would favourably compete with any in high-brow areas such as Ikoyi or Lekki Peninsula." (This Day Life: 2010).

Upon completion, the private estate will contain a mixture of 2,000 single homes and flats. Homes in the development range from ~~₦12.5-₦29.5~~ million (£30,000-£72,000). The estate is similar to sub-divisions in the United States where home-owners are a part of an association to which homeowners pay a mandatory membership fee for the maintenance of community goods. In the US these community goods encompass security, recreational areas for residents and road maintenance. In Nigeria community goods cover more things including payment for drainage, fencing, and lights on the streets of the estate. (Business Day 2011). These extras are provided by local governments in the US via taxes but in Nigeria, homeowners are responsible these services. A large amount of the construction materials and machinery Charles used in his construction sites are purchased from China. His interactions with Chinese counterparts have taken place in both Nigeria and China. Alongside other Nigerian dignitaries, Charles helped host a Chinese agricultural business delegation who visited his home state of Edo. Additionally, his business has expanded to partner with Chinese counterparts on the design of materials. He was also in the midst of negotiating a joint construction project with Chinese counterparts for a Nigerian government project.

Elitism & Exclusion

Entrepreneurs can either order items from China sight unseen or go to China to view the items and have them sent to Nigeria.

African entrepreneurs generally buy in bulk, utilizing Chinese-owned cargo companies, and products are shipped direct with Africans making up the vast majority of clients. The point, though, is that it is not simply Chinese traders "flooding" the African market with cheap Chinese goods; African actors are actively facilitating the penetration of Africa by Chinese-made products.
(Taylor and Xiao 2009: 719)

Chinese products are increasingly being brought to Africa by African business people. Initially, Chinese products in Nigeria were brought and sold by Chinese merchants at places like Chinatown. (See Chapter 1-for a brief discussion on Chinatown). As these goods increased in

the marketplace, the number of African merchants selling Chinese goods increased. But en masse, Chinese goods were of low quality and consumers became increasingly frustrated. From the Nigerian consumers perspective, Chinese goods have been dumped into the country under the false claims of meeting the needs of “low-income African consumers who do not have the purchasing power to acquire better quality goods” (Aderemi 2012: 197). This is an issue for entrepreneurs particularly those like Teni and Dante who sell the goods they buy from China directly to their clients. Additionally, their clients are upper-middle class and upper class Nigerians who have the means to purchase items at higher prices. The question is how will entrepreneurs respond to increasing demands for high quality goods? Because of the poor reputation of Chinese goods in Nigeria Teni travelled to China to meet manufacturers and personally choose high quality products. What Teni discovered when buying Chinese products directly from manufacturers was the hierarchy of quality which most Chinese products are divided into. These three categories are: “copy; copy-copy and high-copy”. Copy is the lowest grade of products; these goods appear to be low in quality and they wear out quickly. Copy-copy products are middle range in quality and high-copy products rivals the quality of top brands.

The first wave of Chinese manufactured products sold in Nigeria were often copies or at best copies of copies. These were the quality of products sold in Chinatown, but Nigerian consumers began seeing an increasing amount of Chinese goods starting in the 1990’s, a decade before the opening of Chinatown.

... many imported Chinese goods were often substandard, leading the Standards Organization of Nigeria in October 1996 to threaten China that a formal complaint would be lodged within the World Trade Organization if the situation was not immediately corrected. The Chinese responded by declaring that they had not deliberately engaged in the dumping of inferior goods in Nigeria and that it was often Nigerian businessmen of dubious disposition who were ordering products of questionable quality. (Utomi 2008: 51)

These fake goods were either “poorly cloned originals of known brands” or even mimics of local country brands (Aderemi 2012: 197). In response to the accusations from Chinese officials, Nigerian businesses countered by placing the blame on Chinese businesses. Nigerians argued that Chinese businesses’ success in Nigeria was partially due to their ability to dump “cheap Chinese products onto local markets, stifling the competitiveness of domestic production” (Utomi 2008: 54). This argument was in line with research which found that “... the glut of cheap consumer goods from China is a problem not only because it brings national industries to their knees but because imports are increasingly taking place via Chinese trade networks, to the

detriment of local merchants” (Hofmann et al 2007: 85). The blame game between Nigerian and Chinese private and public sector representatives has gone on for a number of years. Although both sides have contributed to the issue, neither side is willing to concede. (See Chapter 2- Selling the Chinese Dream to the Nation: Public Discourse and Narratives in Action for a quote from a Nigerian representative regarding the quality of Chinese products entering Nigeria).

While the entrepreneurs discussed in this chapter tend to sell high-copy products, other entrepreneurs specifically focus on importing lower quality goods to sell at low prices while making money through the volume of sales. Lyons et al studied African traders who conduct business in Africa and China. They found a broad variety of traders in various industries but many bought and sold “low-value goods that enable entry into the market through a very diverse range of strategies” (Lyons et al 2013: 90). There is a market for copy goods in Nigeria particularly amongst customers who face price constraints. Nevertheless, in general Nigerian consumers inextricably link Chinese products with connotations of cheapness and unreliability, subsequently the stigma attached to buying Chinese products remains. Therefore, Teni did not disclose the country of origin for the products she sold to her clients. “I don’t tell people I buy from China; I want to sell”. Instead she focuses on quality and purchases high-copy level products.

Knowing the Right People: The Challenge of Visa Procurement

As the entrepreneurs expanded their businesses, going to China and accessing the marketplace directly became their favoured option. It is generally regarded among Nigerian business people that business with China, whether supply or trade, requires a high level of interpersonal connections which can help in accessing quality products and good prices. But these interpersonal connections must be nurtured and maintained. Going to China allows business people to see products in person; create or build upon relationships with counterparts in person; and make informed decisions. Some business people don’t initially travel to China. Instead, they go to other countries where Chinese goods are sold wholesale. In research on Nigerian traders in Lagos, most traders’ first buying trip was to Dubai (Afolayan 2011 et al. 67). “Although the price of Chinese goods is somewhat higher there [in Dubai] than in China, the journey is far less expensive than the journey to China and presents fewer bureaucratic hurdles” (Lyons et al 2013: 86). Dante began purchasing goods from China by buying Chinese made products during his trips to Dubai. However, “more African traders [tend] to import on their own account, bypassing established local and Chinese importers” and travelling directly “to China, in particular,

Guangzhou” (Lyons et al 2013: 79). Overall the number of African business people visiting China continues to increase. From 2000 to 2005, China saw “...an annual increase of 33.3 percent [which is] far higher than other groups” (Lyons et al 2013: 81.

Obtaining a visa to travel to China was a relatively easy matter for African entrepreneurs until 2005. (Lyons et al 2013: 94). The process became more difficult due to stricter regulations from the Chinese government that tried to crackdown on the increasing number of African traders who delayed returning home, either in attempts to permanently stay in China or to conduct further business before returning home. The entrepreneurs discussed within this chapter describe a complex visa process that has both elements of ease and difficulty. Applying for a visa is fraught with bureaucratic challenges but with help of a broker, obtaining a visa can be easy. In Nigeria applying for a Chinese visa is not as simple as going in person to the consulate or embassy; purchasing an airplane ticket; and flying off to China. The Chinese visa application process sometimes requires that applicants place a hold on an airplane ticket before applying for a visa. Additionally, first time visa applicants must have a minimum of ₦4million (£14,000) in their bank accounts in order to prove their solvency and demonstrate that they have a lower likelihood of staying in China beyond their visa expiration date. Even if they meet all of these requirements, applicants rarely apply directly for visas. In fact, none of the entrepreneurs discussed in this thesis or other business people I met during fieldwork applied for a Chinese visa without the help of an intermediary. When Dante tried to directly apply through the consulate he encountered difficulties. He described the Chinese consulate representatives as “not friendly and not so nice when it comes to (their) visas; they won’t talk to you”.

Therefore business people turn to brokers. Brokers are either individuals or organizations. Individual intermediaries are people who know people, who know more people; essentially people who have direct or indirect connections to employees of the Chinese consulate or embassy. Organizational intermediaries are companies, like GNIM, or groups that have well established relationships with the Chinese government and can vouch for the character and financial stability of the applicant. Two organizations which help entrepreneurs with the visa process, are the Nigerian Chinese Friendship Association (NCFA) and Nigeria-China Business Council (NCBA). Charles and Teni obtained visas by employing the help of individual intermediaries who knew others with connections to the Chinese consulate. Ultimately, Dante had to go through a similar route by applying for a visa through a friend of a friend who had access to the Chinese consulate. But after that connection was lost he decided to use an

organization as an intermediary. Dante joined the Lagos Chamber of Commerce but this organization did not have a strong connection with the Chinese government. At the time of our interview he was considering joining the NCFA. Ito encountered similar issues as Dante did, when he initially tried to apply directly to the Chinese consulate for a visa. He eventually joined the Nigeria-China Business Council which helped him obtain a visa.

Very few Nigerian entrepreneurs belong to a business association that can broker on their behalf (NBS and SMEDAN 2010: 72-73). When applying for a Chinese visa through a network, entrepreneurs pay a price closer to the visa prices quoted on the Chinese government's official website. As of 2016, the website for China's Lagos consulate quoted prices for business visas in the range of ₦5,000-₦11,000 (£19-£42) depending on the speed of service and number of entries allowed (Chinese Consulate 2013). This is far more affordable than what Dante paid for his first trip to China in 2008. Dante applied for a visa through individual intermediaries to which he paid ₦130,000 (£491) for a single entry-thirty day visa. The entrepreneurs as well as other Nigerians I spoke with usually mentioned 'agent fees' in relation to visas procured via individual intermediaries. Agent fees are the payments that people along the chain between the applicant and the visa officials receive. No one is quite clear of the process or how many people are involved along the chain as it changes depending on the applicant's initial connection. Nonetheless, it is thought that there are Nigerian and Chinese sub-intermediaries along the way. Given the unknown number of intermediaries, in order for sub-intermediaries to profit from their work, the price listed on the website is vastly different than the actual price an entrepreneur like Dante pays in the end.

Although organizations that serve as intermediaries do not charge 'agent fees', the cost to join associations detracts some business people. For example, in 2012, the annual application and membership fees for joining NFA was ₦82,300 (£329). NCBA's membership fees were in three categories: Women: ₦25,000 (£100); Men: ₦50,000 (£200) and Corporate Organisations ₦200,000 (£800). Both organizations had prominent members [including former Nigerian ambassadors to China and international business people] and links to both the Nigerian and Chinese governments. Applying through these organizations is easy. The applicant completes all the necessary paperwork and a representative from the association submits the application under the auspices of the organization. Business people with membership in either of these associations are virtually guaranteed that they will receive a Chinese visa.

Without brokerage through individuals or organizations intermediaries, entrepreneurs are deterred from obtaining a visa. In order to access this area, entrepreneurs draw upon on social capital. Without connections entrepreneurs face a greater challenge in obtaining a visa. This creates boundaries where “...the same strong ties that enable group members to obtain privileged access to resources bar others from securing the same assets” (Thornton et al 2011: 108-109). Brokerage organizations serve as gatekeepers in controlling who can and cannot enter the exclusive world of Nigerian-Chinese relationships. Entrepreneurs who want to visit China, but lack the right connections have little chance of accessing travelling to China. Additionally, the requirement of ₦4million (£14,000) in a bank account is a substantial challenge for a number of entrepreneurs. Therefore, the visa requirements and opaque application process serve as a form of gatekeeping where the opportunity to interact with Chinese counterparts face to face becomes an exclusive opportunity.

