



Degree Programme in *Politics: Philosophy and Economics*

Course of International Relations

How Business Diplomacy by Multinational Corporations in the Petroleum and Gas Sector

Affects Development Trajectories

In Chad and Nigeria

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To Dr. Carolina Polito,
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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the growing influence of multinational corporations (MNCs) in the realm of international relations, with a specific focus on the practice of Business Diplomacy (BD) within the petroleum and gas sector. The study centers on the cases of Chad and Nigeria, exploring how BD activities by MNCs, most notably Shell plc, affect the developmental and economic policy trajectories of host countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative research methods, this work aims to address a critical gap in the literature: while previous studies have examined the economic motivations and corporate strategies behind BD, there has been limited inquiry into the tangible political and developmental outcomes these strategies produce in the host countries. The thesis begins by tracing the historical evolution of BD as a strategic response to the geopolitical risks faced by MNCs operating in volatile regions. However, despite its conceptual advancement, ranging from early qualitative investigations (Holzer, 2001) to econometric modeling (Jiang, 2024), the literature has largely failed to explore how BD translates into policy shifts within host nations. To bridge this gap, the dissertation formulates a central research question: “How is business diplomacy by multinational corporations affecting economic and developmental policy choices in Chad and Nigeria?”. The research employs a Most Similar Case Design, selecting Chad and Nigeria due to their comparable colonial legacies, resource endowments, and exposure to foreign corporate investment. Yet, despite these similarities, the countries diverge significantly in their policy responses and developmental outcomes. Nigeria presents a model of partial liberalisation and increasing privatisation, marked by the government's recent efforts to reduce corruption and promote private sector engagement. In contrast, Chad exemplifies a trend toward nationalisation and centralised control. The empirical analysis draws from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data include Shell's publicly disclosed payment reports and investment briefs, while secondary data encompass government policy documents, international development indexes, and academic case studies. The analysis highlights how in Nigeria, BD has supported policy reforms and infrastructure investment, albeit within a context still grappling with entrenched governance challenges; and how, in Chad, BD has often exacerbated institutional weaknesses, leading to policy capture, misuse of revenues, and increased foreign dependence. These findings suggest that BD can only be a positive force for development when accompanied by efficient institutions.

Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of international relations, the role of multinational corporations in international crisis management is on the rise and they have increasingly acquired a diplomatically significant role, sometimes even proving to be more efficient compared to more traditional strategies (Ruel, 2020). This new power dynamic has developed through time, alongside the affirmation of multinational corporations as a note-worthy economic phenomenon. The prestige accrued by multinational corporations has been concretely transposed to the political sphere, making them suitable actors to be involved in the arena of international relations. Such a development could be understood as a natural evolution of the focus of multinational corporations, which found themselves twined in an intricate web of business dynamics covering different national realities, which sometimes constituted perilous environments: out of a need to secure economic returns, efforts were needed by multinational corporations to deal effectively with the political landscape of the host country, oftentimes actively put into practice as direct involvement in diplomacy. Whilst purely economic third-party measures are in place, as it is the case for different forms of private risk insurance to safeguard foreign direct investments, the politicisation of multinational corporations has been sought after as an effective way for multinational corporations to safely conduct business activities abroad. This *business diplomacy* has proven itself to not only be an economic advantageous strategy for multinational firms, but also a new convenient way to manoeuvre international relations and significantly influence the political horizon in foreign countries. One example might be the operations of Shell plc. in the territory of Chad. As Shell largest shareholder, the Chadian government has often showed particular interests in aligning with the corporation's positions, in order not to hinder its economic turnouts and, at the same time, Shell had to face the responsibility to take into account its lasting impact on Chadian society, oftentimes by supporting specific governmental action to support various civil initiatives (Winkler, 2018). This represents a concrete example of how the relationship between sovereign states and multinational corporations is exponentially growing in complexity, contributing to a most intricate international panorama. However, said instance only represents one of many actions undertaken by Shell plc. in Sub-Saharan Africa, reflecting the modern trend of multinational corporations' systemic involvement in the region, which is promising to bring everlasting changes in those countries' balance of power and economic structures. Willing to further

analyse this phenomenon, namely how business diplomacy by multinational corporations is permanently affecting the political and economic landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa, I hereby express my interest in addressing these and related questions in a structured extensive research project. Deeming the topic of pivotal importance, the focus of the research project will be analysing the intricate relationship between economic undertakings by multinational corporations and political changes at domestic levels in Sub-Saharan African host countries. This will be carried out in the following way. First, the general impact of multinational corporations investments abroad will be dealt with, without shedding additional light on the Sub-Saharan African context. Here, the data accrued surrounding the phenomenon will be presented and major conclusions will be inferred. Second, two poignant instances relating to the phenomenon will be analysed, both sharing a common denominator: the effect of investments by Shell plc. In Chad and Nigeria. The focus will be extensively on how these economic activities have shaped the interest areas of the respective domestic policy dimensions, expressing further considerations on their lasting impacts on human rights levels. In the third section, the dissertation will delve into the empirical evidence surrounding how corporate diplomacy fares in comparison with other “diplomatic” strategies such as traditional inter-governmental cooperation and intervention by other non-state actors (i.e. Non Governmental Organisations, NGOs).

The thesis project “How Business Diplomacy by Multinational Corporations in the Petroleum and Gas Sector Is Affecting the Developmental Trajectories in Chad and Nigeria” drawing on previously produced and established literature, mainly “Framing the Corporation: Royal Dutch/Shell and Human Rights Woes in Nigeria” (Holzer, 2007), “What Is Corporate Diplomacy? and, Why Does It Matter?” (Asquer, 2012) and the extensive quantitative data sets provided by the study “Corporate diplomacy: the dimensional structure and outcomes” (Jiang, 2024), which predominantly relate to the effects of corporate diplomacy on human rights legislation, has as its core objective to venture in an uncharted area of the topic, namely how corporate activity more broadly influences macro-economic and developmental policies. Whilst a link between the operation of multinational corporations in Sub-Saharan African nations may be inferred by the aforementioned data sets, what is left unaddressed is how this translates to the political and economic reality of specific countries. Thus, both the need to widen the research topic, but, at the same time, narrowing the object of analysis down to two specific examples, i.e. the countries of Chad and Nigeria. Henceforth, the research question pursued by the project is how business diplomacy by multinational corporations is affecting economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria. The study will develop over two

main variables: the independent variable is the economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria, the dependent variable is represented by the expression of business diplomacy in the form of investment by multinational corporations, specifically in the gas and petrol sector. The hypothesised relation, central to this project, is that the nature and amount of investment directed to said countries will affect policy choices in economic areas by those countries' governments. In order to develop the analysis, secondary data (Jiang, 2024) will be taken into account, whilst primary data will also be produced, to shed light on the concrete activities carried out by said corporations. In the contemporary landscape of international relations, the role of multinational corporations in international crisis management is on the rise and they have increasingly acquired a diplomatically significant role, sometimes even proving to be more efficient compared to more traditional strategies (Ruel, 2020). This new power dynamic has developed through time, alongside the affirmation of multinational corporations as a note-worthy economic phenomenon. The prestige accrued by multinational corporations has been concretely transposed to the political sphere, making them suitable actors to be involved in the arena of international relations. Such a development could be understood as a natural evolution of the focus of multinational corporations, which found themselves twined in an intricate web of business dynamics covering different national realities, which sometimes constituted perilous environments: out of a need to secure economic returns, efforts were needed by multinational corporations to deal effectively with the political landscape of the host country, oftentimes actively put into practice as direct involvement in diplomacy. Whilst purely economic third-party measures are in place, as it is the case for different forms of private risk insurance to safeguard foreign direct investments, the politicisation of multinational corporations has been sought after as an effective way for multinational corporations to safely conduct business activities abroad. This *business diplomacy* has proven itself to not only be an economic advantageous strategy for multinational firms, but also a new convenient way to manoeuvre international relations and significantly influence the political horizon in foreign countries. One example might be the operations of Shell plc. in the territory of Chad. As Shell largest shareholder, the Chadian government has often showed particular interests in aligning with the corporation's positions, in order not to hinder its economic turnouts and, at the same time, Shell had to face the responsibility to take into account its lasting impact on Chadian society, oftentimes by supporting specific governmental action to support various civil initiatives (Winkler, 2018). This represents a concrete example of how the relationship between sovereign states and multinational corporations is exponentially growing in complexity, contributing to a most

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I. Literature Review

§1.1 Introductory Remarks

The global and interconnected reality of the 21st century has profoundly shaped business relations, introducing firms to foreign markets. In order to navigate this unpredictable hazardous territory, the traditional ploys and strategies, once only reserved to states and diplomatic actors, need to be translated into the private corporate reality. The tailoring of the traditional skills and mindset of diplomacy to corporate needs, so as to facilitate the exchange of best practice in the analysis and management of geopolitical risk between government and the private sector, is known as Business Diplomacy (Riordan, 2014). Business or Corporate Diplomacy (here shortened to BD) centres on the precise use of coalitions of state and non-state actors to control the firm's risk environment. Larger multinational corporations need to develop their own diplomatic (BD) capabilities, whilst smaller firms might need to purchase these services from consultancies or other institutions. These BD capabilities include: first, analysis of geopolitical risks to their operations at both global and market-specific levels; second, the identification of the governmental and nongovernmental geopolitical stakeholders who shape said risks; third, the development of multi-level and heterogeneous networks of information and influence; fourth, the creation of coalitions among the geopolitical stakeholders based on common interests, pressuring reluctant collaborators and marginalising "problem actors"; lastly, the integration of these elements into an all-encompassing, Business Diplomacy strategy to promote the firm's objectives and effectively manage geopolitical risk. Firms have to operate internationally, whether in pursuit of low production costs or new markets. The international arena where these corporations must interact is unstable and unpredictable. As firms become actors in international relations, they also become targets of international discontent, expressed both through governments and non-governmental organisations. A new multi-polar world brings forth an insecure feel about international rules and regulations, while, at the same time, increasing the unbalance between states. Questioning the universality of international regulatory frameworks leads to many states opting for national legislation with extraterritorial impacts. Firms need to move in an uncharted highly volatile geopolitical environment. Hence, similarly to diplomats, corporations find their boundaries challenged by

“known and unknown unknowns” (Rumsfeld, 2002). Issues such as terrorism, financial instability and organised crime, present a direct threat to the firm. Furthermore, the fragmentation of global rule has revitalised traditional political agendas. Now, old menaces to firms have returned and corporations must again confront the risks of expropriation, nationalisation and political mishaps, as well as the direct physical and economic threats of conflict and warfare. Moreover, a sheer portion of the risks confronting firms arises from the nature of globalisation itself. As the international environment moves from a unipolar towards a multipolar system, firms will navigate between competing rule sets and value systems. Thence, existing international law may no longer offer a reliable protection, highlighting the pivotal importance of alternative strategies such as Business Diplomacy. The simultaneous emergence of new competitive markets on the African continent, propelled by the historical waves of decolonisation and the long-fought-for independent impetus of Sub-Saharan nations, most prominently Chad and Nigeria, provided corporate diplomacy with fertile ground to develop into a prominent and pivotal feature of modern international relations (Jiang, 2024). However, the effects of corporate diplomacy extend well beyond simple business relations, and clearly have wielded a sheer amount of influence on the concrete reality of the countries constituting the foreign market of interest, surprisingly affecting human rights legislation (Holzer, 2007) and sometimes BD has proved to be a rather precarious strategy. The unstable nature of this fairly new field of international relations is underlined by one of its most prominent failures. When Shell p.l.c. sought security for its installations and personnel in the Niger estuary, the consequent retaliatory mechanisms deployed by the Nigerian military shredded Shell’s ethical reputation in its home markets. The aim of this chapter is to first present an overview of pre-existing literature and quantitative data sets concerning the effects of business diplomacy on Sub-Saharan countries. From this analysis will follow a reflection on the present grounds left unaddressed by current literature, specifically regarding the effect of corporate diplomacy on development policies and strategies. The research question presented in this project, namely how business diplomacy by multinational corporations is affecting economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria, will be framed in light of the conclusions highlighted in the previous paragraphs and the relevant variables covered in the study will be briefly presented as a conclusion to the section.

