

Cement Versus Crude: Dangote's Divergent Trajectories in Nigeria

By

Hamisu Salihu

Abstract

Cement production and crude oil refining are resource-based manufacturing industries whose requirements for learning and capabilities as well as operational routines are relatively simple or similar. Leveraging these characteristics, alongside his capabilities and considerable political influence, Africa's foremost industrialist, Aliko Dangote, invested heavily in Nigeria's cement sector in the early 2000s. This investment contributed to the transformation of Nigeria from a net importer of cement into a self-sufficient producer. However, against the backdrop of this success, the Dangote Petroleum Refinery (DPR) in Lagos, conceived as a transformative private-sector initiative to substitute imports, conserve foreign exchange, and stimulate domestic value chains, has faced persistent problems in securing domestic crude supply, attracting favourable regulations, and accessing protected domestic markets. Therefore, this paper poses the following question: why has Dangote succeeded in the cement sector but struggled in the crude oil refining industry? Extending and applying the political settlement (PS) theory and drawing on desk research and interviews, we argue that Dangote's difficulties in oil refining can be attributed to three interesting dynamics: (i) the emergence of a financially autonomous and politically assertive ruling coalition under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT), which appears to have disrupted established state-Dangote relations; (ii) differences in the distribution of power among actors/organisations in the cement and oil sectors; and (iii) the influence of foreign actors and organisations. Theoretically, we introduce international power dynamics into the PS theory; empirically, this is a pioneering study of the political economy of the DPR about which many observers are curious.

Keywords: Industrial policy, Aliko Dangote, state-business relations, oil refining, cement, Nigeria

Contents

Cement Versus Crude: Dangote’s Divergent Trajectories in Nigeria.....	1
Abstract.....	1
1. Introduction	3
2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	5
2.1. Literature Review.....	6
2.2. Theoretical Framework	8
3. Cement Production and Crude Oil Refining in Nigeria: A Brief History.....	13
3.1. Cement Production in Nigeria	13
3.2. Crude Oil Refining in Nigeria	15
4. The political economy of oil rents redistribution in Nigeria	20
5. Dangote’s Divergent Trajectories: Why Success in Cement Contrasts with Struggles in Oil Refining	23
5.1. The emergence of a financially autonomous and politically assertive ruling coalition under PBAT	24
5.2. Differences in power distribution across the cement and oil sectors.....	34
5.3. The influence of foreign actors and global power relations.	39
6. Conclusion.....	44
References	47
Appendix.....	61

1. Introduction

Since the early 2000s, Aliko Dangote has been a central figure in Nigeria's industrial transformation. Following the introduction of the Backward Integration Policy (BIP) in the cement industry in 2002, a policy reportedly influenced by discussions between Dangote and then President Olusegun Obasanjo (Wallis, 2013), Dangote invested heavily in domestic cement production (Salihu, 2023, 2025). He acquired privatised plants, expanded capacity, and leveraged prior experience in cement importation and distribution, alongside political connections, to secure favourable regulations, including import restrictions and tax incentives (Akinyoade & Uche, 2018; Afripoli, 2022).

Consequently, Nigeria shifted from importing over 70 per cent of its cement needs in the early 2000s to achieving self-sufficiency by the 2010s (Salihu, 2023). Dangote Cement's domestic capacity (33.5 million tonnes per annum, Mta) has been complemented by expansion across Africa, including Tanzania (3.0 Mta), South Africa (2.8 Mta), Ethiopia (2.5 Mta), Cameroon (1.5 Mta), Congo (1.5 Mta), Senegal (1.5 Mta), Zambia (1.5 Mta), Ghana (2.0 Mta) and Sierra Leon (0.5 Mta) (Dangote Cement Plc, 2025).

Analytical explanations for this success vary. One strand situates Dangote within crony capitalism, where state-business ties confer advantage (Akinyoade & Uche, 2018; Wei, 2001). However, he is also seen as an active policy entrepreneur who shaped the BIP while generating broader economic gains (Akinyoade & Uche, 2018). Others emphasise his role in sustaining policy continuity through the co-optation of all stakeholders from political, bureaucratic, civil society and other societal actors (Odijie & Onofua, 2020). Still others offer a monopoly capitalism perspective that highlights rent accumulation through market dominance, scale expansion, acquisitions, litigation, and privileged access to state resources (Itaman & Wolf, 2021; Itaman, Salihu and Wolf, 2026). A further view attributes his success to entrepreneurial

capability and alignment with sectors requiring relatively modest technological learning and capabilities (Salihu, 2023, 2025).