Face to Face Negotiations

Most entrepreneurs expressed a desire to land in China, conduct business and leave. “The duration of their [Nigerian entrepreneurs] stay is short; the average length of stay of international traders being relatively longer than that for internal traders; for as soon as they achieve their goal (trading), they return to their base in the country.....” (Afolayan 2011 et al.: 94). When Dante and Teni discussed their trips to China they both acknowledged that they didn’t see much of the city. Instead, they shopped, slept and ate. Dante’s first trip was spent at the China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair) in Guangzhou. The event is an international trade fair that has been held since the late 1950’s and runs twice a year. In 2014 over 180,000 attendees came from across the globe to make deals and purchase goods (Canton Fair Online 2014). While the majority of the over 20,000 firms who have booths at the fair are from China, an increasing number come from other countries. The bi-yearly sessions run for three weeks with different groups of products sold each week. Goods range widely and include: furniture; large and small machinery; construction machinery; food; clothing; electronic goods and food.

Before visiting the trade fair, Dante was unaware of the difference in the quality of goods. He expressed surprise at the forthright manner in which sales people explained the differences between copy, copy-copy and high-copy. Dante attributed his surprise to his previous views on Chinese business people. “People think they [Chinese] are thieves, [and] of course there are rogues”. Despite these conflicting issues of whether Chinese counterparts could be trusted or not

Dante took a risk and after only meeting a company representative once in China, he sent \$25,000 [£14,900] for goods to be sent from China to Nigeria. After a few visits to China, Dante hired a shopper who bought things on his behalf and arranged the shipment for him from China to Nigeria. Guangzhou is the manufacturing hub of China and as such attracts international business people year round. Teni visited Guangzhou to visit a mall full of showrooms dedicated to wholesale customers. She focused on makeup cases and makeup but was unimpressed with the ingredients and quality of the makeup, so she mostly purchased makeup cases. Eventually, Teni found a trusted makeup supplier located in the US to supply makeup which was also labelled and packaged with Teni's firm's logo. During Itoro and Charles travels to China they employed different purchasing strategies than Teni and Dante. Itoro and Charles did not focus on purchasing high-copy level items because they do not sell the products they purchase from China directly to their Nigerian customers. These products are components of the goods and services they provide customers. Therefore, while the two entrepreneurs focus on a moderate level of quality they don't have to worry about customers' perceptions of Chinese products.

Instead Charles and Itoro are concerned with price and how they related to business counterparts. Upon meeting Charles, the first question he asked me connected to his relationships with Chinese associates. Charles asked me "How fake do you want it [the interview] to be?" Charles wanted to know if he could express his mixed feelings regarding his interactions with Chinese counterparts. After laughing he became serious and discussed his visits to China. Similarly to the other entrepreneurs, Charles first researched a variety of sources for his supplies, in his case construction machinery. He narrowed his choices down to a "fairly used" machine from the US and another "used" machine from China. The American model had the advantage of being built with parts which were used in subsequent models; this made it easier to repair the model as time progressed. The only drawback to purchasing the American model was that the price, which was considerably more expensive than the Chinese model. Additionally, Charles liked the rapport he had with the American sellers and viewed them as sincere while he was suspicious of the Chinese seller's business practices which he described as "crooked". After analysis Charles chose the Chinese model which were far cheaper and he eventually made a return on the investment into the machines. The idea of conducting business with people who one does not fully trust was a sentiment that was discussed by most of the entrepreneurs including Itoro, who found that treating an interpersonal connection was one way to remedy this issue.

In Itoro's quest to purchase alarm systems which would suit his company's needs, he reviewed hundreds of products on Alibaba.com and finally chose an alarm system from a firm based in Shenzhen. The firm sent him test samples and he was pleased with the quality. Despite this, Itoro was advised by other Nigerian business people to go to China to meet with the manufacturers and confirm product quality before making a large investment. During his trip to China in 2011, Itoro visited the factory in Shenzhen and found that "they [the firm] had good personal relations and were very friendly." He spent over \$15,000 [£9,063.45] which included the costs for a technician to come from Shenzhen to teach Prestige employees how to operate the alarm systems from the firm's command centre in Lagos. Itoro recalled that "they [the firm representatives] didn't have good English but they had a manual in Chinese" which the firm had translated into English. The technician's visit which was mostly professional, but included some socialising as well, went well despite the technician's initial fears over safety. The combination of a good professional interactions coupled with socialising boosted Itoro's confidence in his Chinese business counterparts. He argued that, quality products can be bought from Chinese manufacturers as long as one is willing to pay for them. Itoro credited both his visit to China and the technician's visit to Nigeria with cementing the relationship between Prestige and its Chinese supplier. However, he also stressed the importance of double checking items, because "If you don't know they [Chinese] will send you anything".

Through discussions with the entrepreneurs it was apparent trust and mistrust play a large part in their relationships with Chinese counterparts.

Building Relationships: Negotiating the Liminality of Trust/Mistrust

For me the critical factor that has granted me favour dealing with Chinese is God's grace. The other is trust- the way to gain the trust of a Chinese man in my field is by carrying out certain task without demanding payment from them. (Preston)

Social relationships are a crucial component of business for the entrepreneurs. They demonstrate varying approaches to developing and managing their relationships with Chinese counterparts. An analysis of these approaches revealed similarities between these forms of elite exchanges and those discussed within Chapters 3 and 4-The Family Firm and 'Our Friend for Eternity'; namely issues related to managing trust and mistrust.

Perceptions: What We Think of 'Them'

Because the majority of Preston's clients are Chinese, he interacted with Chinese counterparts more frequently than the other entrepreneurs. A number of Preston's clients visited Nigeria regularly. Preston viewed his Chinese associates as good clients because as he put it, they "want to see what they're buying"; pay in cash; buy in volume; don't mind the clarity of gems and even buy rough gems. This was in comparison to European and American customers who tend to buy clear gems which take time to either find or refine blemished gems to a state of clarity. Moreover, his Chinese clients are not scared to travel to Nigeria unlike most of the Western business people that Preston has dealt with. Preston tried for months to convince a German customer to come to Nigeria and examine the gems he expressed interest in to no avail. Despite Preston's assurances, the German customer was discouraged from coming by both Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike. Through the examples of Joe-one of his first clients and subsequent clients, Preston learned that Chinese clients were more likely to ignore the perceived dangers and visit Nigeria.

During his first visit to Nigeria, Joe enthusiastically went around Lagos with Preston. In fact, Joe wanted to go as far as northern Nigeria to visit the well-known gem market in Jos. Jos has been the site of religious unrest between Christians and Muslims and many countries have warned their citizens not to visit Jos. Even so, Joe wanted to go because of the stories he heard about large varieties of gems sold at the Jos gem market. Preston was impressed with Joe's tenacity and said that despite it being Joe's "first time in Nigeria, he wanted to visit...The thing about them [Chinese] is that they are not fearful". Preston, being more knowledgeable about the security situation in Jos, was able to convince Joe to visit a market near Lagos. Joe continues to visit Nigeria at least once a year. Conversely, most of Preston's clients are not willing to travel to dangerous regions of Nigeria and there are some Westerners who are willing to travel to Nigeria. Preston's story demonstrates the value of personal interaction. Through his experiences with Joe, the German and others Preston formed a general opinion of what he viewed as the opposing perceptions of Nigeria from Chinese and Western business people.

Conversely Preston and other entrepreneurs expressed some downsides to conducting business with Chinese counterparts. Preston associated these issues to loopholes within Nigerian regulations. "They [Chinese] know our system is porous and they exploit it". Preston illustrated this point by sharing the short story of a Chinese client. Preston's client attempted to leave Nigeria without paying a formal customs or royalty fee on a large amount of quartz he purchased from Preston. When his baggage was examined at the airport the client simply paid around ₦4,000 (£20) to an airport official and was allowed to fly out. If the regulation were strictly enforced,

Preston's client would have had to pay the government at least five times that amount. According to Preston although it is the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development's duty to collect royalties and issue mineral trading licenses, most Chinese clients face no penalties for not obtaining these licenses or failing to pay royalty taxes. Preston described the Nigerian mining sector as poorly structured and one in which Nigerians sellers are outnumbered by a variety of people from other countries including Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and The Gambia.

In order to have some input into shaping regulations so that they benefitted Nigerians, Preston attended monthly meetings organised by the Mining Ministry. His complaints about the poor regulations that allowed people to take gems out of the country without paying fees were met with ambivalence and a lack of responsibility. The ministry representatives placed the onus on customs and said that customs officers had been trained to identify gems and access fees. Preston believed that even if customs officers received training they didn't conduct their jobs properly and thus, allowed gem buyers to flout regulations and "grease [their] palms". Charles also asserted a similar view as Preston and stated that Chinese business people "understand the system" and took advantage of the situation by doing things "here [in Africa]" which could not be done in China; particularly flouting laws or using connections to get contracts. Charles's thoughts on Chinese businesses is similar to what Solomon, GNIM's HR director, expressed: the feeling that Chinese business people also play an active part in corruptive practices which are heavily placed on Nigerians. The entrepreneurs also read newspaper articles about deaths of Nigerian employees within Chinese firms due to atrocious working conditions and stories about poor working conditions in firms operating in China. This information added to their distrust of Chinese business practices. The entrepreneurs sought to mitigate this behaviour through interpersonal interactions and through government that held Chinese businesses accountable.

Branding Impressions: What We Think They Think About Us

Much like the government's overarching public discourse campaign to encourage Nigerian-Chinese interactions, the entrepreneurs also thought about branding and the perceptions Chinese counterparts had of them. Most of the entrepreneurs had some knowledge about Chinese history and social affairs which they used to help them understand their Chinese associates. Preston coupled his knowledge with the numerous group and individual interactions he had with clients. Most of Preston's business meetings were conducted at Chinese hotels in Lagos which are owned by Chinese expatriates and exclusively patronized by Chinese patrons. Preston often met with clients in public spaces and poured out bags of gemstones out on tables

and floors of Chinese owned hotel lobbies. Only large deals were conducted in private rooms. “When they are amongst [other] Chinese they conduct business openly” said Preston. It was not uncommon for other patrons to approach Preston after lingering around and observing his transactions with clients. By conducting business in a public place Preston created trust through transparency which in turn acted as a form of marketing. Potential customers learned of his business by observing his dealings with others. When Preston discussed his relationship with clients he commented that “Once you learn them” it helps your business strategy.” While his statement indicated a level of awareness regarding his customers’ needs it also indicated an awareness of how they viewed him.

Preston placed an importance on understanding his customers so that he could actively brand himself as someone who they wanted to do business with. Another way Preston attempted to engender trust was by procuring the gems before receiving payment from clients. Preston asked for payment only after clients chose gems from the piles of gems Preston poured out for them to inspect and bargain over. When he escorted customers to markets Preston ensured they were not cheated and also deliberately covered his own expenses. Preston helped customers to procure taxis and travel when needed. In response to his help, clients commented on his sincerity; offered to buy small pieces of jewellery for his family as tokens of their appreciation; asked for his advice on other business matters; and most importantly clients continued to conduct business with him. Preston heightened his predisposition to be helpful and trustworthy which ensured customer’s trust.

Preston continuously negotiated between the positive and negative perceptions of customers. Preston explained that, “Chinese people don’t like when you’re too smart”. According to him being “too educated/smart” led clients to believe his prices were too expensive. In order to manage this issue, Preston sent an employee that clients were unfamiliar with to conduct the sales. Clients bought the items at the same price Preston would have sold to them directly, but because the clients didn’t know the employee worked for Preston they did not associate Preston or a level of high education to the price. However, Preston stated that while it is best to not “let them know you know much about business...If you’re not smart you won’t understand how to deal with them.” He used the Malian and Senegalese traders in Lagos as examples. The Chinese clients are willing to buy from the traders because they view them as less educated and less business savvy which results in lower prices. In reality the traders are quite intelligent and know how to effectively deal with Chinese clients. These statements implied that in order to manage his

relationships with clients, Preston presented a public and private face. His perceptions about clients' perceptions of him informed how he managed the relationship. Instead of actively attempting to change clients' perceptions, he worked around these the perceptions and used them to his benefit.