§1.2 Overview

In the contemporary landscape of international relations, the role of multinational corporations in international crisis management is on the rise and they have increasingly acquired a diplomatically significant role, sometimes even proving to be more efficient compared to more traditional strategies (Ruel, 2020). This new power dynamic has developed through time, alongside the affirmation of multinational corporations as a note-worthy economic phenomenon. The prestige accrued by multinational corporations has been concretely transposed to the political sphere, making them suitable actors to be involved in the arena of international relations. Such a development could be understood as a natural evolution of the focus of multinational corporations, which found themselves twined in an intricate web of business dynamics covering different national realities, which sometimes constituted perilous environments: out of a need to secure economic returns, efforts were needed by multinational corporations to deal effectively with the political landscape of the host country, oftentimes actively put into practice as direct involvement in diplomacy. Whilst purely economic third-party measures are in place, as it is the case for different forms of private risk insurance to safeguard foreign direct investments, the politicisation of multinational corporations has been sought after as an effective way for multinational corporations to safely conduct business activities abroad. This business diplomacy has proven itself to not only be an economic advantageous strategy for multinational firms, but also a new convenient way to manoeuvre international relations and significantly influence the political horizon in foreign countries. One example might be the operations of Shell plc. in the territory of Chad. As Shell largest shareholder, the Chadian government has often showed particular interests in aligning with the corporation's positions, in order not to hinder its economic turnouts and, at the same time, Shell had to face the responsibility to take into account its lasting impact on Chadian society, oftentimes by supporting specific governmental action to support various civil initiatives (Winkler, 2018). This represents a concrete example of how the relationship between sovereign states and multinational corporations is exponentially growing in complexity, contributing to a most intricate international panorama. However, said instance only represents one of many actions undertaken by Shell plc. in Sub-Saharan Africa, reflecting the modern trend of multinational corporations' systemic involvement in the region, which is promising to bring everlasting changes in those countries' balance of power and economic structures. For the purpose of

methodically investigating the phenomenon of corporate diplomacy, tracing the chronological and theoretical evolution of the concept across different geographical realities will help us deepen our understanding on how the link between said practices and developmental policy has purposefully been left uncovered.

For the purpose of directing future research towards different and undiscussed directions, selected pieces of literature have been identified and will be reviewed with this purpose in mind. The first text proposed in this section follows a qualitative approach in the production of a report on human rights conditions in Nigeria and their alleged relation to business activity on the territory (Holzer, 2001). Instead, the second piece of research is focused on proceduralising and operationalising the definition of business diplomacy, actively distinguishing it from related concepts (Asquer, 2012). The last two texts are active attempts to conduct the concept of business diplomacy to two different, and specific, ideologies, in order to create a rational model to be followed for further inquiries, presenting in turn a more qualitative, Catholic inspired (Ruel, 2020), approach and a more quantitative economic one (Jihang, 2024).

Title	Method	Keywords
Holzer, B. (2001). Framing the Corporation: Royal Dutch/Shell and Human Rights Woes in Nigeria.	Qualitative report	“Ogoni Nine”, Shell plc, human rights legislation
Asquer, A. (2012). What Is Corporate Diplomacy? and, Why Does It Matter?	Operational definitions and guidelines, qualitative approach	definitions, commercial diplomacy, negotiation, traditional diplomacy
Ruël, H., (2020). Business diplomacy in multinational corporations (MNCs) : An exploratory study	Qualitative analysis through semi-structured interviews	CST, industry-specific, operationalisation
Jiang, S., (2024). Corporate diplomacy: the dimensional	Quantitative analysis through simple regression	econometrics, subsidiary performance assessment,

structure and outcomes.	models	compatriot, regulator	partner,
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With the rise of globalisation in the 1980's, multinational corporations began to be ever more twined in webs of international partnerships and agreement which forced them in the arena of international relations. However, the first efforts to present a systematic analysis of this phenomenon were attempted in the early 2000s, only after the downsides of business diplomacy were beginning to manifest themselves. In 2001, American scholar, Marc Holzer, compiled a detailed report advancing the idea that, often, corporations, when operating in a background of conflict, are framed as moral actors, bringing forth a contingent need to bear responsibility for the respect and protection of human rights, notwithstanding the actual degree of action and involvement of said ventures. The author's analysis draws from the public discourse surrounding the business endeavours carried out by the Dutch division of the petrol multinational corporation Shell plc. in Nigeria in 1995. The firm was found complicit in the execution of the activist group, known as "Ogoni Nine", who were actively contesting the operating practices of Shell plc. in the Niger river delta region (Amnesty International, 2017). Shell plc. started facing the first impediments to its business operations early that year, in the North Sea, when it failed to abide by Greenpeace's plan for the disposal of the Brent Spar oil storage buoy. Yet, in this instance, its involvement was clear, and defied the status of mere allegations. Contrarily, its role in Nigeria, at the time, was ambiguous and curtailed by a dense haze generated by an hostile climate of political upheaval and civic unrest.

"Yet it needs to be noted that large corporations such as Shell are not always able to translate such ethical policies into action on the local level, especially in developing countries like Nigeria (Wheeler et al. 2002). For instance, Shell's experiences with community projects show that corporate responsibility is a double edged sword. Until the year 2000, Shell's approach had been to accept responsibility both for the installation and maintenance of community projects. However, this resulted in far less praise than criticism from local communities since Shell was also blamed for the arising problems and malfunctions." (Holzer, 2001, p. 296)

Moreover, the corporation actions in the country moved along a legal void, burrowed by the numerous past failures of the Nigerian government. Hence, Shell's responsibility was a matter of discursive politics, whose social effects constituted a case of "symbolic" politics (Thomas and Thomas, 1928) and its problem definitions should not be underestimated. Conclusively, the author argues that even if, in the Nigeria case, Shell may not have been responsible for the domestic human rights situation or the distribution of oil revenues, nonetheless, the construction and attribution of such responsibility forced the corporation to act upon that assumption. Then, in so doing, it learned how to confront a political and economic environment that it originally did not control fully. Recent developments in Nigeria suggest that a more conducive political and economic environment may increase the chances of responsible corporate behaviour. Thus, framing the corporation as a responsible actor is how discursive political consumerism can make sure that opportunities for proper corporate conduct are seized when they arise.

Only less than a decade passed, when author Alberto Asquer, in 2012, collected the legacy of previous discourse on business diplomacy and enshrined its principles in his dissertation "What Is Business Diplomacy? And Why Does It Matter" (Asquer, 2012). First, the scholar analyses the concept of business diplomacy, *ibidem* defined as "the behavior of organizational actors aimed at implementing favorable conditions for carrying out corporate activities". Then, Asquer, by following a cognitive-linguistic approach, highlights the various dimensions of the phenomenon and its relations with bordering concepts, such as traditional diplomacy, commercial diplomacy, negotiations, and public relations. Furthermore, the analysis offers a new perspective by acknowledging the merits of business diplomacy, outlining the reasons why this phenomenon should be encouraged and systematised, the reasons why "it matters", especially when multinational corporations are entertaining continuous relations with other entities, such as non-profits, other businesses, and governments.

"[C]orporate diplomacy is carried out through various, complex activities. Effective corporate diplomats need to master a wide range of skills and capabilities that may overlap with those commonly possessed by diplomats, negotiators, and public relations managers. In part, these skills and competences, including gathering and analyzing information, providing advice, and establishing and maintaining relationships with institutions and other firms, may relate to some innate personal features. [...] It seems pivotal, therefore, that firms select the most appropriate talents

in order to fill organizational positions that require the extensive management of relationships with outside entities, that they provide them with appropriate training to develop their analytic and social skills, and that they furnish them with appropriate resources and tools.” (Asquer, 2012, pp.60-61)

Thus, the study qualifies the meaning of corporate diplomacy, so as to prevent that this expression is applied vaguely, with the effect of losing any relevance and usefulness as a category of analysis and component of the discourse on management practices. Qualifying a definition means showing how a discipline moves along different lines in respect to similar endeavours. Hence, in this case, the author shows how business diplomacy is vested with a different function than, for instance, that of commercial diplomacy, which does not relate to specific firms. However, Asquer notes, companies do not recognise the pivotal role of corporate diplomacy, and they may not devote resources and efforts to improve the effectiveness of their “diplomatic” strategies, since this phenomenon at the time lacked and still lacks thorough academic discussion. The author concludes his analysis by underlining the ideal characteristics of effective “corporate diplomats”, including gathering and analysing information, providing advice, and establishing and maintaining relationships with institutions and other firms. These skills, whilst partially connected to an individual’s personal features, may be acquired through targeted training programmes, similar to those usually provided for professional negotiators. Therefore, firms need to select the most appropriate profiles in order to fill organisational positions requiring the extensive management of relations with entities on the outside, so as to provide them with appropriate instructions to benefit their analytic and social skills, endowing them with the utmost useful instruments. As time progresses and the novelty elements of business diplomacy fade, academic discourse quiesces, and until the 2020s no major contribution at systematising and qualifying this concept are advanced. We may identify two main sources dating back contemporary times, exhibiting distinct approaches; however, both underlying important realities concerning business diplomacy. In 2020, Dutch professor, Huubert Ruel, conducted a qualitative study on the nature of diplomatic businesses carried out by multinational corporations, “Business diplomacy in multinational corporations (MNCs) : An exploratory study”. By directly interviewing key figures in those firms, the author pursued the creation of a critical model inspired by Catholic Social Teaching (CST). CST can be summarised as the ensemble of principles contained in Catholic doctrine concerning human dignity and achievement of common good in society, inspired by Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical “De Rerum

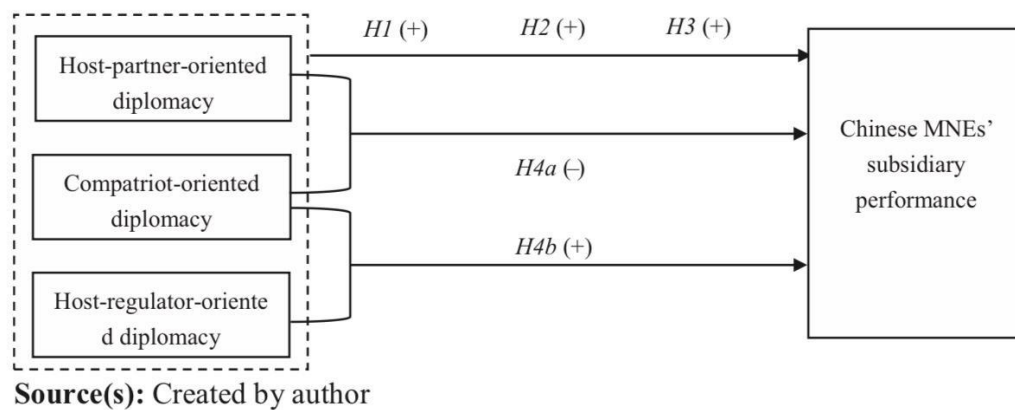
Novarum”, of 1891 (Nardoni, 2004). His intent was clear: to unveil patterns and common strategies deployed by different businesses to deal with the common challenges brought about by the ever-increasing world interconnectedness. At the beginning, he posits that multinational corporations (MNCs) need the ability to manage complex interactions with governments, local and international NGOs. Hence, he acknowledges the relevance of business diplomacy. However, it is not clear how MNCs actually conduct it. Thus, this research aims to answer the question: “How is business diplomacy enacted by and embedded in MNCs?” His inquiry is conducted through a multi-dimensional operationalisation of business diplomacy. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with eight MNCs.