In contrast, Dangote's US\$20 billion investment in the Dangote Petroleum Refinery (DPR), Lagos, commissioned in 2023 and operational from 2024, has faced persistent constraints. Despite Nigeria's crude oil abundance, the refinery has struggled to secure reliable domestic crude supply and effective market protection. The DPR alleges "oil majors were blocking its access to locally produced crude and the regulator [NMDPRA¹] was allowing fuel traders import high-sulphur gasoil thereby undermining its refinery." (Reuters, 2024). It also raised concerns regarding "powerful interests in the oil sector" (Femi, 2025). These challenges persist alongside continued fuel import dependence, with reported expenditure of US\$5 billion in 2023 and US\$2.8 billion in the first half of 2025 on import of refined fuels into Nigeria (NBS, 2025a; Sahara Reporters, 2025). This is at a time the DPR has ramped up production and exported over 1.1 billion litres between June and September 2025 (Billionaires Africa, 2025).

Thus, the question arises: *why has Dangote succeeded in the cement sector but struggles in the crude oil refining industry?*

We argue that this divergence reflects differences in the distribution of power and capabilities among ruling coalitions, sectoral actors and organisations, or the political settlement (PS). Thus, drawing on PS theory (Khan, 2010; 2018), we show that while the cement sector benefited from cohesive state support, oil refining places Dangote in competition with entrenched domestic and international interests. Three dynamics are particularly salient: (i) the emergence of a more autonomous and assertive ruling coalition under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, altering prior state-Dangote relations; (ii) differences in power distribution across the cement and oil sectors; and (iii) the influence of foreign actors and global power relations.

¹ The Nigeria Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA)

However, existing PS theory focuses primarily on domestic configurations of power. Hence, to address this theoretical limitation, we extend the framework to incorporate international power dynamics to better understand Dangote's divergent trajectories in the case study industries. Moreover, the case of the DPR has attracted considerable curiosity among observers yet remains marked by a notable scarcity of rigorous academic analysis. This paper seeks to help address this gap by providing systematic evidence and insight into the subject matter. The paper proceeds as follows: **Section 2** reviews relevant literature by situating this paper's contribution therein (Section 2.1) and succinctly explains and extends political settlements theory by introducing a third dimension to it (Section 2.2); **Section 3** provides the historical and sectoral background to cement production and crude oil refining in Nigeria; **Section 4** explains the political economy of oil rent redistribution in Nigeria; **Section 5** presents the comparative analysis of Dangote's divergent trajectories through the extended political settlements framework; and **Section 6** concludes by drawing out the paper's principal theoretical and empirical contributions, alongside their broader implications.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This section begins with a review of the literature (sub-section 2.1) on industrial policy and industrialisation in Nigeria, focusing on Dangote's significant role within these dynamics. It explores the relevant literature that conceptualise and theorise on the factors and forces that conduce to Dangote's successes and or the structural transformations that he helped to engender. This is to provides a contextual foundation for exploring why, despite the presence of conditions that have historically worked to his advantage, Dangote faces significant challenges in his petroleum refining project. The gap in existing studies that the paper sets out to fill has also been clearly stated. The section wraps up with a synopsis of the main theoretical frameworks used in the paper (sub-section 2.2.)

2.1. Literature Review

Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999 coincided with the revival of industrial policies across multiple sectors. Aliko Dangote, Africa's richest and Nigeria's most prominent industrialist, has been a central actor in this process. Scion of the merchant Dantata business family, Dangote has built a diversified conglomerate, the Dangote Industries Limited (DIL), which deals in the manufacturing, processing or import of many consumer and quasi-capital goods. Cement (and recently petroleum refining) provides the bulk of DIL's revenues (African Business, 2018), and accounts for Dangote's vast fortunes which (as of October 25, 2025) stands at US \$30.5 billion (Bloomberg, 2025), which makes the entrepreneur consistently tops continental rankings (Forbes, 2025).

Extensive scholarship has explored the sources of Dangote's success, particularly in cement. One perspective situates him within crony capitalism (Akinyoade & Uche, 2018), where close state-business ties shape commercial advantage (Wei, 2001). Yet Dangote is seen to go beyond passive rent extraction, actively influencing policy, notably the Backward Integration Policy (BIP) (Akinyoade & Uche, 2018). Odijie and Onofua (2020) further highlight Dangote's role in ensuring policy continuity through political co-optation of influential actors, including ruling elites, opposition elements, organised labour, trade unions and the mass media.