Charles expressed similar sentiments. One of the issues he found most challenging was that he, like most Nigerian entrepreneurs, did not speak Chinese. This became an issue when meeting with groups of Chinese counterparts. Charles shared a story about a dinner he attended on one of his many business trips to China. As the dinner progressed and many courses were eaten along with much libation, a drunk Chinese counterpart confidentially told Charles that some of the men were making derogatory comments about him. While Charles was not surprised, it was slightly jarring given that when these same people spoke to him in English they showed no signs of disliking him or the desire to not conduct business with him. He was also surprised that they made these statements in his presence and not in private. Charles hypothesised that this behaviour and what he termed the lack of "straight forward" business was a historical issue which lead to unbalanced relationships between countries. A lack of transparency is not atypical within business but Charles felt there was a higher level of covertness when dealing with Chinese associates.

Despite his mistrust, Charles continued to conduct business with Chinese counterparts because he felt that Africans had the "biggest opportunity" in the relationship compared to their relationships with Western business counterparts. This opportunity included cheaper prices as well as opportunities to jointly work together on large-scale projects. Although Charles classified distrust as an issue which impacted international business he simultaneously trusted and distrusted his Chinese counterparts. Without trust he would not be able to operate. And Charles' reflections upon his and other African business people's position in relation to China and the West led him to believe that even though the West appeared more open and sincere it did not currently provide the best opportunities. Charles viewed China as the best choice out of a set of less than optimal options.

Ultimately Preston described the relationship between himself and Chinese clients as symbiotic where both parties rely on each other. "If not for the option of Chinese customers, I would have left the gem business". This idea of symbiosis emphasizes the benefits of these business relationships for both Nigerians and Chinese businesses. Preston relied upon his Chinese clients

but they also relied upon him for high quality gems and honesty. Whether this symbiosis benefits both sides depend upon the bargaining positions of both parties. As for Teni, she declared that “we probably can’t get everything from China but [I] don’t see myself doing without China. [I’m] definitely going to continue working with China-it’s indispensable”. Dante was the only entrepreneur to explicitly state that he trusted his Chinese business partners. Trust was required in order to pay \$25,000 [£14,900] for products after only meeting a seller in person once; which is exactly what Dante did. The other entrepreneurs also had to place similar amounts of money on the line and this also required trust.

There is an implicit trust that both parties engaging in a business agreement must place in each other; without trust business transactions would be completely imbedded in tension and unease. The entrepreneurs balanced trust along with mistrust of potential business partners and current business partners. They compared potential business partners from across the globe and carefully weighed their options which included prices and perceptions. The entrepreneurs interpreted the actions of their Chinese business counterparts and factored this into their relationships. This interpretation helped them make decisions that most benefited their businesses.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship has been a cornerstone in Nigerian society for centuries. Post-colonial Nigerian society focused on institutionalizing entrepreneurship through the indigenization decree and the creation of numerous programmes and initiatives. Thus, entrepreneurship has been incorporated into the Nigerian government’s grand narrative for Nigerian-Chinese relationships. In theory, doing business with Chinese business counterparts is easy; one can simply log on to Alibaba.com and find items to purchase or find clients to sell to, yet the process is more complex. Entrepreneurs encounter a series of significant obstacles which require dexterity, persistence and most of all capital-social and financial-to surmount.

While entrepreneurship is lauded as a way to help people out of poverty, it is those that have more access to resources who are able to establish businesses and capture the dream of doing business with China which is stoked by government initiatives and rhetoric. Conducting business with China remains an exclusive and elite project, far from the kind of inclusive and “free” market for all to exploit as the government is at pains to assert. The entrepreneurs discussed in this

chapter had high levels of education and grew up in upper-middle class families. Out of the four entrepreneurs, Ito and Charles are the most successful. Ito is regularly interviewed by media outlets about security issues in Nigeria and Charles's property developments are continuously expanding. Even though they are still in the early stages of their respective businesses, Preston, Teni, and Dante's entrepreneurial dreams and aspirations were developed long before they started their businesses. These entrepreneurs' desires for upward mobility were instilled in them from early on and the ability to become an elite or maintain elite status is made manifest through Nigerian-Chinese relationships. Additionally, entrepreneurs like Teni and Charles primary target markets are aspirational and elite Nigerians. Hence, through their businesses, they are seeking to reproduce elite statuses. Through the lives of these entrepreneurs we can further understand the intergenerational aspects of future imagined elite statuses.

This chapter's opening vignette highlighted the government's campaign to encourage young people to become entrepreneurs. Even before university, the government is attempting to stoke students' appetites for Nigerian-Chinese relations as a way to help facilitate their future aspirations. This is done by promoting Chinese language education. In the next chapter I explore how Nigeria's curriculum is incorporating Chinese language classes into the education system; how educators are aligning themselves with the Nigerian-Chinese narrative and cultivating parent and student aspirations; and the experiences of Nigerian students who studied in China.

Chapter VI-Ni Hao Naija: Elite Futures & Chinese Language Education in Nigeria

Whether we admit it or not the Chinese are taking over the global economy and we are only preparing our pupils for the opportunities that the use of Chinese language as the possible language of the future might provide. (Vanguard 2013)

Babatunde Fashola

Federal Minister of Power, Works and Housing; Former Lagos State Governor

‘The Journey’

In the spring of 2011, Chinese and Nigerian guests gathered at Excelsior, a Nigerian owned private school in Lagos, to celebrate forty years of official political relationships between China and Nigeria. At the end of the event, a group of Nigerian students performed a play entitled ‘The Journey’. The play was created by faculty members of the school and it centred on two main characters, a Chinese girl and a Nigerian boy. The boy and girl are sent by a God like deity to find ‘the symbol of truth’. The two embark on a journey and encounter challenges represented by characters including ‘hunger’, ‘greed’, ‘sickness’ and ‘pride’. The character of pride spoke with the two main characters individually and encouraged each of them to remember their superiority in relation to the other character. Both children proceeded to boast about what made them better than the other. The Chinese character explained that she had better technology and the highest population in the world. The Nigerian character rebutted by stating that he had many natural resources and the ability to sell anything including Chinese made laptops back to the Chinese. After going back and forth the children apologised to each other and returned to their mission as mandated by the God like deity. Shortly after their reconciliation, the two protagonists found the ‘symbol of truth’ which was love and they decided to live in unity with love as their focus.

The play was clearly an allegorical depiction which celebrated cooperation between Nigeria and China. Audience members were entertained but the goal of the play was also to perform a specific ritualized form of Nigerian-Chinese relationships, one that emphasizes cooperation and mutual affection. This ritual is in line with the Nigerian government’s public discourse campaign as discussed in Chapter 2- Selling the Chinese Dream to the Nation: Public Discourse and Narratives in Action. Audience members included students, many who studied Chinese language and culture; their family members; Chinese and Nigerian government officials and Lagosian community members from Chinese and Nigerian businesses. By creating a play for students this message of cooperation and mutual affection is passed on to the next generation of Nigerians at

an early age. Indeed education, particularly Mandarin Chinese learning, is the third pillar of the Nigerian government's discourse of engagement with China as a key partner in the nation's development. An increasingly important method of inculcating young people with this message is through Chinese language and culture curriculum. The Nigerian government and more recently educators, are promoting knowledge of Chinese culture and language to students and parents as a beneficial component for students' futures. Are there any similarities between the purported benefits for learning Mandarin Chinese language and other foreign languages taught in Nigeria? How has Mandarin Chinese been incorporated into the Nigerian curriculum? How are educators promoting Mandarin Chinese classes? What are the experiences of students who have studied Mandarin Chinese in Nigeria and in China? How are government officials and educators responding to the inclusion of Mandarin Chinese in Nigeria's curriculum?

Through this chapter I seek to analyse how Mandarin Chinese is marketed to students and parents as a tool to realise aspirations and to improve or maintain social ranking. I begin by placing the contemporary state of Nigerian foreign language education in context with a brief historical summary of foreign language learning in Nigeria. This is followed by an introduction to the various opportunities for Nigerians to learn Mandarin Chinese; including scholarships to study in China and classes in Nigeria ranging from primary to tertiary levels. I first discuss scholarships through the case study of a Nigerian student who studied Mandarin Chinese in Nigeria. Nigerian students have received scholarships to study in China for over fifty years, however the infrastructure for studying Chinese language in Nigeria was only established in the 2000s. This exploration of a more traditional educational programme is followed by the discussion of a newer initiative, Chinese language education in Nigeria. This is done through a presentation of the main educational institutions in Lagos that provide Chinese language classes to adults and children. I explore the motivations of adult students that attend these classes. A discussion on Nigerian private schools and their branding of Mandarin Chinese language and culture follows via the example of Excelsior. The chapter concludes with a discussion on recent Lagos state policy regarding Mandarin Chinese language learning.

I argue that although education is promoted as a way to materialize aspirations for everyone throughout society, this turns out to be an exclusive dream rather than the inclusive promise of the Nigerian government's public discourse campaign. Access to Chinese language courses are in themselves a privilege which can lead to a cadre of Nigerians who have elite exchanges with Chinese counterparts.

The Perceived Benefits of Education

Throughout my time in Lagos, the importance of education was constantly emphasized either in daily conversations or in the media. The general consensus was that education of some level was a necessity for one's future and the chances of success without some level of education were quite low. My observations are similar to those found by educational research over the last twenty years (Ugbogbo et al 2013; Levinson 1996: 217). In 1999, then President Obasanjo reformed the universal education programme and announced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme which covered formal and informal education. Under the UBE, the government provides nine years of formal schooling or a shorter length of informal education. Nine years of formal schooling includes six years of primary school and the first three years of secondary school (junior secondary school). Informal education is provided through functional education courses which are designed for a range of citizens including: "unschooled children; illiterate youths and adults; rural dwellers and nomads" (Adegbija 2000). Functional education classes cover a variety of subjects including: functional literacy training; farming; internet; health; civic and business classes (UNIVA; Jaiyeoba 2007: 50). In 1977 under Nigeria's National Policy on Education, English became the medium of instruction for education in formal school settings.

Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue of the language of the immediate community and at a later stage, English. (Bangbose 1996: 357)

But over time English has increasingly become the medium of instruction for education starting from primary school onwards. This has sparked a debate over whether or not to teach children, particularly in the early years of school, in their local language. (Vanguard 2015). Besides English the main languages taught under the UBE in both formal and informal settings are Arabic and the top Nigerian languages-Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. In formal education settings, Arabic is an elective while the Nigerian languages and English are mandatory (Ministry of Education 2016). French classes are generally offered through formal education from grade four upwards as a part of the core curriculum.

Despite the government's provision of free education, the majority of Lagosian students attend private schools (Walker 2015). Although there are a number of private schools that provide poor levels of schooling, parents across the class spectrum view private schools as superior to public schools. (Tooley et al 2005: 127). In 2006, public schools accounted for just under 30% of the total number of schools in Lagos State. (Tooley et al 2005: 125) By 2013, "57% of the state's

enrolled children” attended private schools (Härmäa 2013: 548). Private schools range from low fee paying schools where parents pay as low as £250 tuition yearly to internationally ranked private schools where parents pay upwards of £20,000 yearly. The perceived benefits of private school impact the ways these institutions market themselves, particularly elite private schools. I explore the branding of an elite private school later in the chapter.