“None of the eight MNCs had a dedicated business diplomacy function or department. Instead, functions and departments like Public Affairs, Corporate Communications, Public Relations, Government Relations and Government Affairs were concerned with business diplomacy activities. For example, within DSM the two departments of Public Affairs and Corporate Communications together focus on establishing and sustaining positive relationships with governments and nongovernmental stakeholders. Although the term business diplomacy was not actually used by any of the eight MNCs, all of them were able to describe and define the concept. There is great consistency in how seven out of eight MNCs defined business diplomacy” (Ruel, 2020, p.12)

Clearly, the findings exhibited both discordant and common results. It can be inferred that seven of the eight MNCs interviewed conduct business diplomacy intensively. Yet, none of them applied a clear and all-encompassing business diplomatic policy. Contrarily, only general guidelines existed, and were only limited to five MNCs. Furthermore, the results suggest that industry-specific factors affect business diplomacy intensity of MNCs and that the importance of business diplomacy is recognized more in weak institutional contexts.

Following a radically different direction, Jihang’s 2024 contribution represents a monumental undertaking, for it not only furthers the qualifying attempts made in the previous literature, but also provides the phenomenon with econometric and statistical dignity, highlighting the specific business-related characteristics of corporate diplomacy. The study’s backdrop is the current climate of international political upheaval and the ensuing operating risk in international business, which significantly encourage the pursuit of better diplomatic techniques, neatly tailored for a profit maximising reality. However, this excitement has not

been automatically translated into a conceptually clear and operationally precise strategy. The author drawing from social capital theory concretises corporate diplomacy as a three-dimensional construct, identifying three streams of corporate diplomacy: compatriot-oriented, host partner-oriented, and host regulator-oriented. Jihang attempts to quantify its distinct impacts on multinational corporations subsidiary performance. In order to comprehend the importance of this study for the field of international relations, it is pivotal to first cover at least one economic aspect, id est defining what the author means by subsidiary performance. Subsidiary performance is generally defined as the economic performance of a subsidiary, in this case of a multinational corporation, in its own market-place, and its revenues in terms of its influence on strategic decision-making. This is of pivotal significance, due to the fact that the actors concretely engaging in business diplomatic strategies are in most cases territory-specific subsidiaries of bigger international realities.



Moving on with Jihang analysis, the data set contains 134 responses collected from questionnaires administered to key informants in Chinese multinational corporations, using the simple regression model. Through this strict methodological approach, the research manages to find that corporate diplomacy is positively correlated with a multinational corporation subsidiary performance. The research tangibly enriches the operationalisation of business diplomacy, by providing a nuanced view of its distinct and combined effects on subsidiary performance; practically establishing an ambivalent link between higher profits and more efficient diplomatic strategy.

	Host-partner-oriented	Host-regulator-oriented	Compatriot-oriented
Objects	Host-country counterparts	Host-country government officials	Expatriate compatriots living in the host country
Legitimacy to achieve	Business legitimacy	Political and social legitimacy	Business, political, and social legitimacy
The way to achieve legitimacy	(1) Direct access: direct interaction with host partners (2) Mediated access: the recommendation of host partners	(1) Direct access: direct interaction with host regulators (2) Mediated access: with the mediation of political legitimacy and further obtaining social legitimacy	Spillover access: legitimacy spillover from early expatriates' entrants
Resource to achieve	Market resources	Regulatory resources	Rich in market resources (esp. Tacit information)
Table 1. Comparison of three types of corporate diplomacy	Source(s): Created by authors		

Conclusively, by analysing the past literature on the phenomenon of Business Diplomacy, we can safely infer how it emerged as a distinctive and innovative reality in the field of international relations, whose both advantages and disadvantages have been thoroughly discussed, concretely setting aside other strategies such as traditional diplomacy and negotiation. Thus, the objective of this section has been highlighting in chronological order the literature produced on this concept. First, a light was shed on the most immediate consequences of business diplomatic activities, namely concerns surrounding the respect of human rights. Second, the focus shifted on reviewing the operational and distinctive qualities of corporate diplomacy, highlighting both its relationship with neighbouring concepts and its unique features. Third, the attempt to conduct the nature of the concept to a specific methodological approach has been illustrated, through the crafting of a qualitative analysis which produced interesting and ambivalent findings. Lastly, the concept has been properly framed into an econometric and quantitative reality, with the purpose of connecting business diplomatic activity to the subsidiary performance of multinational corporations.

§1.3 Criticalities

The phenomenon of corporate diplomacy has emerged through time as one of the main plays of international cooperation in the current economic and political landscape worldwide (Asquer, 2012). Its links with both economic matters and political technicalities have been thoroughly covered by the current literature, unveiling not so few concerns, mainly

involving human rights woes and legal grey areas, that reflect and aggravate existing backgrounds of civic and social unrest. However, when observing the ever-changing political realities of countries serving as the main stage for corporate subsidiary activities, it is impossible not to inquire about the possible links between these external stimuli and the concrete decisions in matter policies, relating to developmental economic policies, enacted by said governments in recent years. Yet, this very last point is not documented by proper research and possible linkages are left to be uncovered through future analysis. In this section the object will be unveiling the critical points unaddressed by the previously analysed contributions, in order to identify what the possible direction of future research could be.

The first piece of literature analysed, “Framing the Corporation: Royal Dutch/Shell and Human Rights Woes in Nigeria” by Holzer, of 2001, correctly underpins the sociological and humanitarian implications of a new rising phenomenon. However, it solely focuses on these theoretical aspects, without trying to identify links and prompts with government activity, translating into concrete policies, adopted by the country object of inquiry, Nigeria, at the time, which yielded sizable positive effects on the overall well-being of the country (Ojinnaka, 2000). Whether or not those aforementioned policies were influenced by business diplomatic activities has yet to be uncovered; however, the simultaneity of onsets could have been an interesting addition to Holzer’s already enthralling discussion.

The subsequent analysis presented by Asquer, in 2012, namely “What Is Business Diplomacy? And Why Does It Matter”, has the objective merit of having produced an operational and distinct definition for the phenomenon of corporate diplomacy, highlighting new unique features, prompting further discussion and analysis on corporate diplomatic activities, and designing the ideal profile of a “corporate diplomat” and their strategic guidelines. Nonetheless, the object of discussion is exclusively focused on the corporate realities, almost presenting a profit-maximising orientation. The aim of the study is to advantage and ameliorate business activity, and it systematically ignores the positive and negative spillovers produced by said ventures (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015).

Shifting our attention to the literature produced in the current decade, Ruel’s contribution truly stands out as a prominent example of devolving significant efforts to rationally and ideologically dignify the phenomenon of business diplomacy. With a commendable qualitative approach the author proceeds to create a unique methodological strategy in order to better describe the phenomenon. However, due to small sample size and a clear ideological bias, rooted in his total commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, his analysis is incomplete, since it falls short in describing the real political relations underpinning the phenomenon of

corporate diplomacy, limiting its research solely to a descriptive approach, excluding any advice with a more prescription orientation.

The most recent study presented in the previous section, id est “Corporate diplomacy: the dimensional structure and outcomes” by Jiang, of 2024, brilliantly confers to the concept of business diplomacy an econometric dignity, a quantitative dimension that makes the economic and financial character of said phenomenon evident, by framing it as a business strategy with a profit-oriented rational, whilst at the same time understanding the intricate nature of its ties with host and partner governments. However, although this relation is not forsaken or ignored by said study, it still is conceived as a benefit or demerit to business activity: the ties are unilateral and only the economic effects borne by the company are discussed. Hence, the opposite direction, namely how corporate action influences political reality is left open to discussion.

Conclusively, by critically analysing and dissecting the main pieces of literature on the concept of corporate diplomacy, it is evident how one specific aspect of said phenomenon is left unaddressed, namely how business diplomatic activities and strategies influence the outside reality in the form of policy choices, whose aim is to set on economic development in countries, such as Chad and Nigeria, to ambivalently benefit both corporations and society as large. Hence, the aim of this section has been to investigate the common denominator among past contributions, with the objective of identifying unabridged concepts, gaps, that constitute unaddressed criticalities, arising both from error in sampling or mere will to focus on different aspects of the phenomenon of business diplomacy. The research gap has been identified in a lack of coverage of the direct links between business diplomatic activities by multinational corporations and developmental policies in Sub-Saharan countries, most notably Chad and Nigeria.

§1.4 Literature and Research Question

Starting from the 1980s, the concept of corporate or business diplomacy has been the object of thorough discussion. Many scholars have produced literature investigating the various aspects and manifestations of the phenomenon. Most notably, American scholar, Holzer, was the first to have an all-encompassing comprehension on both the advantages and disadvantages of corporate diplomatic activity, specifically focusing on human rights woes in Nigeria. However, the procedural and defining standards of corporate diplomacy were first

discussed by Asquer in 2012. with the clear objective of distinguishing the practice of corporate diplomacy from other akin strategies, such as negotiation and commercial diplomacy. Not only did he proceed to clearly set out the reasons underpinning the importance and necessity of that practice, but also described the ideal traits and characteristics of the efficient business diplomat. The concept kept its evolution track up until the contemporary decade, the 2020's being the frame of the most decisive theoretical achievements. Now, attempts are made to provide a methodological confinement to the discussion surrounding business diplomacy. Most notably, two different approaches have been advanced. First, in 2020, by Ruel, the efforts were directed towards a more qualitative dominion, inspired by Catholic Social Teaching and distributism. Second, in 2024, the method proposed is a quantitative and econometric model, which prioritises the analysis of subsidiary performance of multinational corporations.

The previous section has underlined the common denominator amongst these aforementioned findings, being their lack of coverage on the direct political consequences on tangible daily reality, effectively producing a “research gap”, that serves as an open field inviting further research on the untouched areas. In this section, attempts will be made to create a linkage between the gap described beforehand and the research objective of this dissertation. The project, here presented, has as its aim to be the expression of a need to widen the research topic of business diplomacy, but, at the same time, narrowing the object of analysis down to two specific examples, i.e. the countries of Chad and Nigeria. Henceforth, the research question pursued by the project is how business diplomacy by multinational corporations is affecting policies in Chad and Nigeria. The study will develop over two main variables: the independent variable is the policies in Chad and Nigeria, the dependent variable is represented by the expression of business diplomacy in the classical, previously highlighted, expressions by multinational corporations, specifically in the gas and petrol sector. The hypothesised relation, central to this project, is that the nature and amount of investment directed to said countries will affect policy choices in economic areas by those countries' governments. With this objective laid out, it is clear how the previous literature constitutes a large framework, ideal to accommodate the processes and reflections linked to the research question. Indeed, the topic of analysis rests on the previous assumptions and definitions surrounding the concept of business diplomacy and moves from the original findings. However, efforts will be made to refocus its aims on the more specific context of developmental policies in a much more restricted territorial reality. This will be carried out through the construction of a qualitative model in its primary sources analysed, but at the

same time references to appropriate quantitative sources will be added as secondary data, so as to acknowledge both current contribution to the development of the concept of corporate diplomacy.

In conclusion, the concept of business diplomacy has inspired throughout the past decades vivid discussion on its nature, purposes, modes of action, and ideological vocation. However, when put into a more concrete and tangible direction, few points really stand out and can be considered appropriate to respond to the real challenges of our interconnected reality. Whilst, past literature has not failed in noticing the simultaneous emergence of developmental policies and foreign business activities, it has yet proved the existence of direct links and does not move past simple nods to possible correlation. The aim of this section has been to raccord what past contributions have left unaddressed with the research aims of this dissertation, clearly manifesting the will to further the research on the topic of corporate diplomacy.

§1.5 Conclusive Remarks

The increasing interconnectedness of the global reality has placed multinational corporations (MNCs) at the forefront of international relations, requiring them to develop diplomatic strategies to navigate geopolitical risks. Business Diplomacy (BD) has emerged as a key practice, allowing firms to manage their risk environment by engaging with state and non-state actors. The literature reviewed has extensively discussed the evolution of BD, from its conceptualization as a corporate necessity to its operationalization through qualitative and quantitative methodologies. However, despite significant contributions, a critical research gap remains—the direct impact of business diplomacy on the economic and developmental policies of host nations, particularly in politically volatile regions such as Chad and Nigeria.