Others interpret Dangote's dominance through monopoly capitalism, arguing that his privileged market position enables rent accumulation while generating limited broad-based transformation (Itaman & Wolf, 2021; Wolf, Salihu and Itaman, forthcoming). These analyses emphasise Dangote's strategies such as predatory pricing, scale advantages, acquisitions, litigation, and access to state incentives including subsidised foreign exchange and tax holidays (ibid). Another work attributes Dangote's successes to entrepreneurial capabilities, political networks, and the requirements of relatively simple or basic capabilities and routines in sectors where he operates (Salihu, 2023, 2025).

The theoretical (political economy/settlement) literature rationalise the relatively recent prominence of domestic entrepreneurs in developing countries to a certain logic: i.e. that due to the existence of few large economic organisations to legitimately finance political parties/candidates in these countries in exchange for favourable policy, ruling coalitions resort to creating regulatory rents for a chosen domestic capital who provide the political financing for maintaining their coalition in power (Khan, 2010). Hence, for industrial policies to succeed in these contexts, the mutual interests of ruling coalitions and domestic capitalists must align (Whitfield *et al.*, 2015). That is why the industrial landscape in developing countries is said to be dominated by entrepreneurs described as *rentiers* (who mine and export resources for rents) and *powerbrokers* (who leverage their networks to have domestic market protected for them) due to their reliance on *discretionary/regulatory* rents to thrive, as opposed to *magicians* (who export) and *workhorses* (who cater to domestic markets only) that harness their rents through competitive market processes (Pritchett, Sen, & Werker, 2017)

However, while existing empirical and theoretical literature (see *inter alia* Khan, 2010, 2018; Behuria, 2016; Whitfield *et al.*, 2015; Kjær, 2015; Hickey & Hossain, 2019; Kelsall *et al.*, 2022; Salihu, 2023, 2025) use the PS theory to provide important insights on state-business/Dangote relations and the performance of policy institutions, they consider political settlement as a **closed system** where the dynamic of power distribution is treated solely as an endogenous variable. As will be demonstrated in the next section 2.2 (theoretical framework), international actors and organisations can influence the configurations of domestic political settlements and affect the performance of policy institutions. Also, existing literature presume that ruling coalitions in the competitive clientelist political settlement that characterise much of Africa will always promote and protect domestic entrepreneurs like Dangote in exchange for political financing. Hence, using the case study of the DPR, this paper makes a novel empirical contribution by bringing attention to how the emergence, in Nigeria, of a financially

autonomous ruling coalition that is uniquely assertive in protecting its political-economic interests challenges this conventional wisdom.

Finally, the case of the DPR is one about which many observers are curious but on which there is a conspicuous absence of academic work to whet people's curiosity. This paper hopes to also fill in this gap.

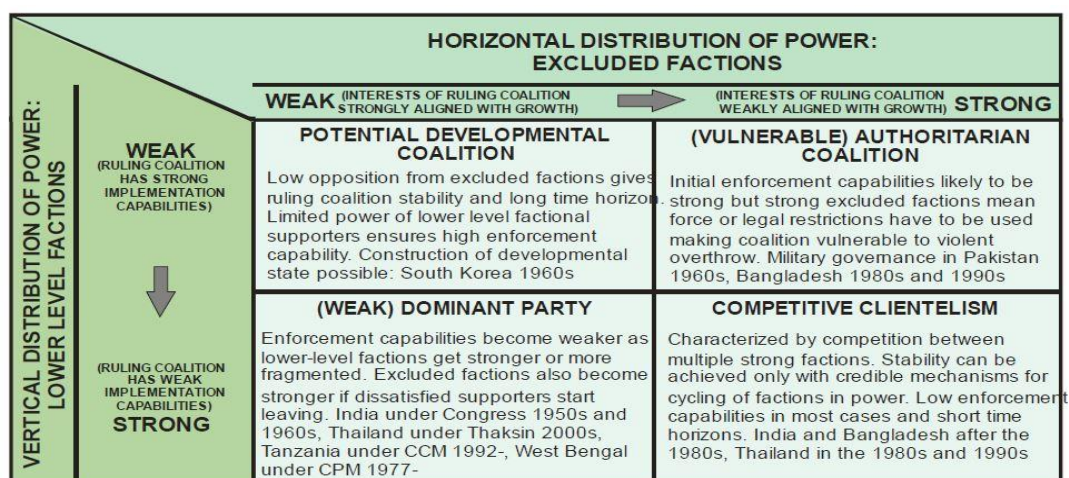
Led by PBAT, this ruling coalition disrupted historic pattern of state-Dangote relations whereby successive ruling coalitions promoted and protected domestic capital based on dual economic and political logics. Economically, successive ruling coalitions had sought to create jobs and conserve foreign exchange via import substitution industrialisation (ISI) strategy with the overall objective of facilitating Nigeria's industrial development. Politically, domestic capital has especially Dangote has reportedly been a source of political financing for successive ruling coalitions. However, disrupting this pattern, the PBAT ruling coalition appears reluctant to protect the DPR and hence, through the continuation of imports of refined fuels, opts not only for marginalising domestic capital (Dangote/DPR) but also for the protection of the interests of foreign capital (refiners in Malta and Europe) and their domestic clients (ruling elites and associations of petroleum workers, transporters and marketers). However, the PS theory offers limited insight into how external actors influence domestic institutions. Thus, this paper also makes a novel theoretical contribution by integrating Bayart's (1993, 2000) concept of extraversion to the PS framework addresses this gap. Using insight from this theory, it is argued herein that dependence on rents from refined fuels import fosters the outward-oriented economic behaviour of the PBAT ruling coalitions which marginalises Dangote/DPR as well as undermines domestic industrial development.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This paper applies the *political settlements* (PS) theory (Khan, 2010, 2018) as its main analytical lens. The PS framework examines the distribution of power and capabilities among