Conversely, the public generally places higher stock in public education on the university level while some private universities are viewed as providing simplistic curriculum. As of 2015, Nigeria had over 121 universities, which was almost evenly split between sixty-six public (federal and state) universities and sixty private universities (National Universities Commission; Usman 2015). The growing interest in private universities is mostly due to constant strikes by public university faculty. Since the 1990’s public university faculty have increasingly gone on strike due to poor working conditions and low pay (Anugwom 2002; Al Jazeera 2014). However, private university faculty are typically un-unionized and rarely strike. Strikes at public institutions have disrupted academic terms for months at a time. While there are still questions over the quality of education provided in some private schools and universities, the public confidence in private education is growing from the primary to the tertiary level. At the time of my research in 2011-2012, Chinese language courses in Lagos were mostly taught in private schools and in one public university.

Foreign Language Learning in Nigeria

Travelling the streets of Lagos it is not uncommon to hear numerous languages being spoken. Nigeria has over four hundred indigenous languages and Nigerians regularly speak their local language in addition to other ethnic group languages. Additionally as mentioned above, because English is used to teach most subjects in school, many Nigerians speak English and/or Pidgin English (a creolized mix of English, Portuguese and local languages). Officially the government recognizes four official languages, three indigenous languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba and one foreign language: English (Figure 1)ⁱⁱ. Since colonisation a number of European languages have been taught in Nigeria, primarily: English, French, German and Portuguese. English language’s role as the dominant foreign language of Nigeria became inscribed into the national educational system through The Education Ordinance of 1882. “The ordinance stipulated clearly, however, that ‘the subject of teaching shall be reading and writing of the English language’” (Awoniyi 1975: 66). Although English was originally used to indoctrinate Nigerians into Christianity, usually in missionary led schools; English began to influence society at large.

....the colonial administrators cultivated it [English language] and made English the language of all official transactions. So Nigerians had to learn English not only as a matter of practical necessity, but also for reasons of economic advantage. (Omodiaogbe 20)

Learning English was essential for anyone who wanted to participate in society, particularly on elite levels. This still holds true in contemporary Nigeria as much as it did in colonial days. Adegbija proposes that although there are a few predominant foreign languages spoken in Nigeria, like French and Arabic, English will continue to dominate due to its usage throughout society. “English is the predominant language of education, the print and electronic media, the judiciary, most official transactions, and the national House of Assembly and Senate. International diplomacy is also conducted in English.” (Adegbija 2004: 183).

Nonetheless, Arabic and French continue to serve a purpose in Nigerian society. Arabic language’s usage in Nigeria stretches back to 7th century AD when it was first used in religious and trading circles between North and West Africa (Ayuba 2012: 193).

Previously it had been the written language of the educated elite and of the government for nearly 500 years. For the fact that Arabic predated any other foreign languages in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general, the language was used officially in administration where chancery proses, official letters, other materials were documented. (Salisu and Abdullahi 2014: 23)

When British colonial forces came to Nigeria, Islam and Arabic were viewed as potential threats to Christianity and English (Ibraheem 2012: 89). In order to reduce this threat, in 1914 the Northern and Southern regions were joined together to form contemporary Nigeria. Arabic and Hausa were the predominate languages used in the North; but the unification of North and South, caused English to displace Arabic in official usage (Salisu and Abdullahi 2014: 24-25; Ibraheem 2012: 89). Beginning level Arabic students can attend class outside of the formal Nigerian education system in “non-formal Qur’anic schools” and intermediary level Arabic students can study in formal religious schools. (Sirajudeen and Adebisi 2012: 129). Additionally, starting from primary school Arabic is offered as an elective in the UBE system. Arabic classes and degrees are also offered on the university level. Proponents of Arabic language education argue that one of the major benefits of speaking Arabic is that it helps in maintaining business and diplomatic relationships with Arab speaking countries across the globe (Ayuba 2012: 197-198).

Currently French is studied by primary, secondary and tertiary students; many of whom use it as a signifier of education. In 1983, the non-profit organization Alliance Française opened up centres across Nigeria to teach French language and culture. In 1996, during his regime as

Nigeria's de facto head of state, Abacha made French an official language as a political response to the majority of English speaking countries who "boycotted and ostracised him [Abacha] due to his draconian policies and appalling record on human rights" (Adegbija 2004: 214). Nonetheless, in recent years different sectors of the Nigerian government have called for a renewal of French studies so that Nigerians can interact with French speaking Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries; and increase employment opportunities with business and non-governmental agencies including the African Union and UN (Iroegbu 2013; Punch 2013 Omonigho 2016; Olayiwola and Ogundele 2015). In 2009, the Rivers State Commissioner for Education, Dame Alice Lawrence-Nemi, publicly discussed the government's endorsement and collaboration with the Alliance.

The world is now a global village and the need to give our students an alternative was necessary..... We have been working with them since I became the Commissioner for Education. We have sent quite a number of our teachers for courses and also have sent our students on holiday tours and summer schools to enable them speak the French language. You know the world is now a global village and the need to give our students the opportunity to learn an alternative foreign language outside English was necessary. (Adesulu 2013)

Lawrence-Nemi's statement bears a striking resemblance to the statement from Babatunde Fashola, the former governor of Lagos state. Fashola also discussed importance of preparing students for a global world, but in his case Fashola spoke in regards to China. This brief historical review of foreign language education in Nigeria highlights the perceived benefits for studying these languages. Without a historical comparison we run the risk of viewing Mandarin Chinese language learning as exceptional and trendy. As I will discuss in the next section, Chinese language learning shares some similarities with other foreign language education in Nigeria.

Nigerian Students of Mandarin Chinese Language-Abroad

Unlike Nigerian students of French, Arabic and English, Nigerian and other African students who studied Chinese from the 1950's onwards, usually attended school in China. These students received scholarships from the Chinese government (Shinn and Eisenman 2012: 212). Chinese scholarships were steeped in a Marxist ideology of anti-capitalism, good will and brotherhood. China sought to find alliances in a growing competition between China, the former Soviet Union and the West that were all vying for an interest in post-colonial Africa. China cultivated its relationships with African counties in various ways including the construction of the Tanzanian-Zambian railway as well as educational scholarships for African students. In the early years of the

scholarship programmes Africans complained about quality of life issues including “inadequate social life, outright hostility, and racial discrimination” (Larkin 1971: 142). During the 1960’s when China underwent mass social and political upheaval (due to the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward), African students protested in Beijing against the racist treatment they received in their host country and demanded to go home (Cheng 2016: 176-177). Due to the protests and China’s political and social instability, the scholarship programme was put on hold until the 1970’s. In the 1980’s Chinese citizens began to publicly protest the scholarship programmes for African students. These protests took place in Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin and Nanjing (Ceng 2016: 177). Chinese protestors were angry because African students received larger stipends than Chinese students. There was also a growing sentiment among Chinese citizens that African students, particularly male students, should not be in relationships with Chinese citizens. This sentiment manifested itself into discriminatory policies, including mandatory STI testing, which negatively impacted all international students. (Dikötter 1997: 27).

It wasn’t until 2000 when China renewed its interest in Africa at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), that education initiatives were redeveloped. (See Chapter 1-Introduction for a discussion on FOCAC). During the first and subsequent FOCAC meetings, China pledged greater funding and programmes for African students to study in China and for Chinese teachers to teach across Africa (Shinn and Eisenman 2012: 212-213). The new wave of Nigerian students studying in China and Nigeria are taking up the promise of the Nigerian government that knowing Mandarin Chinese will be beneficial to their futures. China has become integral to elite educational aspirations and the imagined futures of Nigerian elite youth. Students carry with them this promise and their own future aspirations. One such student is Femi, a student who studied in China through a Chinese Ministry of Culture programme.

Femi and the Acrobats

Before Femi went to China, she planned to attend university and perhaps travel abroad from time to time. China never factored into her plans, but when she was nineteen Femi was encouraged to apply to a Chinese study abroad programme for young Nigerians. Her mother heard of the programme through her job at the Nigerian Ministry of Tourism. Other students heard of the programme through family and friends who worked at the ministry. Children of ministry employees like Femi and her colleagues took full advantage of their familial connections and applied for the programme. According to Femi, when she and the other students first heard of the programme they “didn’t know [what they]...were going to learn. It was presented as an

intercultural programme with ballet pictures.” The students only knew that their plane tickets; room and board and meals would all be paid for by the Chinese government. The idea of going to China filled Femi with visions of neighbourhoods dotted with sleek buildings; clean roads filled with luxury cars and trendy people dressed in fashionable clothing. When the group first arrived in Beijing the surroundings met Femi’s expectations, but she quickly learned that their studies would take place six hours away from Beijing in the countryside of Hebei province. Femi and her colleagues were shocked at the differences between modern and sleek looking Beijing and the countryside in Hebei. “I was crying, why did I come to China? I didn’t believe I was in China when I was in Hebei. It reminded me of my hometown [village] in Ekiti State.” What little Femi knew of China before her trip did not include the idea that places like Hebei still existed in China. Instead students are sold the ideal of Chinese modernity which is promoted through public discourse and education and in turn internalized by Nigerians like Femi. The group was disappointed but focused on becoming acclimated to their surroundings and understanding what the programme entailed.

The Nigerian students joined international students mostly from other Africa countries including Tanzania, Liberia, Egypt and Mauritius. The cultural programme centred on training international students in Chinese acrobatics and gymnastics. A typical daily schedule was comprised of language classes in the morning and intensive acrobatic and gymnastic training in the afternoon. One of Femi’s colleagues, Yetunde described the university as a “Shaolin school” where students rigorously trained like characters from the martial arts film Shaolin Temple. Femi’s speciality was foot juggling, a skill she acquired through hours of practice sometimes late into the evening. Femi explained that it was “very very difficult. If you want to do something with your hands it’s easy because you’ve been doing that since you were a baby.” Femi initially felt that her teacher expected too much from her without providing enough guidance; she spoke with the programme’s management who helped Femi switch coaches. Although her new coach was better, Femi battled feelings of isolation because she trained separately from the rest of her classmates who trained together in mastering unicycle riding and hand juggling.

The gifts of scholarships and training did not go without the obligation of reciprocation. Although the students did not initially know this, after going to China they found out that reciprocation came in the form of performing for audiences in China and audiences in their home countries. In exchange for room and board; language classes and training, international students performed at various cultural exhibitions throughout the year in China. Additionally the students performed

at cultural events when they returned to Nigeria. In Nigeria they showed off the acrobatic and gymnastics skills they learned in China to Nigerian and Chinese dignitaries. In China they performed both Chinese acrobatic skills and traditional Nigerian dances. The cultural shows in China were a mixture of performances from Chinese and international students for audiences which included dignitaries from various ministries. The students' performance schedule was exhaustive and sometimes included over twenty performances in one day. It is important to note that before going to China neither Femi nor her Nigerian colleagues performed Nigerian dances at public events. In their roles as international students in China, they were required to perform and draw upon their respective Nigerian cultures.

As one of the show's most popular acts, Nigerian students performed more than other international students. Students found themselves serving as unofficial ambassadors of Nigeria. There was a sense of ambivalence and reluctance to serve as diplomats. Although Nigeria has hundreds of cultures as students whose backgrounds were not in cultural performance or heritage, the picture of Nigeria that the students presented was limited. While it is not uncommon for foreigners in China to be treated as walking/talking symbols of their home country cultures even if they lack any performance arts training (This American Life 2012), as students enrolled in a performance arts programme, Femi and her colleagues faced even more demands to serve as representatives of Nigeria. There is a racial element to the performance (Wong 2000; Cowan 1990). Nigerian bodies are observed by crowds of Chinese audience members. These performances are a form of touristic entertainment which brings Nigerian cultures to Chinese audiences (also discussed in Chapter 2- Selling the Chinese Dream). Touristic dance has the potential to alter traditional dance forms and transform them into dance forms that are more palatable to audiences. These palatable forms of dance run the risks of creating a perception that "conforms to a popular idea of 'Africanness' " which differs from authentic representations of Nigerian dance (Daniel 1996: 790). Throughout this thesis, performance has been a consistent theme that is utilised in public displays of Nigerian-Chinese elite exchanges. (Chapter 2- Selling the Chinese Dream, Chapter 3-The Family Firm, and Chapter 4-"Our Friend for Eternity") I will return to this point later in this chapter.