In order to build the foundations of this research project, it was first necessary to establish its links with past literary contributions in this field. This has been carried out by first enumerating and analysing past research on the topic of business diplomacy in chronological order, starting from the early 2000s and culminating in contemporary times. Then, efforts were made to identify a common denominator among these aforementioned sources. This led to the emergence of a research gap, namely there is no significant coverage on the direct interactions between business ventures and concrete policies adopted by the countries of Chad and Nigeria in terms of development sponsoring. Thus, this project has as its objective that of creating a network of linkages to further research in the aforementioned direction.

The theoretical foundation of BD has been established through multiple scholarly efforts. Early studies, such as Holzer's (2001) investigation into Shell's operations in Nigeria, highlighted the ethical and reputational dilemmas corporations face when operating in conflict-prone areas. Later, Asquer (2012) provided an operational definition of BD, focusing on its strategic importance to corporate actors. More recent contributions have explored different methodological perspectives: Ruel (2020) approached BD through a qualitative, ideologically informed lens, whereas Jiang (2024) introduced an econometric model, linking BD to MNC subsidiary performance. While these studies have enriched the understanding of BD, they have primarily viewed the phenomenon through the lens of corporate interests, neglecting its broader implications for host countries' policy landscapes. The core objective of this study is to bridge this gap by examining how corporate diplomatic activities influence economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria. The hypothesis suggests that BD strategies, whether host-partner-oriented, host-regulator-oriented, or compatriot-oriented, shape governmental decision-making, particularly in resource-dependent economies. The framework established in this study incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to assess the extent to which corporate diplomatic engagement translates into policy shifts, either fostering sustainable development or exacerbating economic disparities. As global power dynamics shift towards a multipolar world, the role of MNCs in shaping international relations will only intensify. The increasing prevalence of extraterritorial regulations and the regulatory fragmentation among states create a complex environment where corporate diplomacy must evolve beyond profit-driven risk management to encompass broader socio-political responsibilities. By investigating the interplay between BD and national policy decisions, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of corporate influence in the global governance landscape. Moving forward, empirical studies should further dissect the causal mechanisms linking corporate diplomatic actions to policy outcomes, particularly in emerging economies, to ensure that BD strategies contribute to both business success and equitable development.

The next section will deal with this project research design. Justification and explanation of this dissertation aims and purposes will be presented, concretely assembling a theoretical framework, for its analysis to be accommodated. This will be carried out so as to prepare for the proper empirical analysis and presentation that will follow these sections and will constitute the true corpus of the discourse. The following second section (§2) of this dissertation holds the purpose of examining the complex interaction between multinational corporations' diplomatic activities, specifically within the gas and petroleum sector, and the

economic and developmental policies adopted by the Sub-Saharan countries of Chad and Nigeria. Moving from this theoretical groundwork and the literature review presented in the previous section, this section deepens the general understanding of the practical dynamics and narrows down the implications of corporate diplomacy in this context.

In the first paragraph (§2.2), an analysis will be woven on the core variables central to this project, i.e. the independent variable, represented by multinational corporations' quantity and nature of investments, and the dependent variable, namely the economic and developmental policies devised by the Chadian and Nigerian. The image presented will highlight the apparent quantitative nature of corporate investments, whilst, at the same time, recognising the qualitative vocation of governmental policy choices. So as to empirically evaluate the relations between the two variables, the methodology employed will be that of hypothesis testing, fostering analytical clarity and avoiding supplementary confounding variables. Second (§2.3), this section will provide an overview of the analytical definition of the phenomenon under investigation, bringing forth the hypothesised relation between the nature and quality of corporate investments and the policy guidelines in Chad and Nigeria. This relation will be dissected by reconstructing the history of each country's experience of the development of the petroleum sector in a colonial and post-colonial framework, tracing back their trajectories from the initial exploration mandates and the subsequent periods of instability and reform, leading to contemporary dynamics involving a spectrum of policies ranging from nationalisation to privatisation. Here, two approaches will emerge. One, Nigeria's approach, is generally characterised by appreciable openness to foreign investment and privation. Two, which contrasts significantly the previous model, is that followed by Chad, exhibiting a tendency toward nationalisation and centralised control, mirroring deeper political, institutional and infrastructural disparities. In the third paragraph (§2.4), the chapter introduces the necessary instruments to present the comparative analysis of the two case studies, i.e. the petrol and gas sector in Chad and Nigeria, as a foundation for more profound empirical scrutiny, emphasising the rich, yet evident, interlinkage between corporate diplomatic activity and national policy frameworks. Conclusive remarks (§2.5) will follow, summarising the pivotal developments of the section and underlining the issues that will be addressed in the following section (§3). All sources employed in the development of the chapter will be available in a later section (§2.6).

II. Methodology

§2.1 Introductory Remarks

In the previous section of literature review (§1), which has ventured in exploring the conceptual framework and scholarly debates surrounding the phenomenon of Business Diplomacy (BD), a critical dissection of its defining evolution, operationalisation, and methodological context, through key academic considerations. Whilst the groundwork has presented compelling insight into BD ethical sphere, strategic implications, and its correlation with subsidiary performance, a significant empirical void persists, i.e. the reciprocal influence of corporate diplomatic activity on the economic and developmental policies and trajectories of host nations, particularly within the Sub-Saharan context. The second section (§2) develops along this identified research gap, by operating a transition from a theoretical and literature-based overview to analytical discourse through the case studies on Chad and Nigeria. Hence, by situating multinational corporations investments, specifically within the gas and petroleum sector in the countries, the following ponderings are aimed at substantiating the hypothesis that business diplomatic strategies are capable of materially shaping national economic and developmental frameworks. Thus, this section serves as the critical interjection between theoretical reflections and empirical inquiry, preparing for further comparative and evaluative reflections (§3).

The following second section (§2) of this dissertation holds the purpose of examining the complex interaction between multinational corporations' diplomatic activities, specifically within the gas and petroleum sector, and the economic and developmental policies adopted by the Sub-Saharan countries of Chad and Nigeria. Moving from this theoretical groundwork and the literature review presented in the previous section, this section deepens the general understanding of the practical dynamics and narrows down the implications of corporate diplomacy in this context.

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back their trajectories from the initial exploration mandates and the subsequent periods of instability and reform, leading to contemporary dynamics involving a spectrum of policies ranging from nationalisation to privatisation. Here, two approaches will emerge. One, Nigeria's approach, is generally characterised by appreciable openness to foreign investment and privation. Two, which contrasts significantly the previous model, is that followed by Chad, exhibiting a tendency toward nationalisation and centralised control, mirroring deeper political, institutional and infrastructural disparities. Second (§2.3), an analysis will be woven on the core variables central to this project, i.e. the independent variable, represented by multinational corporations' quantity and nature of investments, and the dependent variable, namely the economic and developmental policies devised by the Chadian and Nigerian. The image presented will highlight the apparent quantitative nature of corporate investments, whilst, at the same time, recognising the qualitative vocation of governmental policy choices. So as to empirically evaluate the relations between the two variables, the methodology employed will be that of Most Similar Case Design, fostering analytical clarity and avoiding supplementary confounding variables. In the third paragraph (§2.4), the chapter introduces the necessary instruments to present the comparative analysis of the two case studies, i.e. the petrol and gas sector in Chad and Nigeria, as a foundation for more profound empirical scrutiny, emphasising the rich, yet evident, interlinkage between corporate diplomatic activity and national policy frameworks. Conclusive remarks (§2.5) will follow, summarising the pivotal developments of the section and underlining the issues that will be addressed in the following section (§3). All sources employed in the development of the chapter will be available in a later section (§2.6).

§2.2 Case studies overview. History of the Oil and Petroleum sector in Nigeria and Chad

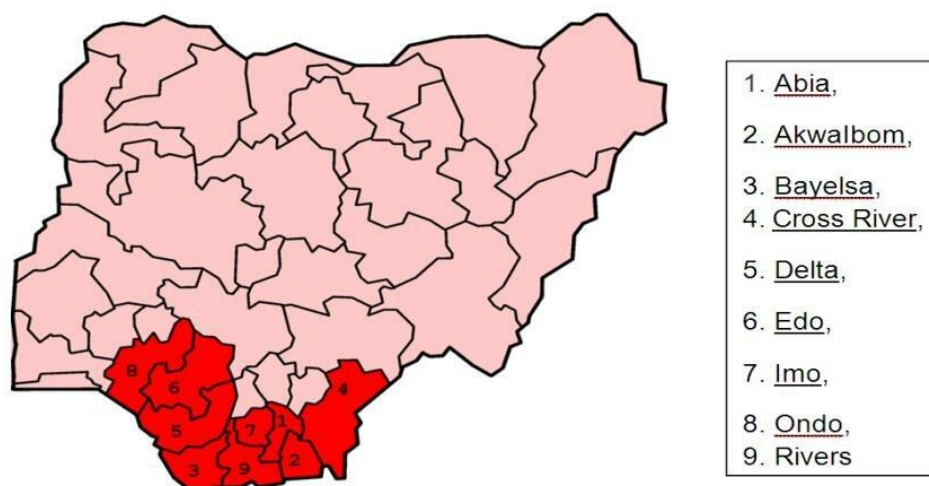
This dissertation makes use, in order to develop the proposed analysis, of two case studies, namely the effect brought about by corporate activities in the petrol and oil sector in the countries of Chad and Nigeria. These realities have a complex and long tie with said industrial sector. Understanding its implications may be insightful to better frame the object of inquiry here presented.

The history of oil exploration in modern-day Nigeria dates back to 1903, where the Nigerian Bitumen Corporation conducted preliminary tests in the country. With the outbreak of World War I, the firm's operations were halted. Owing to a scarcity of resources of small oil

companies, larger corporations overtook the exploration of commercial oil in Nigeria. These companies were unable to find commercially valuable oil and withdrew in 1923 (Frynas, 2000). In 1937, a new licence covering 920,000 km² was given to the Anglo-Iranian consortium Shell D'arcy Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, which began exploratory work all over the territory of Nigeria, but the acreage allotted to the company in the original licence was reduced in 1951 and then again between 1955 and 1957. Drilling activities started in 1951 in the Owerri area. In 1953, oil was discovered in non-commercially apt quantities at Akata, near Eket. Prior to the Akata find, the company had spent around £6 million on exploratory activities in the country. In the pursuit of commercially available petroleum, Shell-BP found oil in Oloibiri, Nigeria, in 1956. Other important oil wells discovered during the period were Afam and Bomu in Ogoni territory. In 1957, production of crude oil began and in 1960, a total of 847,000 tonnes of crude oil was exported. Towards the end of the 1950s, non-British firms were granted licence to explore for oil: Mobil in 1955, Tenneco in 1960, Gulf Oil, later Chevron, in 1961, Agip in 1962, and Elf in 1962. Prior to the discovery of oil, Nigeria, and many other African countries alike, strongly relied on agricultural exports to supply its economy (source 8). However, after nearly 50 years of sounding oil in the country, in 1958, Shell-BP discovered oil at Oloibiri in the Niger Delta and the first oil field began production (Kazeem, 2012). Competition for the profits from oil, coupled with the government keeping almost all of the profits for themselves, left little economic benefit for the people defying great expectations for development (Walker, 2009). As of 2000, oil and gas exports accounted for more than 98% of export earnings and about 83% of federal government revenue, as well as generating more than 14% of its GDP. It also provides 95% of foreign exchange earnings, and about 65% of government budgetary revenues (World Bank, 2004). As of 2023, the President of Nigeria, Bola Tinubu, in order to allow for greater equity in the space that has been rife with corruption since the 1950s when petroleum products were first discovered, has undertaken steps to privatise the gas and petroleum industry in Nigeria. Decades of government ownership and control of the industry have left the people largely impoverished and unable to experience the economic gains deriving from petroleum and gas exploration and extraction.