actors and organisations (in a sector or country) along two dimensions and the implications thereof on policy institutions. The *first dimension* explores how the distribution of power among elites - both within the ruling coalition (vertical contestation) and between the coalition and external groups (horizontal contestation) - shapes institutional performance. These dynamics generate four stylised settlement types with divergent influence on the performance of (industrial) policy institutions (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Patron-Client Factions and the Structure of the Ruling Coalition



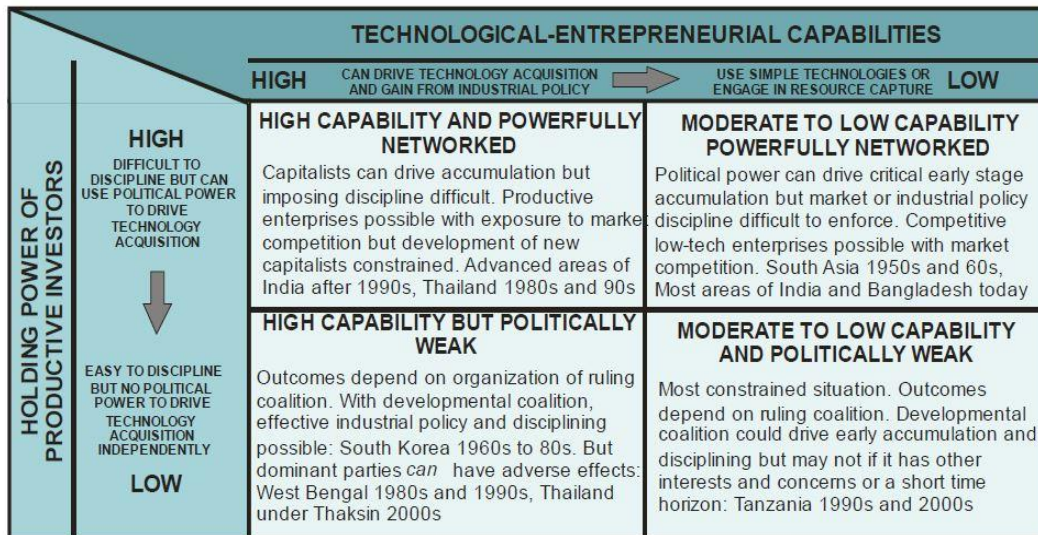
Source: Khan (2010)

The *second dimension* focuses on the organizational and technological capabilities of the emerging productive sector capitalists/entrepreneurs and their relationship with the ruling coalition. It examines the extent to which these productive entrepreneurs possess the capabilities and political power to influence, resist, or align with state-led institutional arrangements/policies.