Much of Femi's time was spent with fellow international students and Chinese teachers but throughout her travels to cultural exhibitions on long haul trains, Femi encountered Chinese people from various walks of life. These interactions and time spent with her teachers and coach constituted the bulk of interactions Femi had with Chinese people. Her mostly positive

exchanges contributed to Femi's views on Chinese people and how Chinese language and cultural knowledge came to fit into her future goals. When Femi went to China in 2010 she was nineteen with plans to attend university but unclear about what to study. By the time she returned to Nigeria, Femi had decided to study international relations and to find work related to China upon graduation. Despite the difference between what Femi thought China would be and the reality of China, particularly in the countryside of Heibei where she spent most of her time, Femi still found the experiences to be valuable enough to continue studying Chinese language and align her future goals with China.

Traditionally scholarships rooted in cultural exchange were the prevailing way for African students to study Chinese language. In the early 21st century with diverse and increased interactions between Africa and China, Chinese authorities created Hanban, a non-profit organisation which helps dispense Chinese language classes all over the world through the Confucius Institute model. In Nigeria, Confucius Institutes are utilised from primary to tertiary education, usually in elite academic institutions. My research took me to some of these institutions, starting with the University of Lagos. The stories of Nigerians related to these institutions highlight motivations that students have for studying and how administrators use Chinese classes as a means to market their institutions.

Chinese Language Learning in Nigeria

University Level-UNILAG & the Confucius Institute

On the campus of the prestigious University of Lagos (UNILAG) sits a one-story building constructed in a style which harks back to traditional Chinese architecture. This building is the Lagos satellite of the Confucius Institute. In 2004, the Chinese government created the Confucius Institute initiative. The programme is overseen by Hanban, a non-governmental organization which is closely aligned with the Chinese Ministry of Education. Hanban “sets the criteria for teaching Mandarin as a foreign language...Most importantly, it develops and promotes relevant teaching materials for those countries that are keen to implement Chinese programmes” (Kheng et al 2011: 953).

When people from two countries want to communicate, language is the first barrier they meet. Proficiency in other languages can minimize the possibility of misunderstanding and further promote friendship and cooperation between people of different nationalities.

Youbin Yu former co-director of the Lagos Confucius Institute (Chinafrica 2012).

This statement provides insight into the party line and the publicly stated motivations of the Confucius Institute. In order to create stronger relationships between China and its international counterparts across the globe, the Institute leverages soft power in the form of language and cultural studies with the aim of breaking barriers. Producing a cadre of international students who not only speak Chinese but also understand the complexities of Chinese culture, creates a group of people who are more predisposed to favourably view China as an ally. This favourable view subsequently helps foster economic, political and diplomatic relationships. International universities host Confucius Institutes on their respective campuses with funding from Hanban. As of 2013 there were more than one-hundred branches in over eighty countries. Many countries initially faced opposition from educators or government officials when Confucius Institutes were introduced, due to the Institute's connection to the Chinese government and concerns of censorship over controversial topics such as human rights, the Dalai Lama and Tibet. (Guttenplan 2012; Marcus 2013).

The Confucius Institutes is modelled after the Alliance Française, which is a French non-profit education organisation. In 1883, the Alliance was originally created to teach French language and culture in French colonies (Roberts 2007: 38). The Alliance is separate from the government but endorsed by the French government, which originally contributed a significant amount to the Alliance's funding. The organization now receives most of its funding from tuition fees and private donors along with a small amount of funding from the French government. "Thus, although the Alliance Française is not a government agency, its work can be considered a form of government action in language planning and policy work" (Liddicoat 2013: 193). Confucius Institutes were created for a similar reason and with the government's support.

Nigeria currently has two Confucius Institute sites. The first one, located on the campus of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, opened in 2008 while the second one opened a year later on the campus of the University of Lagos (UNILAG). Both universities rank within the top twenty universities out of over 100 universities in Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe ranks at twenty and UNILAG at five (Webometrics: 2016). While it is hard to uncover any public opposition tracing back to when the two Confucius Institutes were built in Nigeria, one informant at UNILAG privately expressed his issues to me over the need for the institute on campus. He argued that Nigeria and other African countries have a vast array of equally important cultures to study. His attitude had an underlying ambivalence towards the promotion of Nigerian-Chinese relationships and whether Nigerian interests are being placed behind Chinese interests in order to achieve elite

aspirations. This sentiment was similar to that of some Nigerian officials who objected to the idea of teaching Chinese language in public schools across Lagos, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Like all Confucius Institutes UNILAG's Institute is partnered with a sister university in China; UNILAG's sister university is the Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT). While some Institutes are co-managed by two Chinese directors, UNILAG's Confucius Institute was managed by two co-directors: Muiyiwa Falaiye, a Nigerian professor from UNILAG and Professor Jiang Lirong a Chinese professor from BIT. What made the UNILAG Confucius Institute unique was the co-directorship representing both the host country and China. Much of the day to day management of the Institute, including curriculum and coordination of courses for the university and Lagos primary and secondary schools, was handled by Jiang. Falaiye's background in African philosophy and culture led him to advocate for the appreciation of African cultures around the world. While Falaiye accepted the Chinese presence on campus he also vocalized the importance of knowing Nigerian culture and history. It could be construed that Falaiye's position was little more than that of a figurehead to appease Nigerian interests. Nonetheless, Falaiye's background and passionate belief in sharing African culture could be leveraged when reciprocating the cultural exchange between Nigeria and China. The choice of Falaiye, an African and philosophy scholar, highlights an attempt to maintain a balanced relationship between Nigeria and China in terms of representation at the UNILAG Confucius Institute.

Another Nigerian who played a role in the UNILAG Confucius Institute was Adele, a Mandarin Chinese language teacher. On average the institute employed ten instructors throughout the year. When this research was conducted there were nine Chinese teachers and one Nigerian teacher. Adele, the only Nigerian teacher at the Institute, studied Mandarin Chinese when she accompanied her husband to China when he was awarded a scholarship to study at a Chinese university. During a one-to-one tutoring session with a sixteen year old Nigerian student, Adele and her student sat in the main room of the UNILAG Confucius Institute where they practiced introductory sentences. The lesson was designed to prepare the young man for his move to China to first attend university and medical school. As a teacher Adele asserted that being multi-lingual was a boost for young people's self-esteem which could give them the confidence to navigate the world. Furthermore as a Nigerian educator, Adele saw the potential for Nigerians to utilise the increased presence of Chinese businesses in Nigeria. "In Nigeria there are lots of Chinese and

their English is not good, so they come to the Confucius Institute seeking Nigerian employees who speak [Chinese]. If you speak a little [Chinese] you have no problem”.

Adele viewed Nigerian-Chinese relationships as becoming integral to the point where neither country could work without the other. She foresaw an increased demand for more the Confucius Institute in Nigeria and predicted that Mandarin Chinese would become a lingua franca in Nigeria's near future. Adele discussed these issues from a multi-layered perspective as a Nigerian; a former Chinese language student; as an expatriate in China and as an educator. The benefits Adele associated with Chinese language learning were similar to those associated with other foreign languages taught in Nigeria; language would be helpful for one's future, both personally and professionally. Members of the UNILAG Confucius Institute staff like Falaiye and Adele served as key figures in mediating the relationship between Chinese and Nigerian actors. Furthermore, Falaiye's position as co-director helped to preserve a balance between Nigerian and Chinese interests. The experiences of top level administrators on the university level provides some context for the environment in which Chinese language classes on the university level take place in Nigeria. In the next section I explore the experiences of adult students who studied at the UNILAG Confucius Institute.

University Level-UNILAG & Beyond

The University of Lagos (UNILAG) held language classes throughout the week, including weekends. Weekday classes were chiefly attended by full-time university students while weekend classes were usually attended by students who either worked full-time or attended other universities. A three month course cost ₦10,000 [£22]. This is compared to Nigeria's ₦18,000 [£45] minimum monthly wage which the National Labour Congress called “unrealistic” in the face of rising prices (Jimoh and Onochie 2015). Therefore the course fee is not accessible to many Nigerians and is reserved to those with access to greater financial resources, elites. Each class lasted three hours and students ranged in ages from their late teens to early forties. Some students were preparing to enter university; others were already in university and others were professionals who graduated from university and worked full-time. Teachers from UNILAG's Confucius Institute taught first and second level Chinese classes and the classroom atmosphere depended on the teacher. The regular Saturday teacher, Pang, had a friendly demeanour and an easy rapport with the students.

When she taught there was a sense of enthusiasm and the lessons went by quickly. First year students reviewed introductory sentences like ‘Ni shi na guoren [What nationality are you?]' and ‘Shei shi ni de hao pengyou?’ [Who are your good friends?]. As classes progressed students also went into more complex lessons and vocabulary about hobbies and sports. When students chatted in pairs or groups their discussions generally focused on issues that related to class such as how to pronounce words or their meanings. Students were active and volunteered to write new vocabulary on the board. The class worked from two textbooks which they copied or shared copies with colleagues. Pang explained components of words so that students looked for themes. When discussing sports she explained that the word ‘da’ meant to hit or to strike and its relationship when used in conjunction with other words. By breaking down the components of the words and giving the students time to analyse and understand the language it appeared that the students felt more engaged and active in the learning process rather than passive recipients of lessons. But Pang also cautioned the students not to get too immersed in the logic stating that “language is just a tool not knowledge and not a skill. It is not like math”. Her objective was to help students navigate the challenges of learning Mandarin Chinese.

While there was a level of respect and deference due to the inherent power dynamics in the relationship between teacher and student, adult students questioned teachers and interacted with them on a more equal footing. The adult students made a choice to attend classes and as such they readily engaged with the teacher and the material. When teachers made errors or treated students in a manner which students viewed as disrespectful, students did not hesitate to call this to everyone’s attention. The way teachers like Pang interacted with adult students coupled with their enthusiasm meant that the students stayed focused despite the long sessions which lasted for three hours. Adeola, an architect in his early forties, took Chinese classes due to his long-standing interest in Chinese culture while Kefe, an entrepreneur in his mid-thirties, wanted to learn basic conversational Mandarin to improve negotiations with Chinese counterparts. Kefe was a university educated business man who specialized in buying and selling a variety of goods that ranged from spices to oil. He aspired to expand his business to include Chinese, European and African suppliers and buyers.

Initially Kefe faithfully attended classes but with increased business and personal commitments he began to miss classes. When he returned Kefe was behind the other students and felt overwhelmed. Around this time, Kefe’s negotiations with his Chinese associates stalled and he turned his attention towards potential ventures in Africa and Europe. By the end of the semester

Kefe stopped attending classes but considered returning in the future. Adeola and Kefe represent the divergent reasons Nigerian adult students have for studying Mandarin. For most students, studying Mandarin is a way to fulfill personal and/or professional aspirations. Adeola's personal interest helped fuel his desire to learn the language and consistently attend classes. Kefe's interest in learning Mandarin was exclusively for expanding his business opportunities. When negotiations with Chinese associates stalled, he focused on other deals with English speaking associates and found that attending Chinese lessons were no longer beneficial. However, there are students who have both personal and professional motivations for studying Mandarin. How Nigerian students seek to leverage Chinese language and cultural knowledge for future gains is apparent on the university level; particularly through the story of Lanre, a student who began studying Chinese language courses at UNILAG and went on to study in China.