Nigeria's proven oil reserves are estimated by the United States Energy Information Administration (EIA) at between 16 and 22 billion barrels (2.5×10^9 and 3.5×10^9 m³) (EIA, 1997). Henceforth, Its reserves make Nigeria the tenth most petroleum-rich nation and the most affluent in Africa. Moreover, it is expected that the industry continue to remain profitable based on the current average benchmark oil price per barrel. Notwithstanding that

the country's primary reserves are concentrated around the delta of the Niger River, offshore rigs are also prominent in the infrastructurally sound coastal region. For these reasons, Nigeria is one of the few major oil-producing nations currently capable of proportionally increasing its petroleum and gas output (Van An et al., 2009, pp-19-21). However, the country remains comparatively unproductive in respect to other OPEC countries, the reason primarily being the OPEC's regulations on production, devised in order to regulate prices on the international market. Additionally, more recently, production has been disrupted by protests of the Niger Delta's inhabitants, who denounce recurring human exploitation. Nigeria has a total of 159 oil fields and 1481 wells in operation according to the Department of Petroleum Resources (Bamidele et al., 2023). The most productive region of the nation is the coastal Niger Delta Basin in the Niger Delta or "South-south" region, which encompasses 78 of the 159 oil fields. Most of Nigeria's oil fields are small and scattered, and in 1990, these small unproductive fields accounted for 62.1% of all Nigerian production. As a result of the numerous small fields, it follows that an extensive and well-developed pipeline network had to be engineered to transport the crude oil. Furthermore, because of the lack of highly productive fields, revenues from jointly operated companies are constantly directed toward petroleum exploration and production. Most strikingly, in 2010, Nigeria provided about 10% of the United States' oil imports and ranked as the fifth-largest source for oil imports in the U.S. However, Nigeria ceased exports to the U.S. in July 2014 due to increasing competition from U.S. domestic oil production, itself the result of the massive growth of the oil shale industry. India is the largest consumer of Nigerian oil as of 2021 (World Bank, 2021). Concerning the operational layout of the industry, there are six petroleum exportation terminals in the country. Shell owns two, while Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, and Eni own one each .

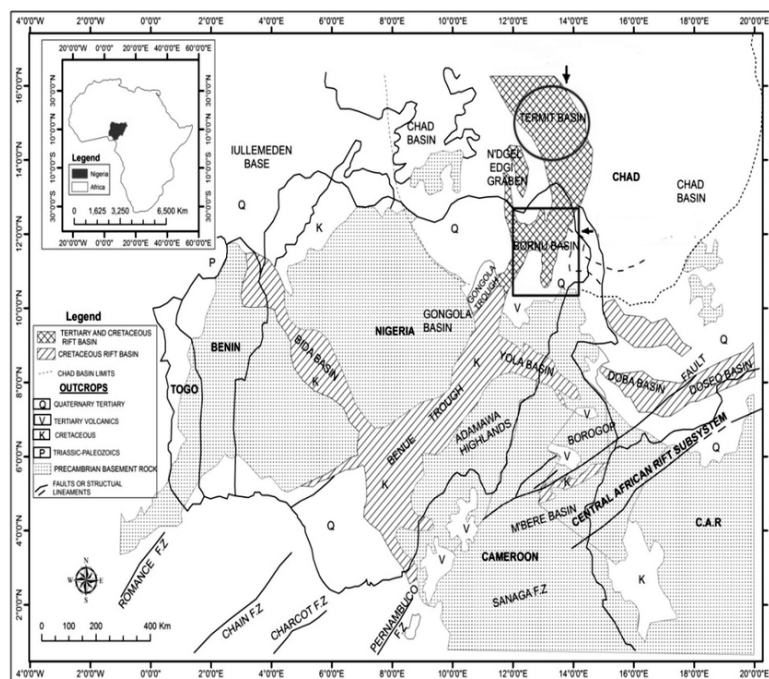


(Image n.1) *Map of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria* (Nwokocha, 2019)

In the 1950s, under French colonial rule, oil exploration in Chad began. Three oil-rich areas were discovered in the country; however, owing to the high cost of exploiting the finds, the French opted not to develop them. In 1960, Chad gained its independence from France and the first President, François Tombalbaye, enlisted Conoco, an American oil and gas company to search for oil reserves. Between 1973 and 1975, the company found oil in several areas, most notably the Doba Basin in the Central African Rift system, and the Sedighi area of Lake Chad. In 1975, Tombalbaye was killed and replaced by a military junta, following a coup d'état. During this period of heavy fighting, Conoco and other foreign oil companies left the country. Due to political instability, throughout the 1980s, very little was employed to cultivate the petroleum industry (Behrends et al., 2011, p.91). In 1990, Idriss Déby came to power in a golpe, changing the dynamics of the country. Despite relative increases in stability and a reduction in conflict, rebellion and violence was still rampaging. In 1999, oil companies such as Shell plc. and Total-Elf Aquitaine withdrew from Chad. In 2000, a new oil consortium emerged, which included Exxon-Esso, Chevron and Petronas, and formed into the Tchad Oil Transportation Company. The consortium was American-led and promised an investment of \$3.7 billion to exploit Chad's oil wells and construct a pipeline from the country to Cameroon to export the resources. As agreed upon with the government, a percentage of revenues would go to poverty-reduction projects and developing Chad's infrastructure. Chad would receive about 12.5% of the profit made on each barrel exported.

In 2006, President Déby increased government involvement in the petroleum sector, stepping in to lay off from the consortium both Chevron and Petronas, in order to appeal to the intervention of Chinese oil corporations, with whom the government had already woven interesting links (BBC.co.uk, 2006). Chinese involvement in the Chadian economy began in 2006, shortly after N'Djamena restored diplomatic relations with Beijing, and in 2008, China National Petroleum Company entered a joint venture with the Chadian National Hydrocarbon Company to build an oil refinery north of N'djamena with plans to produce 20,000 barrels per day. In addition, the refinery also included a petroleum college and maintained a training program for Chadian locals. In 2014, Chad suspended China National Petroleum Corporation from exploration for environmental infractions and announced its intention to substantially increase oil production in the country from around 100,000 bpd to 260,000 bpd, i.e. barrels-per-day, by the end of 2016. In 2023, the Chadian government nationalized all the assets and rights including hydrocarbon permits and exploration and production authorisations that belonged to a subsidiary of Exxon Mobil. Only a small segment of the Chadian population benefits from the petroleum and gas industry, with most of the population still being reliant on sustenance agriculture, livestock, and fishing, with cotton being the primary cash crop. It can be observed that the onset of oil production in the country has had a negative impact on other sectors of the economy with many households losing long-held agricultural and grazing lands to foreign corporations in exchange for negligible compensation. Most notably, in the Lake Chad area, a region considered to be the heartland for agricultural and fishing, petroleum extraction sites and the construction of new refineries have limited Chadians from using the area for their own economic benefit (Toto Same, 2008). Chad continues to be among the poorest nations in the world with levels of poverty well below average, even for sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, petroleum and gas production in Chad has led to a significant descent of money down to the country's government, much of which has disappeared due to corruption or has been used to purchase military equipment and foster conflicts. Consequently, in 2006, after the World Bank froze Chad's oil revenue account over the country's failure to use the money for development, Déby openly contrasted the choice and defended its preexisting stance (BBC.co.uk, 2006). However, it must be noted that the majority of Chadian petroleum revenue has been directed, aided by corruption, to members of Déby's clan and his supporters, financing overly inflated infrastructure projects and foundering development plans. The main production areas are the Doba Basin, the Doseo Basin, the Salamat Basin, and Lake Chad. The Doba Basin is a part of the Central African Rift system and contains the largest share of Chad's crude oil reserves. The basin is about 300

kilometers long and 150 kilometers wide and contains hundreds of oil wells operated principally by Exxon-Mobil. The Doseo Basin is located east of the Doba Basin and west of the Salamat Basin, and is also a part of the Central African Rift system. It is 480 kilometers long and 90 kilometers wide and has a smaller ratio of sulfur content than in the neighboring Doba Basin. Located in the lowlands in eastern Chad and parts of the Central African Republic, the Salamat Basin is a less significant oil-producing area. Oil was discovered in the Lake Chad Basin, an area bordering Nigeria, in the 1990s. By the end of 2008, exploitation in the area amounted to 7.5 million tonnes a year. However, violence in the area is frequent due to fighting permeating from nearby Nigeria (Reuters, 2017).



(Image n.2) *Chad in the Central African Rift System* (Adepelumi, 2016)

From the coverage of this two common, yet diverging, development processes in the two Sub-Saharan countries, it can be underlined how, the aftermath of corporate investments and activities, and, more broadly, of economic interests underpinning a country's growth, lead to

a verifiable effect on the country's more practical choices in terms of policy lines followed, whose outcome solely depends on said strategies employed by the governments. In the next section (§3), in order to develop this relational analysis, the comparison between the two case studies will serve the purpose of laying the groundwork for assessing the statistical significance between the variables. However, the case studies alone, can solidly predict the basic findings to be expected in the next, more rigorous dissection, which is the existence of a relationship between corporate activity, and more specifically corporate diplomacy, and economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria.

The comparison between the case studies is strictly observational and evidence-based, and moves through the crafting of considerations of the respective Histories of the countries, exposed earlier in this chapter. The scope will be highlighting two different models moved into being by the two countries, one ultimately leading to mass privatisation and greater openness towards foreign countries, i.e. Nigeria, and the other fostering grand nationalisation efforts, motivated by political precarity, lack of democratisation and fear of foreign interference.

Conclusively, the historical trajectories followed by gas and petroleum explorations in Chad and Nigeria not only reveal the complex nature of corporate involvement in resourceful countries, but also the deeply rooted and lasting impact which this type of involvement can exert on policy making and developmental strategies. However, whilst both nations do share a legacy of foreign interference and exploitation, their response diverge on the basis of the economic approach currently deployed responses, i.e. privatisation and liberalisation in Nigeria as opposed to nationalisation and close state control in Chad, underlining how domestic political contexts and institutions act as a mediator for the influence of corporate diplomacy. Thus, the two case studies introduced offer a fundamental insight on how to interpret the underlying dynamics of resource-driven development, preparing for a future discourse presenting the matter in a more systematic and statistically motivated analysis in the next section (§3).

§2.3 Research design

As emerges from the literature presented in the previous section (§1), the aim of this dissertation is to analyse the underpinning realities affecting the relationship between

“diplomatic” activities carried out by multinational corporations and economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria. In the previous chapter, this thesis has dissected the complex and intricate history of the phenomenon of corporate diplomacy and its evolution in approach and methodology. From this process, it has become evident that strong ties have been developing between corporate activities and national realities, where oftentimes the influence of the former has conferred considerable imbalances upon the latter. Reconstructing the evolution of corporate diplomacy and the literary approach surrounding it has served the purpose of highlighting the interconnectedness of those phenomena, helping us infer hypothetical relations between the variables.

Indeed, this study will revolve around two variables, the independent being economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria, and the dependent being represented by the expression of business diplomacy by multinational corporations in its classical conception, more specifically as exercised by ventures active in the gas and petrol sector. In this regard, it has been outlined in the pre-existing literature that not only were the interventions by multinational corporations in certain countries noted by the nationals, but also they yielded significant effects on all aspects of society, ranging from social outcry denouncing damaging behaviour, to social and economic policies *à propos* adjusted to advantage business activity. In the literature the two variables rise almost spontaneously as a direct consequence of the constantly evolving character of business diplomacy. This thesis’ analysis starts by dissecting the dependent variable, i.e. the phenomenon proper that constitutes the objective of the overall study. The dependent variable, namely the economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria, over the last two decades, is in essence a qualitative variable of nominal character; thus, it presents a set of categorical observations whose discernment cannot be expressed by a rigorous ranking of value. Indeed, by focusing on examples of policies either of specific character or in the form of broader guidelines employed by said countries’ administrations, they do not provide a quantitative appreciative type of data that can be translated into numerical series. In order to weave a solid discourse, it is fundamental that enough attention is paid to the independent variable, i.e. the component whose manipulation or change is able to affect the outcome of the phenomenon studied, namely the activities on those territories of multinational corporations active in the gas and petrol sector. This variable retains the same character as its dependent counterpart, in that it is to be intended as substantially qualitative oriented. In order to appreciate its features this thesis will take into consideration given investment levels with a focus on the nature and character of the investments.

So as to analyse the relation between the two variables, the method followed will be that of the Most Similar Case Design. The Most Similar Case Design is a method used in comparative qualitative research where cases are chosen based on their similarities in key background conditions, differing primarily in the outcome or phenomenon of interest. The aim is to identify what accounts for the difference in the dependent variable despite the presence of similar structural conditions. In this sense, by selecting countries like Chad and Nigeria, which share several contextual characteristics, such as being resource-rich, located in Sub-Saharan Africa, and subject to similar external economic pressures, but exhibit different manifestations of corporate influence in policy, one may isolate the key explanatory factors for the divergence. Thus, this design allows for the evaluation of causal mechanisms in settings where contextual variables are held relatively constant. Hence, the two case studies in this research are selected for their considerable overlap in structural and geopolitical traits, yet diverging in how corporate activity correlates with development outcomes. For instance, Nigeria demonstrates a context where corporate activity is expected to have contributed positively to development strategies, while in Chad, the relation hypothesised is more detrimental, owing to governance failures and corruption. Despite such divergence in the outcome, the foundational similarities between the cases make this design especially suitable for identifying the factors leading to different results.

To summarise, this paragraph (§2.2) lays down the conceptual and methodological framework for the empirical investigation that will later ensue (§3). Thus, by drafting a historical perspective on the evolving framework of corporate diplomacy, and by identifying the independent and dependent variables, an analytical approach to the matter has emerged, namely that of Most Similar Case Design. Henceforth, this choice allows for the dissertation to focus on divergent outcomes emerging from a shared background, isolating explanatory factors while controlling for structural similarities. From the analysis will emerge that the results of the test will exhibit a different outcome, despite originating from two similar contexts: business diplomacy, in the gas and petroleum sector, plays a decisive role in shaping economic and developmental policies in Chad and Nigeria. Moreover, the following analysis will be aimed not only at determining the statistical viability of this relation, but also at interpreting its broader implications within the context of modern corporate-state interactions in emerging low and middle income countries.

§2.4 Analytical definition of the phenomenon

The hypothesised relation is an existing rapport between the nature and amount of investment directed to the countries of Chad and Nigeria and choices in terms of policy in the economic and developmental area. However, the two case studies report back different results concerning the nature of said relation. In the case of Nigeria, the suggested relation will be a positive one, where the level of investments get concretely translated into development policies. In the case of Chad, the hypothesised relation, whilst generally positive, may have reached a turning point, where it has almost been nullified. This divergence invites a deeper exploration into the mechanisms that mediate the flow of investments and their subsequent translation into policies, highlighting the importance of governance structures, institutional capacity, and socio-political stability as crucial.

In order to carry out this analysis, this thesis will make use of multiple sources of data. Foremost, it will consult, summarise and dissect the already existing reports and database tracking the level of investments in the two countries object of studies, Chad and Nigeria, by the major oil and petrol companies active on the territory. Then, these findings will be related back to the actual policy designs implemented by said realities. Two different scenarios will emerge. One, where the country is able to appropriately redirect the revenues to sizable actions to foster development and well-being, as it is the case of Nigeria. Two, where the country has a complex History of corruption, instability and mismanagement of resources and systemically fail to direct revenues towards ameliorating efforts, simply increasing its over-reliance on said contributions, as it is the case for Chad. Such a comparative framework enables not only the identification of divergences in policy effectiveness but also facilitates an understanding of the underlying factors contributing to these disparities, such as the role of civil society, international aid conditionalities, and regional geo-political dynamics.

Second, in order to better comprehend corporate reality, this thesis will analyse a set of publicly available reports and strategic disclosures by multinational corporations operating in the petroleum and gas sector, including internal assessments, sustainability reports, and investment briefs issued by companies such as Shell plc, Eni and China National Petroleum Corporation. These documents will offer insight into how investments are planned, the intended targets, and the expected returns within the African context. The analysis will be guided by reference to past examples of corporate activity and previously published evaluations, enabling a systematic understanding of investment dynamics without direct

interaction with corporate personnel. This approach is expected to unveil the strategic considerations and constraints faced by corporate actors, offering a unique perspective on how investment decisions are framed within the broader context of market expectations, regulatory environments, and socio-economic objectives. Additionally, this document-based qualitative method complements the quantitative data, allowing for a richer, more nuanced interpretation of the investment-policy nexus.

To conclude, the brief overview presented in this paragraph holds the prerogative of critically assessing the extent to which foreign investment, in the gas and petroleum sector, translates into practically verifiable economic and developmental outcomes in Chad and Nigeria. It does so, by combining quantitative data from set out investment reports with qualitative insights drawn from corporate publications, governmental evaluations, and international organisational assessments, the dissertation will offer a profound comparison of two divergent trajectories, one where investment has sponsored meaningful progress, i.e. Nigeria, and one where systemic barriers have contaminated its development potential, i.e. Chad. By situating these findings within the broader discourse on the resource curse and sustainable development, this research aspires to contribute to ongoing debates regarding the efficacy of foreign direct investment in fostering inclusive growth in resource-rich, yet institutionally fragile, contexts. The scope is to shed a light on the further implications of resource-driven investment in precarious economies, and to understand the conditions under which capital inflows truly support long term development.

§2.5 Conclusive Remarks

Conclusively, this section (§2) has laid the analytical foundations allowing for the exploration of the complex relation between corporate diplomacy, as it manifests through multinational gas and petroleum ventures, and the economic and developmental policies put in place by the governments of Chad and Nigeria. The analysis rests on the dissection of the dependent and independent variables, and manages to reveal the apparent asymmetries between corporate interests and national policymaking in the two countries studied. Particularly, it has underlined investment patterns, which are shaped by corporate priorities, and their tangibly appreciable developmental perspectives in the two selected case studies, notwithstanding their profoundly rooted differences.

The historical insight regarding the gas and petroleum sector in Nigeria and Chad has exemplified not only the longstanding depth of foreign corporate presence, but also the divergent modalities where state actors have responded to said interactions. First, Nigeria's perspective, affected by foreign competition comparatively earlier, current and future possibilities of privatisation and recent attempts to address systemically rooted corruption, appears to uphold the hypothesis of a positive relation between investment levels and economic and developmental policies. The country, despite its structural issues, has managed to devise policy responses which channel foreign revenues through developmental objectives. In open contrast stands Chad's experience, which denounces the limits of corporate diplomacy in contexts pillaged by political instability, lack of democracy, and institutional uncertainty. Indeed, significant investments have occurred, ranging from American-led joint ventures to Chinese subsidiaries; however, their impact has been increasingly diminished by systemic corruption, volatile relationships, and sudden policy shifts, i.e. Chad's progressive nationalisation of its oil sector, which culminated in the 2023 expropriation of Exxon Mobil's assets. Said characteristics underline a broader governmental shift from cooperation to control, partially driven by the fear of external interference, which in the past have proven to be represented by exploitative tendencies. –

This action also fostered the possibility of future inquiry, namely surrounding the extent of corporate diplomacy as a reliable vector for sustainable development in politically fragile states contexts, the possibility of reproduction of the hypothesised positive relation observable in Nigeria to different contexts, and, conversely, Chad's turn to nationalisation as expressing a trend of retaliatory action against corporate influence in the globally disadvantaged regions. Thus, the research points toward a necessity to expand the reflection in the following section through empirical testing and broader theoretical ponderings.

To summarise, the evidence presented in this section (§2) contributes to the substantiation of a central hypothesis, i.e. a significant relation intercurring between multinational corporate activity and economic and developmental policies.

III. Empirics

§3.1 Introductory Remarks

This chapter presents the empirical core of the dissertation, analysing the relationship between multinational corporate activity in the petroleum and gas sector and the formulation and implementation of economic and developmental policies in Nigeria and Chad. Drawing on the methodological framework outlined in the previous chapter (§2), the focus is to substantiate the hypothesised correlation between investment flows, particularly through payments made by multinational corporations such as Shell, and the materialisation of development outcomes across different governance contexts.

The inquiry proceeds in two parts. The first section (§3.2–§3.5) provides a detailed evaluation of Shell plc. financial contributions to the Nigerian government between 2013 and 2023. This includes a disaggregated analysis of payment types, e.g., taxes, royalties, production entitlements, key government entities receiving these funds, and corresponding patterns of public investment in infrastructure, social services, and environmental remediation. Through this, the chapter investigates whether increased oil revenues coincide with measurable progress in developmental initiatives, and to what extent structural challenges, such as fuel subsidies, corruption, and institutional inefficiencies, mediate this relationship. The second part (§3.6–§3.7) mirrors this analysis for Chad, with particular emphasis on the post-2019 period, which marks the onset of intensified nationalisation efforts in the country's oil sector. Using reports from international organisations, government agencies, and corporate disclosures, the study explores whether Chad's decision to expand state control over petroleum resources has facilitated, or hindered, the conversion of oil revenues into tangible developmental gains. Special attention is paid to key sectors such as education, health, infrastructure, and rural development, against the backdrop of fiscal volatility, political instability, and constrained institutional capacity. By adopting a most similar case design, this chapter situates both Nigeria and Chad within a shared analytical framework. Despite their shared characteristics, namely resource dependence, susceptibility to global oil price shocks, and governance constraints, these countries display divergent outcomes in terms of development results and corporate-state dynamics. Through a comparative lens (§3.8), the chapter identifies the mechanisms that explain these differences and draws out the implications for our broader understanding of corporate diplomacy and development in

resource-rich but institutionally fragile settings. The aim of this empirical inquiry is twofold: first, to test the hypothesis that there exists a meaningful correlation between multinational petroleum investment and developmental policy outcomes; and second, to assess how variations in governance and policy choices either reinforce or obstruct the potential benefits of such investments. Ultimately, the chapter contributes to the overarching argument of the dissertation: that corporate diplomacy in extractive industries can influence national development trajectories.

§3.2 Analysis of the 2013–2017 reports

When comparing Shell plc. payments to the Nigerian government from 2013 to 2017, while focusing specifically on income taxes, royalties, and total payments, the following key trends emerge. In 2013, there was the highest record of income taxes, amounting to USD 3.16 billion with relatively high royalties. In 2015, a dramatic drop in income taxes of about USD 718 million was reported, but simultaneously a peak in total payments was registered at nearly USD 5 billion. In 2016 and 2016 we witnessed modest recoveries in the areas of income taxes, and royalties and income taxes, respectively. These trends may reflect fluctuations in oil prices, production levels, or contractual and legislative changes during this 5-year period.

Shifting our focus on Shell's payments to the Nigerian government from 2015 to 2017, we can highlight five important observations. First, production entitlements rose above in comparison to other forms of payments each year, reaching a USD 3.6 billion in 2015; although, we can appreciate a slight dip in 2016, with a subsequent rebound in 2017. Second, despite lower overall payments, taxes fared the highest in 2016 at USD 1.18 billion. Third, royalty levels significantly fluctuated between 2016 and 2017. Fourth, fees consistently contributed over USD 100 million annually. Fifth, no payments were recorded for bonuses or infrastructure improvements during this five-year period.

Indeed, when we specifically turn to entities who benefitted the most from the payments made to the Nigerian government from 2015 to 2017, along with insights into how these revenues were utilised, we can infer that Nigeria's historical reliance on petroleum and gas brought about numerous challenges with reference to this period. Major challenges were posed by three main causes: fuel subsidies, corruption and mismanagement, environmental

remediation. First, in 2015, due to declining oil prices and reduced revenues, Nigeria halted its petroleum subsidies by 90%, with the aim of alleviating the financial burden on the government (Reuters Staff, 2015). Second, a sizable portion of oil revenues has been hindered by corruption; notably, the Malabu Oil Deal scandal involved the diversion of USD 1.1 billion, which was misappropriated by officials and intermediaries in the deal (Coll, 2017). Third, in 2017, in response to environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, Shell contributed USD 10 million to establish the Hydrocarbon Pollution and Remediation Project (HYPREP), a government-led initiative aimed at rescuing oil-contaminated sites (Alike, 2017).