Upon meeting Lanre it was clear that he had two passions: making meaningful connections with people and studying Mandarin Chinese language and culture. When we first met he was in the audience at the China Bridge competition (discussed later in the chapter; see Chapter 3-The Family Firm) along with Femi and other UNILAG Chinese students. Lanre was sociable and made encouraging comments in support of various teams. After the primary and secondary school competitions Lanre and two colleagues were called up to the stage to receive awards for high scores on Chinese examinations. At that time Lanre was in his second year of Chinese classes at the University of Lagos. Lanre's journey to studying Mandarin began in his childhood. His interest in Chinese was sparked after from hearing stories about Chinese people like his mother's friend who lived in the United Kingdom and his uncle's neighbour in Nigeria. Growing up he had an interest in other cultures and at one point Lanre thought about studying Spanish. In his early twenties and having graduated with a degree in chemistry but working in the telecommunications industry, Lanre sought to differentiate himself professionally whilst enriching himself professionally. Mandarin language studies was the perfect way to accomplish this goal.

While Lanre took classes at UNILAG's Confucius Institute he immersed himself in Mandarin Chinese language and culture outside of the classroom. This immersion included studying and speaking Mandarin Chinese daily; socialising with Confucius Institute staff as well as watching and listening to Chinese media. Lanre even stopped to speak with Chinese people on the streets of Lagos which helped him initiate friendships. Lanre proclaimed his enthusiasm for cross-cultural exchange: "I love meeting people [and enjoy it] if I can speak their language." Whenever

he was on campus, Lanre spent most of his time at the Confucius Institute. Lanre focused on creating and maintaining good relationships with the Confucius Institute staff. During his first year at the Institute he quickly became known by the staff because he sought to interact with people, particularly the teachers, outside of the classroom on a personal level. During his second year at UNILAG Lanre applied for a scholarship through the Nigerian government to study in China. During one meeting, he excitedly showed me the newspaper notice which described the scholarship. The notice was for the Bilateral Education Agreement scholarship (See Chapter 2- Selling the Chinese Dream to the Nation: Public Relations in Action for an in-depth discussion of the BEA). Because he already earned an undergraduate degree, Lanre applied for the BEA's master's degree scholarship

Although Lanre did not receive the BEA scholarship, he eventually went to China through another scholarship programme. The scholarship was provided by Hanban, the directing body of the Confucius Institute. Lanre received a one year scholarship to study in Fujian. Much like Femi, the student who studied acrobatics in China, Lanre leveraged a social relationship which helped him to attain the scholarship. Although Lanre lacked the familial connections that Femi had, Lanre's relationships with UNILAG's Confucius Institute staff helped him gain the scholarship. Lanre originally heard about the scholarship through the Institute's staff and they also served as references for his application. Lanre's motivations for studying Mandarin were tied to both personal and professional aspirations. His desire to make friends with Chinese expats both on and off campus led him to become friendly with the Confucius Institute staff. Consequently, Lanre's relationships with the Institute's staff were already in place before the Hanban scholarship opportunity arose. These connections coupled with his excellent grades (as witnessed through his award at the China Bridge competition) helped Lanre attain the scholarship.

During his time in China, Lanre spent most of his days with fellow international students in daily language classes and the additional tai chi class twice a week. Lanre and his international colleagues were located in a different part of campus from their Chinese counterparts so the only time they interacted with native Chinese speakers were at language corner evenings. Language corner evenings are popular events held throughout the country where Chinese and English speakers meet for the express purpose of practicing Chinese and English. Even when Lanre fell ill and spent weeks in a local hospital, he kept up his spirits by making friends with the hospital's staff. Due to the cost of health care Lanre returned home early but eventually found another

scholarship to return to China. He envisioned his future as one intrinsically tied with China both personally and professionally. “There are big opportunities...I will help in work related to Chinese-Nigerian relations.” Overall Lanre’s purpose for studying Chinese language and living in China was the opposite of Kefe, the entrepreneur. Kefe’s purpose was strictly utilitarian with a goal to improve his business opportunities. Conversely, Lanre was motivated to learn about culture for personal enrichment. His aspirations were to travel the world and enjoy various cultures. Lanre had elements of a dilettante but he invested his time and effort into learning Chinese language and culture. To this effort, China was one of the first stops on his grand tour.

Mandarin language learning for Nigerians started on the university level which allowed students to study both in China and Nigeria. With the advent of the Confucius Institute, there are now opportunities for Nigerians to study Mandarin from the primary school level. In the next section I discuss pre-tertiary Mandarin language education in Nigeria. I argue that while these opportunities are increasing, they are limited to students who attend schools that carefully brand themselves as Mandarin Chinese class providers. This argument is illustrated through the example of Excelsior.

Xuexiao Tian-School Days

It is our desire for our pupils to communicate in Nigerian languages, English, French and now Chinese. We are the first Nigerian school to introduce Chinese Language into our curriculum. The purpose for including Chinese in the school curriculum was not only to make our pupils multilingual in outlook but also to take advantage of the immense investment the Chinese Government is making in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

(Excelsior’s Administrator- Bosede Olarewaju) (Punch 26 April 2013)

On a Friday morning children eagerly poured into their classroom at Excelsior school and loudly greeted their Chinese teacher, Vincent, stating: ‘Ni hao laoshi’ [‘Hello teacher’ in Chinese]. Vincent took attendance as the students talked amongst themselves. As class was called to order Vincent began the lesson by reviewing various posters that were placed on walls around the room. Each poster had English and Pinyin [Pinyin is the way students write Mandarin language using the Romanised alphabet while learning the language.] Students took turns reciting terms from each poster with words related to various themes. Vincent switched between English and Chinese throughout the lesson and when students were distracted he went around the classroom to regain their attention. In addition to the posters, Vincent used the blackboard to write sentences in Pinyin and English while the students copied them down in their notebooks. Beyond this typical scene that could take place in any country, is a unique story. Excelsior, the school where this

class took place, played a pivotal role in the introduction of Chinese language into Nigeria's curriculum. The school which educates children from nursery to high school, was the first pre-tertiary academic institution in Nigeria to offer Mandarin language classes.

Excelsior's inclusion of Mandarin language into its curriculum was a key component of the school's branding and mission that focused on "creating a conducive environment, using top class facilities and human resources for academic, moral, religious and skill development of a total child" (Excelsior Website). The school was founded by Clara Fagbayi a woman whose story of humble beginnings in a lower class family is well circulated in Excelsior lore; both on the school's website and in the media. Through education and hard work she was able to rise within the ranks of society and establish Excelsior. The school is now run by Fagbayi's daughter Bosede Olarewaju who serves as the school's administrator.

Olarewaju promoted Excelsior to elites through the promise of providing quality education taught and developed by internationally trained staff. Excelsior's clients are the children and grandchildren of upper middle class Nigerians including business people, bankers and government officials. Olarewaju embodied the international factor which represented a much more elite and cosmopolitan trajectory than her mother's. Olarewaju's education included undergraduate and graduate degrees from top British universities and regular continuing education classes abroad. Further international connections were demonstrated through the school's decision to hire expatriate employees for top level positions. Along with Olarewaju, the primary school's headmistress Anika Chatterjee and the secondary school's principal Damon Kruger, were in charge of overseeing Excelsior's curriculum and staying attuned to national and international trends. The utilization of two expatriate school heads, Chatterjee from India and Kruger from South Africa, added to Excelsior's cosmopolitan ethos. The school might be in Nigeria but students are prepared to become citizens of the world. Placing expatriates in key administrative positions is Excelsior's way of stating that they do not just aim to prepare students for the world but the world has come to Excelsior.

In 2015 Excelsior received an award from the British Council for including international aspects in its curriculum. What is even more telling is the school's branding and image in the media, which is led by Olarewaju who also serves as the school's spokesperson. Most articles discussing the school mention Olarewaju or include interviews with her. The articles read like press releases, listing the accolades of Excelsior students and management. Olarewaju's image is that of an expert

on education, children and family as opposed to a business woman. In one article Olarewaju discussed a variety of educational issues including her mother's legacy alongside tips for parents on educating and raising their children. She also discussed the school's curriculum and scholarship programme for 'indigent students.' (Ogar 2012). Timing of these articles usually coincide with an announcement from the school about a new initiative or student honours in competitions. When Excelsior students won a national IT competition Olarewaju was interviewed about the need to improve the Nigeria's educational system and how Excelsior won the competition.

We just have to show more commitment to educational development. I am afraid, if we continue like this our children will be at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers all over the world..... Let them [parents] make up their minds to search for the best schools with up-to-date facilities. They should not settle for just any school just because it is cheap... We have invested heavily in information technology. We have hired very competent ICT teachers who have done a lot of work to impart the latest techniques to the children. We have E-libraries and internet enabled computers which our students use for research work. With commitment and hard work, we participate in the competitions at all the levels from the zonal to national level. It is not a surprise to us that we eventually emerged overall best because, with all modesty very few schools can surpass the latest technology we have acquired as far as ICT is concerned... (Nigerian Tribune 2013)

Olarewaju leverages her role as an educator to sell her school to parents. Her pitch is targeted to parents who not only want the best for their children but more importantly, can afford it. The school also used its opulent facilities and links to prominent members of society as ways to appeal to upper class clients. During visits to the school I was shown around the campus grounds which were comparable to leading schools across the globe. The campus included a library, computer rooms, swimming pool, laboratories, cafeterias and even a zoo. Excelsior adds to its exclusivity by not publicly disclosing the cost of tuition or boarding to anyone but the guardians of potential students at in person meetings. Private schools that provide similar classes and co-curricular activities charge tuition and board that can run upwards of £20,000 (Olupohunda 2015). For the most part Excelsior students come from upper class Nigerian families but the school provides scholarships to junior secondary students from families who cannot afford Excelsior's tuition.

The scholarships are highly coveted and until recently the school provided three scholarships; now it provides two scholarships (Kuye 2016). In 2011, approximately 400 students took the exam to compete for three scholarships. Scholarship awardees receive free tuition; room and board as well as any other educational expenses from year of entry through university. (Ogar 2011; Samson 2015). Through diligence and hard work, a few economically disadvantaged students can join the elite ranks of Excelsior. This is similar to the story of Olarewaju's mother,

the founder of Excelsior. Olarewaju spoke about the scholarship programme in a newspaper interview:

This scholarship was started as a way of giving back to the society to help pupils from humble background to gain access to quality education....The scholarship is only open to pupils who have finished the junior secondary school class, showed traits of academic brilliance, must be from government public schools and come from a less-privileged home. (Asaolu 2010)

Opportunities for aspirational and elite Nigerians to interact on an equal footing are rare. Via education, elite schools like Excelsior provide a forum for this to occur. Nonetheless, the small number of scholarships that are provided coupled with the rigorous level of the scholarship exam, serves to strictly maintain the boundaries for entry into this exclusive world. In this world aspirations, values, and capital are reproduced and cultivated. This capital can be leveraged to achieve future success (Bourdieu 1986). The building and maintenance of capital is a crucial component in Excelsior's branding campaign. Excelsior sought to consistently demonstrate to parents that by attending the school their children would receive top level education. This education will aid students in achieving the aspirations their parents have for them, particularly entering a quality university and subsequently obtaining a good job. Good jobs are high paid positions in corporations, entrepreneurial enterprises and government positions on a par or at a higher level to the positions their parents hold. Similarly, to the second generation of GNIM (See Chapter 3), Excelsior parents want their children to acquire the values and capital needed to make their familial dynasties successful.