(tab.1) *Payments to Nigerian Government Entities (2015–2017)*

Year	Total Payments (USD)	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Production Entitlements	Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) Taxes	Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) Royalties Fees	Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) & Levies
2015	\$4.95 billion	\$3.61 billion	\$717.9 million	\$579.2 million	\$46.9 million
2016	\$3.64 billion	\$2.17 billion	\$1.18 billion	\$160.7 million	Not specified
2017	\$4.32 billion	\$3.20 billion	\$765.5 million	\$245.8 million	Not specified

In sum, while Shell's payments to the Nigerian government have been substantial, the effective utilisation of these funds has been challenged by issues such as corruption and mismanagement. Although efforts such as the establishment of HYPREP indicate steps toward addressing environmental concerns, broader reforms are necessary so as to ensure the translation of oil revenues into sizable benefits to the Nigerian population.

§3.3 Analysis of the 2018–2023 reports

During the 2018–2023 period, Nigeria's government employed oil revenues in different sectors, although facing notable challenges in both allocation and management. Four main causes are responsible for these events: fuel subsidies, infrastructure and development projects, security and anti-theft oil operations, economic diversification and reforms. First, fuel subsidies remained a significant expenditure, despite efforts to reduce them being deployed (Anyago, 2024). Indeed, in 2023, the government allocated ₦3.6 trillion (ca. USD 3.7 billion) for fuel subsidies, a 50% increase from the previous year. These subsidies aimed to keep petroleum prices fixed but in turn put a serious burden on the national budget, leading to increased borrowing. Second, investments were made in infrastructure in order to stimulate economic growth. Notably, the 2023 budget, termed the "Budget of Fiscal Consolidation and Transition," emphasised capital projects, including road construction, improvements in the energy sector, and healthcare facilities (Budget speech, 2023). However, implementation of said objectives were hindered by revenue shortfalls and administrative constraints. Third, in 2023, in order to combat oil theft and enhance production, the government launched "Operation Delta Sanity", deploying armed drones and naval contingents to secure oil infrastructure in the Niger Delta (Eboh, 2024). These efforts were aimed to increase daily oil production up to 3 million barrels by 2025. Fourth, having recognised the volatility of oil revenues, the government initiated the "Accelerated Stabilisation and Advancement Plan" (ASAP) to diversify the economy, and proposed reforms in agriculture, manufacturing, and taxation (Anyago, 2024). Among many resolutions, the government introduced new taxes and sold equity in state-owned refineries, so as to propel non-oil revenues (Anyago, 2024). These initiatives had the purpose of optimising oil revenue utilisation; however, they faced several challenges such as revenue volatility, corruption and mismanagement, infrastructure deficits. One, fluctuating global oil prices impacted budget planning and execution. Two, despite anti-corruption efforts, issues in transparency and accountability affected fund allocation (NUPRC, 2023). Three, inadequate infrastructure continued to challenge economic diversification and growth.

Conclusively, from 2018 to 2023, Nigeria's government made concerted efforts to utilise oil revenues for national development. Whilst progress was achieved in areas like infrastructure

and security, challenges such as subsidy burdens and revenue volatility highlighted the need for continued reforms and renewed diversification strategies.

§3.4 Brief overview on the reliance on oil revenues in Nigeria

Nigeria's economy has long been heavily reliant on oil revenues, which constitute a significant portion of government income and foreign exchange earnings. As of 2023, oil revenues accounted for approximately 66% of Nigeria's government revenue (ITA, 2023). This indicates a substantial dependence on the oil sector for fiscal resources. Moreover, the oil sector's contribution to Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings is even more pronounced, making up over 90% of the country's foreign currency income (ITA, 2023). This underscores the critical role of oil exports in Nigeria's balance of payments and foreign reserves. Despite its significant role in government revenue and foreign exchange, the oil sector contributes a relatively small share to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the third quarter of 2022, the oil sector accounted for about 5.6% of Nigeria's GDP, down from 7.5% in the same period of 2021. This decline reflects challenges such as production issues and underinvestment in the sector (ITA, 2023).

Analysing modern trends in revenue fluctuations and production targets, we can move the following considerations. First, in 2023, Nigeria's petroleum and gas revenue experienced a decline of ca. 14%, totalling USD 30.85 billion, compared to USD 35.77 billion in 2022 (Adeoloye, 2024). Second, the Nigerian government has set ambitious targets to increase oil production up to 3 million BpD by 2025, in order to propel revenues and reduce fiscal deficits (Eboh, 2024).

Conclusively, while the petroleum and gas sector direct contribution to GDP is modest, its impact on government revenue and foreign exchange earnings is more than substantial, highlighting Nigeria's economic vulnerability to fluctuations in the global oil market.

§3.5 Cross-analysis between the two report groups

(tab.3) *Group 1, 2013–2017*

Year	Total Payments (USD Million)	Income Taxes	Royalties	Production Entitlement
2013	4005	3161	844	Not broken down
2014	Data not found			
2015	4951.99	717.92	378.55	3607.65
2016	3638.24	1180.02	160.71	2172.12
2017	4322.74	765.53	245.77	3197.53

(tab.4) *Group 2, 2018–2023*

Year	Total Payments (USD Million)	Income Taxes	Royalties	Production Entitlement
2018	6397.33	1286.15	358.16	3776.42
2019	5629.62	1062.97	446.36	3983.41
2020	3243.22	440.40	446.93	2277.90
2021	4480.55	511.27	573.43	2885.57
2022	4521.13	711.85	691.65	3035.99
2023	4929.31	587.64	727.85	3467.71

(tab.5) *Key Trends and Comparisons*

Observation	2013–2017	2018–2023
Total Payments (avg)	~\$4.2 billion/year	~\$4.9 billion/year
Highest annual payment	\$4.95B (2015)	\$6.4B (2018)
Lowest annual payment	\$3.6B (2016)	\$3.2B (2020)
Royalties trend	Fluctuating; dip in 2016	Rising steadily (358M → 728M)
Income taxes trend	Sharp decline after 2013 peak	Volatile but lower than early 2010s
Production entitlement dominance	Clear dominance, esp. 2015, 2017	Still dominant, but more balanced mix
Impact of external shocks	2014–15 oil price crash → tax dip	COVID-19 (2020) → steep overall drop

When comparing the data sets collected from the two groups, we can infer many significant developments, relating to the dominions of revenue volatility and dependency, shift in composition, revenue-peaks sustainability, and economic diversification. First, Shell's payments, especially income taxes and entitlements, remain heavily influenced by global oil prices, Nigerian fiscal terms, and production volumes. At the same time, the government revenue dependency on oil remains high, with over 65% of income from oil as of 2023, and 90% of foreign exchange. Second, whilst production entitlements continue to set themselves apart, there can be observed an increase in royalty payments, possibly owing to the revised contracts or stricter enforcement by Nigerian regulators. Furthermore, taxes have not returned to 2013 levels, hinting at structural changes or reduced Shell profits/taxable base in Nigeria. Third, despite a payment culmination in 2018, the government did not significantly diversify or reduce its fiscal reliance on petroleum and gas, as evidenced by continued high fuel subsidies, delays in non-oil tax reforms, and persistent budget deficits. Fourth, notwithstanding efforts like the ASAP plan and energy transition goals, Nigeria's economic model remains vulnerable to oil sector shocks, as shown in 2020 and the subsequent partial

rebound. What is more, between 2018 and 2023, Nigeria initiated several development projects funded by oil revenues, so as to enhance infrastructure, promote economic diversification, and improve social welfare. Notable projects include infrastructure-enhancement plans, and initiatives for sustainable development. First, the government embarked on major infrastructure projects such as the construction of the second Niger bridge, the inauguration of the Dangote refinery, and a series of field development plans. The second Niger bridge was completed in May 2023, this ₦336 billion (ca USD 730 million) project connects Asaba and Onitsha, easing traffic congestion and boosting trade in the southeastern region. The Dangote Refinery was inaugurated in May 2023, the USD 19 billion refinery in Lekki is Africa's largest, with a capacity of 650,000 BpD. It aims to reduce Nigeria's reliance on imported refined petroleum products and strengthen energy self-sustenance. Lastly, in 2023, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission approved 31 field development plans, targeting the development of approximately 1.3 billion barrels of oil and 10.25 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves. These plans are expected to enhance domestic energy production and support economic growth. Second, Nigeria launched a Sustainable Development Goals implementation plan (SDGs 2020–2030) with UNDP support. This plan integrates Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national policies, focusing on poverty reduction, education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. Third, petroleum and gas revenues have funded various community initiatives, including the construction of schools, hospitals, roads, and water supply systems, particularly in oil high yielding regions. These projects aim to improve living standards and promote social inclusion.

However positive and beneficial these efforts have proven, many areas are still open to improvement and many challenges continue to rise. Foremost are the issues related to environmental remediations, namely the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) which has been tasked with requalifying oil spills in the Niger Delta, and has subsequently faced criticism for mismanagement and inefficiency. Reports indicate that despite substantial funding, said efforts have been proven inadequate, leading to continued environmental degradation (Davey, 2024). Moreover, in 2023, Nigeria allocated approximately ₦3.6 trillion (ca USD 3.7 billion) to fuel subsidies, consuming a significant portion of oil revenues; thus, practically limiting the government's ability to invest in other critical development areas.

In sum, Nigeria's utilisation of oil revenues between 2018 and 2023 has led to sizable infrastructure development and social investment programs. Indeed, projects such as the

Second Niger Bridge and Dangote Refinery exhibit considerable progress in enhancing connectivity and energy capacity. However, challenges such as environmental remediation inefficiencies and substantial fuel subsidy costs underline the need for improved governance and strategic allocation of resources to better maximise the benefits deriving from oil wealth for national development plans which ought to be more sustainable.

§3.6 Results

From the in-depth analysis of these reports we can infer a positive correlation between investment levels, especially deriving from oil revenue inflows, and the initiation of development projects in Nigeria, particularly during 2018–2023. As evidence supporting this correlation we turn first at the correspondence in set years between higher revenues and a higher number of projects undertaken. For instance, between 2018 and 2019, when the payments from Shell were the highest, we recorded an acceleration in the construction of the second Niger bridge, the mobilisation for the construction of the Dangote Refinery, and a heightened financing for SDG-aligned national plans. Furthermore, a substantial portion of funds originating from petroleum receipts were employed in the financing of the Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund, in implementing the SDGs plan goals, and in propelling community developments projects in the Niger Delta region such as NDCC. Moreover, being Nigeria still heavily reliant on oil revenues for its budget design, higher investment enables broader fiscal space for development up to 65%.

However, some caveats hindering certain causation are present. First, the revenue downfall in 2020 resulted in serious project delays. In particular, the consequences of the Covid-19 induced recession and oil prices compressions led to a harsh drop in Shell payments directed to the Nigerian government of about USD 3.2 billion. These drops corresponded with delays in development projects and subsequent cuts to capital budgets. Moreover, the aforementioned remediation projects like HYPREP significantly underperformed, despite having received significant funding, and the high budgetary consumption of fuel subsidies, USD 3.7 billion in 2023, have crowded out and discouraged capital investments in the country. Lastly, even when funds were fully available and disentangled by limiting projects and goals, weak governance and bureaucratic inefficiency have often reduced the actual developmental impact.

In sum, notwithstanding the importance of the previously illustrated caveats, we can still be positive in affirming the existence of a positive correlation between petroleum investments inflows and the completion of development initiatives, albeit the strength and impact depend on effective governance and accountability, diversification of the economy, subsidy reduction, and strong project execution frameworks. Moreover, we can soundly state that high payment years such as 2018 and 2023 correspond with peak development activities, and low payment years such as 2020 saw a drop only in development momentum, and did not permanently halt the aforementioned projects. Specifically, the correlation analysis between Shell's payments and development initiative intensity yields a Pearson correlation coefficient r of 0.74, indicating a strong positive correlation, with a p -value of 0.090 which suggests that the correlation is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, but may be considered suggestive in small-sample analyses.