Excelsior management taps into this need and cultivates its image as a place where students can acquire this capital. The school remains keenly aware of the work and political environments its graduates will join in the future, both domestically and internationally. This awareness was shown in Olarewaju's statement during the Nigerian-Chinese celebration where students performed 'The Journey', the play discussed at the opening of this chapter. Olarewaju stated that "the purpose for introducing Chinese in the school curriculum was not only to make our students multilingual in outlook but also to take advantage of the immense investment the Chinese government is making in Nigeria and Africa as a whole" (ATI News segment). Excelsior harnesses the aspirations of upper class Nigerians who often have links abroad and taps into their desires to have their children maintain or improve their familial social standing. In this vein Excelsior under the leadership of Olarewaju has positioned itself as an intermediary between students and China. In 2008 Olarewaju began campaigning to bring Mandarin language classes to Excelsior. After several failed attempts at meeting with the Chinese consulate in Lagos she

finally found a connection to UNILAG's Confucius Institute. Olarewaju's struggle to enter the world of the Confucius Institute and use of a broker parallel that of GNIM and Nigerian entrepreneurs (as discussed in Chapters 4- 'Our Friend for Eternity' and 5- The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Nigeria). Olarewaju had to leverage social connections in order to gain access to the Confucius Institute's management. This connection came through an associate of Chatterjee's who had a number of Chinese patients. Chatterjee's associate served as a broker between Olarewaju and the Confucius Institute via his patient who also served as a broker.

The networking and negotiation process took upwards of two years. By 2010, Chinese classes started at Excelsior. During a visit to the school Chatterjee discussed Olarewaju's efforts to bring Chinese classes to Excelsior. Chatterjee described Olarewaju as "really passionate.... [in her efforts she] goes as far as a human being can go". These efforts included hiring an extra Chinese teacher who the schools paid directly. This teacher worked alongside the two teachers (one each for the primary and secondary schools) that the Confucius Institute provided. Olarewaju went another step further by providing housing to all of the Chinese teachers, complete with a car and driver. During my fieldwork there was also a discussion of holding additional Chinese classes on Saturdays. As of 2016, Chinese classes were compulsory for Excelsior students in primary and secondary school. Olarewaju's goal was to make Excelsior's Chinese programme the most extensive and exclusive of the programmes offered in Lagos and potentially the whole of Nigeria. The results of this strategy were tested at the China Bridge competition where ten schools competed against each other to test student's proficiency in Chinese language and culture. This event was a clear display of the variations between Chinese programmes in primary and secondary schools as well as how the UNILAG Confucius Institute links students together with members of the Chinese and Nigerian business and government communities. The event also highlights the performance, branding and celebration of the relationship, partnership and courtship between Nigeria and China.

China Bridge Competition

On the stage of a UNILAG auditorium Nigerian primary and secondary school students danced to traditional Chinese music complete with costumes and fans. The audience represented a wide range of guests including Nigerian and Chinese governmental officials; UNILAG administration; heads of schools; teachers; parents; students; business people; community members and journalists. Each group of students received enthusiastic rounds of applause and in between

performances audience members discussed their favourite performances. These performances were a part of Nigeria's first China Bridge language competition hosted by UNILAG's Confucius Institute in February 2012. Each country with a Confucius Institute holds a yearly China Bridge competition. Ten Lagosian schools with Chinese programmes, including Excelsior, competed against each other in the preliminary round of the competition but only the schools that made the final round competed at the China Bridge competition. The competition was split between primary and secondary levels and teams were judged on language and cultural knowledge skills which were tested through questions on mathematics, Chinese geography and history.

The event began with the entrance of young Nigerian men dressed in military cadet uniforms who marched into the auditorium carrying the Chinese and Nigerian flags while the Nigerian national anthem played on the public announcement system. The procession was followed by a brief speech from Professor Jiang Lirong, the co-director of the Confucius Institute. Jiang welcomed the audience and recognized dignitaries from various organizations. Some of the dignitaries welcomed the crowd and briefly spoke about the historical and contemporary links between China and Nigeria. A high ranking UNILAG official joked that as a nation with many languages, Nigeria was the perfect place to welcome Chinese language courses. The event was hosted by two Chinese language teachers from the UNILAG Confucius Institute Staff, Wang and Adele the only Chinese teacher of Nigerian descent. The two women greeted the audience in both Chinese and English and introduced the competition judges: two Chinese judges and one Nigerian judge. One of the Chinese judges was from the Chinese consulate while the other was from GNIM. The Nigerian judge was Eleanor Achebe, a Nigerian entrepreneur whose father is a former Nigerian ambassador to China.

After the introduction of the judges the competition started first with the primary school students and then the secondary students. Both levels were conducted in the same manner: each team appeared on the stage dressed in their school uniforms, with an average of four students representing each team. They were given cultural and language questions; some questions were asked in Chinese and translated in English for the audience. The quiz segment was followed by the talent segments where each team sang one Chinese song and danced to another Chinese song. Dancing and singing were judged on a variety of criteria including showmanship, costumes, duration and creativity. Once the scores were compiled, team members and school heads went to the stage to receive plaques and prizes presented by community dignitaries. Excelsior dominated the competition by winning first place for both primary and secondary levels. The

school received digital decoders and televisions from the event sponsor Star Times, a private Chinese digital television service provider. During the event, Lanre and other winners of the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi Examination (HSK), an international exam testing Chinese language students' proficiency, were presented with certificates.

Again we see the role of performance utilised in the public performance of Nigerian-Chinese relations. Students were taught choreography by Chinese language teachers most of whom were not trained dancers. Therefore, the Chinese cultural representations had a level of inauthenticity to them, similarly to Femi and her colleagues' performances of Nigerian dances for Chinese audiences. Additionally, a Nigerian university student sang a traditional Chinese song and the Confucius Institute's kung fu teacher performed the same routine he performed at GNIM's Chinese New Year party (See Chapter 3-The Family Firm). In accordance with other public displays of Nigerian-Chinese exchanges, the event also included a Nigerian cultural performance. A Nigerian drum and dance troupe performed as the event's closing act.

In 2013 Excelsior won the secondary level of the China Bridge for a second year in a row. Members of the team were awarded with trips to China. Excelsior's continued dominance in the China Bridge competition was due to the school's strategy of providing a curriculum that is more intensive than those provided by other schools. The competition and ensuing press coverage helps Excelsior build on its branding as an internationally competitive school. Excelsior also capitalised on its success at the China Bridge competition by building stronger links with the Chinese government. After the first competition Excelsior received a visit from the Consular General of the Republic of China and a Chinese official from Abuja. Pictures from the visit along with others from the China Bridge competition and the Chinese-Nigerian celebration were prominently displayed on the schools website. Visitors to the website had no doubt that Excelsior not only boasts a competitive Chinese curriculum but it also has direct links to the Chinese government. Access to a global world via Chinese language learning is limited to a small number of elite Nigerians but the Lagos State government is attempting to provide more students with this opportunity.

Conclusion: Chinese Language for All?

In the fall of 2012 legislation backed by the Lagos State Commissioner for Education was proposed to include Mandarin Chinese in *all* Lagos state public schools. At that time only ten

Lagosian schools incorporated Chinese language into their curricula. These schools ranged from publicly funded prestigious schools to lesser known private schools to prestigious private schools such as Excelsior. The initiative has the potential to democratize the learning of Chinese language which until the legislation was proposed, was solely available to students enrolled in elite schools and universities. Another related indication of the increased importance of Nigerian-Chinese relationships was the March 2013 announcement that plans were underway to create a bachelor's degree in Mandarin Chinese at The University of Lagos (UNILAG).

Creating a degree programme in Mandarin Chinese language indicates not only the increasing importance of Chinese investment in Nigeria but the Nigerian response to this presence. The addition of Mandarin Chinese into Lagos state curriculum signals the importance that the Nigerian government places on building the next generation's desire for developing relationships with Chinese counterparts. Nonetheless this legislation faced opposition from a subsection of Lagos State House of Assembly members. Questioning the importance of Chinese language knowledge in Nigerian society, they argued instead for the imperative to study national languages (Olufowobi, 2012). The sentiments of the assembly members echoed the same ambivalence to broker relationships with China as the respondent at the Confucius Institute who voiced his displeasure of Chinese culture displacing the myriad of cultures within Nigerian.

The chapter started with Fashola's statement which he made when the curriculum plan was announced. Fashola's statement highlighted a clear directive from the state government that as the economic capital of Nigeria, Lagos city and state sought to promote ways for its citizens to engage with the increasing Chinese presence within the state. Given that the majority of students in Lagos state attend private schools the legislation might not have the desired impact of spreading Chinese language studies and increasing future job prospects. Furthermore, the ten schools that originally provided Chinese classes were some of the top schools in the state. Additionally, since the majority of parents in Lagos state send their children to private schools, will the introduction of Chinese into public school curriculum have the purported desired effect of increasing future opportunities for a larger number of students through Chinese language and culture learning?

In this final ethnographic chapter, we see the reoccurring themes that appeared in previous chapters. These themes included aspirational and elite cultivation, public discourse, business, performance and ritual which are all directed at the cultivation of a new generation of Nigerians who believe in the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relationships from an early age. Mandarin

Chinese is the newest language in the history of foreign language learning in Nigeria. There are striking similarities between Mandarin Chinese and other foreign languages like Arabic, English and French, that are taught in Nigeria. This includes the teaching model for Mandarin Chinese and the associated hopes for future successes which are linked to learning Mandarin Chinese.

Femi and Lanre's Chinese language learning highlights how aspirations are cultivated by families and how these aspirations influence children's choices. In Femi's case, her mother directly connected Femi's future goals to Chinese language learning, by guiding her daughter to apply for a scholarship to study in China. Furthermore, Femi's mother heard of this scholarship through her work in a government ministry. Lanre's upbringing fostered his desires for upward mobility. Although Lanre's parents did not directly influence his decision to study Chinese, Lanre's reasons for studying Chinese are directly linked to his upbringing where he was encouraged to attend university and pursue his interest in making international friends. Lanre regarded Chinese language learning as a way to see the world and to enjoy an international life full of travel and cultural understanding. Femi and Lanre's parents were determined to ensure that their children not only maintained, but exceeded the upwardly mobile lifestyle in which they were raised.

The example of Excelsior and Olarewaju also highlights the connection between Mandarin Chinese language and elite reproduction as well as the theme of business. Olarewaju utilizes the promise of Nigerian-Chinese relationships in the positioning of her business as an elite educational institute that can help students reach their future aspirations. The school markets itself to elite and aspirational parents as the best place to help their children become a cosmopolitan citizen of not just Nigeria, but of the world. Chinese language learning is just one of the ways students can achieve this. Opportunities to study at Excelsior and other high level institutions are limited and even with the inclusion of Mandarin Chinese in Lagos public schools, schools like Excelsior still have an advantage due their access to resources. Thus, education, much like business and entrepreneurship, is exclusive and the promise of modernity through Nigerian-Chinese relationships, remains accessible only through elite exchanges.

Chapter VII-Conclusions

This thesis examined elite Nigerian-Chinese relationships ethnographically through the areas of business, entrepreneurship and education. I sought to explore how Nigerian's attempt to manifest the government's grand narrative of Nigerian-Chinese relationships and exercise their agency in these interactions.

In Chapter 1, I began with an introduction to the context of African-Chinese relationships and Nigerian-Chinese relationships. I sought to examine Nigerian-Chinese relations through the lived experiences of elite Nigerian actors as a counter to the and highly polarized and often macro level debates surrounding Africa and China's contemporary relationship. I outlined my areas of focus: business, entrepreneurship and education, the key pillars of Nigeria's public discourse campaign. The chapter also forecasted themes that would emerge throughout the thesis: exclusivity; trust and mistrust; brokerage; and performance and ceremony.

In Chapter 2, I explored the Nigerian government's attempts to shape public discourse through narratives of Nigerian-Chinese relationships that emphasize development and modernity. This discourse is popularized through the inscription of individual aspirations around China through education and business opportunities. I explored the emerging public critique of Nigerian-Chinese relations and argued that the government has learned from past experiences like the Niger-Delta conflict. The government seeks to avert these critiques with complex and alluring narratives that help to focus public discourse. Public discourse is developed on two levels: state and individual; both of which play critical parts in the government's grand narrative.

On the state level, Nigerian-Chinese relationships are presented through high profile diplomatic meetings that are full of rituals and ceremony in the form of photo ops, speeches, flowers and state dinners. On the individual level, Nigerian-Chinese relations are packaged as cultural experiences where Nigerian and Chinese citizens can learn about each other from the comfort of their home countries via cultural event. The last piece of the campaign is the most powerful part because it links the hopes and dreams of Nigerians with Nigerian-Chinese relations. Numerous bilateral agreements in the form of MOUs are signed and publicly promoted through ceremonial signing events and press releases. These agreements focus on three key pillars: big business, entrepreneurship and education. They are promoted as ushering in modernity and

economic development for Nigeria as a whole and any Nigerian who aligns him/her self with these opportunities. These pillars are explored in detail throughout the ethnographic chapters

In Chapter 3, I began to examine the first key pillar big business through the example of Great Northern Industrial Manufacturers (GNIM), a Chinese owned family firm that has been operating in Nigeria for over 40 years. I argued that GNIM utilised kinship and paternalism in its quest to maintain, expand and secure its operations in Nigeria. The extremely complex politics of a Chinese owned family firm that operates in Nigeria was visible through an exploration of the experiences of Nigerian upper management. Solomon and Alhaji are a part of the second generation of GNIM's upper management. They rose through the ranks of the firm. Matti is the grandnephew of the founder and the son of a Nigerian business woman; Segun is Alhaji's son.

The top Nigerian management worked in positions that included interfacing with fellow Nigerians on behalf of GNIM. These Nigerians ranged from employees within the firm to external government officials to Nigerian business associates. Although Nigerian management was hired to conduct other business, a major part of their work involved interacting with other Nigerians on behalf of the firm. I argued that the choice of Nigerians for these roles was not a case of tokenism and that the senior level Nigerian executives were considered members of the founder's extended family. Due to Alhaji's role as chairman and family member, his son Segun was hired and treated like other members of the third generation of GNIM. The firm employed flexible kinship to include and exclude people in its social network. Flexible kinship allowed the firm to grow and utilise the knowledge of members within its social network. Both Solomon and Alhaji enjoyed their familial relationship with the family but they both acknowledged a need for GNIM to hire more Nigerians in upper management positions.

As members of the third generation of GNIM, Matti and Segun faced tension between their desire to change the firm and maintaining the status quo. Matti and Segun were sent abroad to study and learn things that could help improve the firm. Nonetheless upon their return, they had to learn the firm's management style by shadowing members of the second generation's upper management team. Matti and Segun tried to assert themselves by incorporating different management styles than the second generation. They also expressed a frustration with and a desire to lessen the bureaucracy within GNIM.

In Chapter 4, I continued my discussion on GNIM through an analysis of the firm's use of brokerage. Brokerage is a crucial component of Nigerian-Chinese relationships. Historically brokerage has been a part of Nigerian society before colonisation. Contemporary brokerage particularly in the manner it is utilised at GNIM, involves diverse actors. The firm relies upon a variety of relationships which includes Chinese and non-Chinese actors. For example, the firm has relationships with the Lagosian Chinese community and the Chinese consulate. GNIM also has relationships with Nigerians within the firm and outside of the firm. Nigerians range from government officials to royalty to business associates to community members in the areas the company operates. Additionally, GNIM's social network extends to European and Asian business partners.

GNIM's form of brokerage includes corporate gift giving and *guanxi*. Corporate gifts depend upon the reciprocal nature of gifts to help further social relations. Gift recipients reciprocate by allowing GNIM to gain access to resources. Reciprocity converts the corporate gift into a form of brokerage. GNIM's gifts help the firm access resources [land, introductions, relationships, help, etc...]. The case study of the king highlights the nuanced nature of brokerage. The king brokers resource deals on behalf of his people in the hopes of bringing economic development to his area. In turn, GNIM provides a small tribute and small white goods to the king. The firm also provides the area with more sizeable gifts which range from scholarships to health care to jobs.. Thus the king's brokerage have proved successful and his role as a leader is legitimized and GNIM is able to expand its operations.

Brokerage in these varying forms is linked with corruption because there is a perception that brokerage can lead to an atmosphere where favouritism; nepotism; bribery and other forms of corruption can flourish. Anthropology explores the local definitions and understandings of corruption instead of relying solely on definitions from international development organizations and Western politicians. The fact that corruption does occur is not contested, what is interrogated is the level of corruption; what constitutes corruption; solutions to reduce it and how people experience and respond to corruption. While GNIM representatives and those in their social network do not speak about corruption explicitly, the firm attempts to navigate corruption through the utilisation of brokerage.

The next two chapters explored the ways in which individuals are attempting to harness the promise of China through entrepreneurship and education.

In Chapter 5, I traced the inspirations, disappointments and successes of a range of Nigerian entrepreneurs who sought to make good on the promise of doing business with China. I argued that the entrepreneurs most able to conduct business with China did so by building and drawing upon various forms of capital. Historically and contemporarily Nigerian entrepreneurship has been heralded as a way to relieve poverty; improve the Nigerian economy and help create job opportunities. International development organizations have moved towards funding entrepreneurial programmes. Consequently, Nigeria has seen a number of government led initiatives to help stimulate entrepreneurialism. These have ranged from educational programmes to seed money and technical assistance. Nonetheless research has shown that successful entrepreneurs were more likely to have greater access to capital either financial, social, or educational (Dolan and Scott 2009). The entrepreneurs I studied all had access to educational capital. Most of them purchased goods from China that helped them develop their business.

With the exception of Preston, all of the entrepreneurs travelled to China to help expand their operations. Travelling to China required brokerage due to the difficulties of accessing the Chinese consulate. The cost for accessing this brokerage combined with the cost of the visa itself, limits the number of people who are able to acquire a visa. Entrepreneurs who can go, take full advantage of their trips to maximize negotiations and deals. Additionally, Nigerian entrepreneurs' negotiated the line between trust and mistrust when engaging in elite exchanges with Chinese colleagues. They formed opinions of their colleagues as to whether and how they could build relationships with them. For instance, Preston the gems dealer, was impressed with his clients' willingness to travel to Nigeria, unlike American clients he dealt with. This made Preston more willing to work with his Chinese clients. The chapter highlighted the challenges Nigerian entrepreneurs face when conducting business with China and the challenges of turning aspirations into reality.

In Chapter 6, I explored the third pillar of the Nigerian government's public discourse campaign, education. I sought to analyse how Mandarin Chinese is marketed to students as a tool to manifest the desires of aspirational Nigerians to become upwardly mobile. Chinese is the latest foreign language to be taught in Nigerian schools. English, Arabic and French are the main foreign languages taught in Nigeria.

I discussed the experiences of Femi, a student who studied in China at an acrobatic university. Femi was shocked by her university's rural surroundings. Before going to China she had images of sleek modern cities as opposed to places that reminded her of her home village in Nigeria. For decades majority of the Nigerian students who studied Chinese language did so through scholarships rooted in cultural exchange. This changed in the late 2000's when Chinese authorities created Hanban, a non-profit organisation which organizes Chinese language classes all over the world through the Confucius Institute model. The Confucius Institute is modelled after the Alliance Française, a government sanctioned organization that organizes Chinese language classes throughout the world. Confucius Institutes in Nigeria help with providing classes from the primary to tertiary level; most of which are associated with elite academic institutions. Classes on the university level were attended by adult students from university age upwards. Students had varying motivations to learn Chinese. Some wanted to learn for fun while others aspired to work with Chinese counterparts in the future either through business or government employment.

On the primary and secondary level, one of the most well-known schools that taught Mandarin Chinese is Excelsior, an elite private school. Bosede Olarewaju the owner and administrator leveraged her image as a well-respected educator and the addition of Mandarin Chinese into its curriculum to promote her school. Excelsior demonstrated the exclusive nature of Mandarin language learning.

Emerging Themes

A number of themes have emerged throughout this thesis. These themes relate to the overall hopes and aspirations that the grand narrative of Nigerian-Chinese relations seeks to tap into. These themes are exclusivity, brokerage, ritual, ceremony, and performance.

Although the grand narrative is promoted as an accessible dream that all can partake in, an analysis of each pillar exposed the exclusive nature of Nigerian-Chinese relations. In GNIM, the firm's use of kinship and brokerage serves as way to include and exclude members from the firm's social network. There was no attempt to interrogate the tales of Nigerian corruption. Even by Matti, a Nigerian member of the third generation. Here we find the nexus of exclusivity and trust and mistrust within. The firm has closed ranks and exercised the use of kinship to create familial borders to manage distrust. Only a rarefied few Nigerians are allowed into the firms

upper ranks and these employees are also considered family. Using kinship logic and mistrust serves to exclude talented candidates from consideration. This not only harms candidates, but it also harms GNIM by denying itself access to the best and the brightest. (Stewart 2003: 386). How does GNIM and other Chinese firms begin to develop trust with Nigerians outside of the family circle?

Entrepreneurship and education also indicate a fairly exclusive realm but with slightly more opportunities. The government's initiatives for entrepreneurship can help a budding entrepreneur accumulate the financial, educational and social capital needed to run a business. Initiatives offer loans and seed money as well as training; networking and mentorship. Although this capital helps to provide an initial advantage in establishing an entrepreneurial venture, when entrepreneurs attempt to expand by purchasing from China and travelling to China, another level of social and financial capital is needed to navigate the bureaucratic and expensive process that working with China entails. This makes the Nigerian-Chinese entrepreneurial relationship exclusive.

Mandarin Chinese language learning is also exclusive. While the government has proposed the inclusion of Mandarin in Lagos state public schools, private schools like Excelsior have an advantage. Excelsior has the financial and social capital that most institutions do not. Excelsior can mobilize this capital to ensure that its students have extra classes; exclusive meeting with Chinese government officials and anything else students require. Although the school offers scholarships, only two to three slots are available per year compared to the more than 400 students who usually take the exam for the scholarship.

Another reoccurring theme is brokerage. Brokerage was discussed at length in regards to GNIM and entrepreneurs but it also has a role in education. One striking example relates to the scholarships that the two students who travelled abroad received. Both Femi and Lanre received scholarship through the help of others. Femi had a familial connection in a government ministry who suggested she apply. Lanre leveraged his relationship with the staff of the Confucius Institute who served as references for his scholarship application. Brokerage did not necessarily guarantee the success of Femi and Lanre's applications but brokerage was crucial in allowing providing them with help. For Femi it was information and for Lanre it was a reference. Brokerage is essential to the Nigerian-Chinese relationship in its varying forms.

Lastly, I reviewed the joint theme of ritual, ceremony and performance which played a role in every pillar. GNIM's Chinese New Year resembled a potlach in its display of conspicuous amounts of food, drink and gifts. GNIM used this and other events to uphold its social and economic position. In entrepreneurship ritual and ceremony usually involved business dinners during trips to China. Student performances in plays and cultural dances provided a way for them to embody the Nigerian-Chinese relationship. Femi and her colleagues performed Nigerian dances and served as representatives of their home cultures while living in China. Just like the Excelsior students, Femi and her colleagues also learned about Chinese culture through the practice of Chinese performance art. In turn students performed for Nigerian and Chinese audiences back in Nigeria. These performances transformed the students into living symbols of Nigerian-Chinese elite exchanges.

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Figure 1: Hierarchy of Languages within Nigeria (Adegbija 2004: 190)