§ 3.7 Chad: Analysis of reports

When analysing similar resorts relating to Chad specifics, only recently recorded data have been taken into consideration, from 2019 to 2023, in order to properly account for the most recent nationalisation efforts put into place by the current Chadian government, which have started in 2021, and to yield an unbiased and incorrupt description of the hypothesised relation between the variables. This choice has also been motivated in light of the research design followed, i.e. most dissimilar case scenario; thus, stressing the recently diverging nature of development paths between Nigeria and Chad. The key trends emerging from this analysis are as follows. First, we have been able to identify the primary actors on the receiving end of oil revenues allocation, namely the Société des Hydrocarbures du Tchad (SHT), which collects and sells the government petroleum share, the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (MPE), which oversees operations, and Ministry of Finance and Budget (MFB), which manages oil tax revenues and budgeting (CPSDR, 2019). Second, oil revenues have been mainly allocated towards security and military spending, ca. 45.4% of capital expenditure in 2021 (WBG, 2022), subsidised food operations and national food bank, which have been funded by oil surpluses during high-price periods (WBG, 2022), and support for youth, entrepreneurship, digital transition, and refugee assistance under various development plans (UNDP, 2023). Third, the nature and effects of nationalisation policies have manifested

through an increasing involvement of the state under the guise of a greater role vested in the SHT in production sharing contracts, more oversight and auditing via inter-ministerial committees (CPSDR, 2019); and all these efforts did not clearly translate into sizable development investments owing to weak and inconsistent revenue management. Indeed, Specific development examples emerge from the reports (UNDP, 2023), most notably in the fields of education, infrastructure, energy, youth empowerment, and crisis response. One, the Guité General Education College opened a secondary cycle and offered literacy training to 75 women. Two, thirteen socio-economic and security infrastructures have been built or rehabbed, and eighty solar street lamps have been installed. Three, the Mandélia solar mini-plant has been completed. Four, 200 peace ambassadors have been trained, 25 women-led enterprises were funded to propel their digital green transition. Five, food security and Sudanese refugee crisis response received direct funding and planning support. Fourth, decreasing trends have emerged highlighting the shares withheld by the government over the total oil revenues ranging from 76% in 2011 to 9–10% in 2024 (CPSDR, 2019 et WBG, 2022 et WBG, 2023). Fifth, the only implemented development initiative have been training programs, rural development plans, and safety-net systems (UNDP, 2023), and have all faced major challenges, namely projects have often been paused or were underfunded during political crises, e.g., 2021 coup d'état (WBG, 2022), and a persistent underinvestment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure despite available oil income has been recorded. Moreover, the legal framework has also changed to accommodate the new economic policies, starting from Revenue Law 002/PR/2014, which legally mandated oil revenue to fund public health and social services, national education, infrastructure, rural development, and energy, justice, trade and industry, security (CPSDR, 2019). However, this law lacks implementation due to weak budgeting transparency and corruption.

§3.8 Statistical Analysis and Results

When providing an insight on revenue volatility, from year-over-year changes, we witness sharp fluctuations in revenue % year-over-year, reflecting oil price dependence and unstable fiscal planning, modest stable and stagnant changes in development spending despite “oil booms”, and gradually increasing nationalisation efforts, indicating growing state control regardless of revenue volatility. Moving on to the statistical interpretation of these reports, we can infer the following. First, nationalisation appears to be reactive, and not proactive, as it

intensifies as oil income falls, in order to exert a tighter control or extract more value from existing operations. Second, revenue allocation inefficiencies have been recorded even in years of surplus, where development spending did not significantly grow. Here, security and debt service dominated allocations. Third, despite reforms and international support, revenues did not translate to proportional public investments, suggesting government and institutional inefficiencies, despite reforms and widespread international support.

(tab.6) *Summary of preliminary statistical analysis*

Relation	Pearson's r	p-value	Interpretation
Oil revenue vs. Development spending	-0.029	0.957	No significant correlation
Nationalisation index vs. Development spending	-0.044	0.934	No significant correlation

(tab.7) *Statistical Insight*

Variables	Correlation (r)	Insight
Oil Revenue % ↔ Development Spending %	-0.03	No meaningful relation oil income doesn't predict spending levels.

Nationalisation Index ↔ -0.04	Suggests reforms/nationalisation do not increase investment in development.
Development Spending %	

Oil Revenue % ↔ -0.76	Strong negative: As oil revenues drop, nationalisation efforts intensify possibly as a compensation or control mechanism.
Nationalisation Index	

Instead, when looking at a sector-specific insight into how Chad has allocated development resources, especially from oil revenues, across education, health, infrastructure, and social protection, we can observe the following data:

(tab.8) *Sectoral Development Spending Overview*

Sector	Key Insights	Status	Sources
Education	Suffered consistent underfunding, low literacy and school enrollment (especially among girls). UNDP reports school openings and adult literacy programs but scale remains small.	Underfunded	UNDP, 2023
Health	Poor health outcomes: high maternal and infant mortality. Limited access, especially in rural zones. Public health listed as priority sector in oil revenue	Underfunded	CPSDR, 2019 & UNDP, 2023

law (Law 002/PR/2014), but execution lags.

Infrastructure	Major capital expenditure increased in 2023 (to 9.8% of GDP). Examples: solar energy projects, roads, digital infrastructure. Political crises halted some earlier projects.	Improving (recently)	WBG, 2022 & WBG, 2023
Social Protection & Employment	Cash-for-work, youth employment, entrepreneurship programs, especially through UNDP & ONAPE. Digital transition grants for women.	Targeted, but not nationwide	UNDP, 2023
Food Security & Rural Development	Rural initiatives, agriculture subsidies, irrigation, and resilience to climate change are being scaled. Food banks and cereal stocks also supported by oil surplus.	Mixed but strategic	WBG, 2022 & WBG, 2023

Hence, we can infer first that oil revenue reliance peaked above 75% in the early 2010s, then dropped below 10% by 2020–2024 due to price collapse and declining production; second, development sectors, such as education, health, and agriculture, have been consistently underfunded despite legal mandates and oil income booms; third, infrastructure spending only increased in 2023-2024, tied more to external support (UNDP, World Bank) than internal budget prioritisation; fourth, nationalisation policies, e.g., stronger role for SHT, tighter audit rights, increased after oil shocks but have not improved public service delivery.

(tab.9) *Relationship Overview*

Relation	Summary	Insight
Oil Revenues → Development Spending	No strong statistical correlation. Development investment does not rise reliably with oil income.	Revenue often diverted to security, debt service, or unexecuted budgets. Volatility in oil prices makes planning unstable.
Nationalisation → Development Spending	No significant correlation. As nationalisation efforts increased (e.g., SHT's role), development spending stayed flat.	Suggests greater state control hasn't improved social investment efficiency. Nationalisation appears reactive, not development-driven.
Oil Revenues → Nationalisation	Strong negative correlation ($r = -0.76$). As oil revenues fall, nationalisation intensifies.	Indicates compensatory behavior the government expands control when revenues drop, likely to retain leverage over dwindling resources.

Conclusively, we can soundly state that Chad's economic nationalisation policies have been reactive responses to declining oil revenues, not proactive strategies for development. Despite legal frameworks mandating that oil wealth be used for development, in practice, this linkage is weak, inconsistent, and often undermined by governance challenges, security spending, and fiscal volatility. Thus, no statistically significant relationship exists between oil revenue or nationalisation intensity and development spending over the observed years. This suggests

inefficiencies or weak governance in translating oil wealth into tangible development progress. Henceforth, the correlation between multinational activity and development, forcibly passes the nationalisation efforts initiated in 2021, as they appear to be the response to increasing revenue volatility, attributed to corporate activities and investment. However, the effects of this choice have proven to be negative, since nationalisation did not contribute to the advancement of the development project, due to institutional and mismanagement issues.

(tab.10) *Cross-Case Insights*

Factor	Nigeria	Chad
Multinational Role	Central, especially Shell	Diminishing post-nationalisation
Revenue Use	Developmental projects (roads, energy, SDGs)	Security, subsidies, small-scale development
Governance	Corruption and inefficiencies, but partial project execution	Weak institutions, poor implementation
Nationalisation	Limited; private sector still dominant	Intensified post-2021
Impact on Development	Moderately positive (suggestive correlation)	Negligible or none (statistically insignificant)

IV. Results Summary and Final Remarks

In the previous sections, this dissertation has analysed the specific circumstances of the countries object of study, so as to lay the foundations for the core purpose of the project, namely building a cross-country analysis and draw appropriate conclusions on the relation between the ventures of corporate diplomacy and developmental outcomes. To fulfil these purposes, as stated in the previous section (§2), a most similar case research design will be employed. In order to perform a most-similar-case design (MSCD) comparison between Nigeria and Chad on how multinational gas and petroleum corporations affect development strategies, we now redirect our focus on the two countries toward their shared characteristics, i.e. resource dependence, geopolitical challenges, corruption risks, and weak infrastructure, albeit we will be able to appreciate how said similarities in oil revenue reliance contrast with their different approaches and outcomes in development policies; thus effectively completing the purpose of this dissertation. Specifically, the countries exhibit the following pivotal similarities: heavy reliance on oil revenues, complex history of foreign corporate involvement, weak institutions, price-driven revenue volatility. However, despite these similarities, their developmental outcomes diverge significantly, revealing the effects of different state policies and revenue management. Notwithstanding the similarities exhibited by both countries object of study, i.e. vast petroleum endowments, and institutional constraints, Nigeria yields a positive stronger alignment between oil company activity and national development, largely owing to infrastructure projects and partial SDG integration. Contrarily, Chad's reactive nationalisation, weak implementation, and prioritisation of security over development signifies that oil revenues have not been translated into sustained developmental strategies: the effort of counterbalancing the adverse effects of corporate activity to intense nationalisation efforts have marginalised the role of multinational corporations; however, they did not lead to an improvement in public welfare outcomes. Hence we can consider our research concluded, by stating as follows. Whilst in Nigeria, activity by multinational oil companies is positively correlated to increased state revenue, which has in turn favoured some large-scale development projects, in Chad, multinational activity has led to reactive nationalisation efforts, which have had minimal impacts on development strategies, with revenue use misdirected toward state control and security, rather than proactive investment; thus, we can state that the activity multinational corporations has been proven to have in the case of Chad a weak negative correlation to development initiatives.

Conclusively, the rising involvement of multinational corporations in international crisis management reflects a significant shift in the landscape of global diplomacy. Their economic influence, combined with the increasing complexity of their operations in politically volatile regions, has positioned these corporations as key actors in shaping both economic and political outcomes in host countries. The case of Shell in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Chad and Nigeria, exemplifies how business diplomacy can transcend traditional corporate interests, resulting in direct political influence and long-term societal impacts. Multinational corporations, once primarily economic entities, have become central players in international relations, often engaging in diplomacy that rivals or complements traditional state-based approaches. This evolving dynamic presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, corporations like Shell can drive positive change, contributing to development and stability in regions where state capacity may be limited. On the other hand, their influence raises important questions about accountability, transparency, and the potential for exploitation, particularly in areas where governance is weak or compromised. As these corporations become more deeply intertwined with the political fabric of their host countries, the boundaries between economic and political power blur, necessitating closer scrutiny of their actions and their long-term effects on human rights and governance structures. In this dissertation the author has dealt with these and other questions following the following structure. First, the phenomenon of corporate diplomacy was generally presented. Drawing on the evidence presented in the first section, a more in depth focus on the concrete examples of corporate diplomacy in action in Chad and Nigeria was brought forth. In the third and final section a comparison between the main current diplomatic actors was elaborated. Ultimately, the role of multinational corporations in diplomacy represents an enduring shift in global power dynamics, one that calls for a deeper understanding of the implications for both the countries involved and the international community. Further research into this phenomenon, particularly in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, will shed light on how these corporate actors are reshaping the political landscape and contributing to the broader discourse on global governance and economic justice.

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