Where productive organisations are technologically weak and politically subordinate, they remain dependent on patron-client networks for access to rents and opportunities, limiting the effectiveness of growth-enhancing institutions. Conversely, where productive actors possess greater organisational strength and learning capabilities, they can discipline the allocation of

rents, support longer-term investment/industrial strategies, and induce more coherent institutional performance. The relative balance of power between the ruling coalition and emerging capitalists therefore shapes whether institutions facilitate productive transformation or reproduce clientelist redistribution (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Patron-Client Structures and the Organizational Power of Emerging Capitalists



Source: Khan (2010)

For the purpose of our analysis, we extend the PS theory by adding the *third dimension* to the PS theory. This dimension incorporates the role of **external actors and international power relations** in shaping domestic institutional performance. Whereas the first two dimensions focus only on internal distributions of holding power and capabilities, this extension recognises that political settlements in developing countries are embedded within an open global system in which external actors can influence both the distribution of power and the enforceability of institutions.

At its core, the extension retains the central proposition that institutions are effective when their distributive outcomes are compatible with the distribution of holding power. However, it departs from the original framework by recognising that holding power itself may be externally

conditioned. External actors, such as foreign governments, multinational firms/corporations, and international financial organisations/institutions, can participate in domestic processes of conflict and cooperation by imposing costs, providing resources, or supporting particular factions or interests. As a result, we argue that the performance and sustainability of some institutional arrangements depend not only on domestic power configurations but also on alignment with the interests of external actors/organisations.

This dimension is analytically structured around two broad variables. The first is **domestic vulnerability**, which captures the extent to which internal power configurations (domestic political settlement) are susceptible to external influence. Political settlements characterised by strong ruling coalitions, effective vertical control over lower-level factions, and aligned or embedded productive sector actors exhibit low vulnerability and are therefore more resistant to external pressures. By contrast, fragmented coalitions, weak control over patron-client networks, and a disorganised productive sector create high vulnerability, enabling external actors to reshape domestic enforcement outcomes.

The second variable is **external threat (posed by domestic policies) combined with foreign holding power**. External actors are more likely to intervene when domestic policies threaten their economic or strategic interests, for instance by restricting market access, reducing rents, or challenging geopolitical priorities. The effectiveness of such intervention depends on their capacity to impose and absorb costs, whether through trade measures, financial leverage, or political alliances with domestic actors. In this sense, foreign actors possess a form of holding power analogous to domestic groups, allowing them to influence which institutional equilibria are feasible.

Together, these variables define a third dimension that interacts with the internal structure of political settlements to produce differentiated policy outcomes. Even where internal

configurations are similar, variations in external pressure can alter enforcement costs, reshape coalitions, and affect the viability of institutional change. The framework therefore identifies distinct equilibria ranging from autonomous enforcement, where policies succeed with minimal external interference, to externally distorted outcomes, where foreign intervention (directly or via domestic proxies), combined with domestic fragmentation, leads to policy distortion or failure (see table 3 below).

Figure 3: Extended Political Settlement: External Actors and Institutional Performance

		EXTERNAL THREAT & FOREIGN HOLDING POWER	
		LOW INDUSTRIAL POLICY MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED	HIGH INDUSTRIAL POLICY LESS LIKELY TO SUCCEED
DOMESTIC VULNERABILITY	LOW EASY TO MOBILISE CITIZENS & RESOURCES TO DRIVE TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION	HIGH POLICY SUCCESS (AUTONOMOUS ENFORCEMENT EQUILIBRIUM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive ruling coalition; low external interference • Low enforcement costs Example: Nigeria's <i>Backward Integration Policy (BIP)</i> in cement implemented in 2002	CONSTRAINED BUT LARGELY SUCCESSFUL POLICIES (STRATEGIC ADAPTATION EQUILIBRIUM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External pressure present but contained • Policy implemented with adjustments Example: Nigeria's fuel subsidy reforms, oil and gas policies (e.g. the DPR)
	HIGH DIFFICULT TO MOBILISE CITIZENS & RESOURCES TO DRIVE TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION	WEAK / PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL POLICIES (FRAGMENTED ENFORCEMENT EQUILIBRIUM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal fragmentation dominates • Uneven enforcement Example: Political restructuring and agricultural policies (e.g., Fulani Ruga Settlement Policy)	POLICY FAILURE (EXTERNALLY DISTORTED EQUILIBRIUM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External actors exploit domestic divisions • Enforcement collapses or reverses Example: Iron & steel (Ajaokuta) development policies in Nigeria and similar policies developing countries; resource contract renegotiations in fragile states

Source: Author Inspired by Khan (2010)

Therefore, this third dimension reconceptualises political settlements as **open systems**, where institutional performance is jointly determined by domestic and external distributions of power. It provides a more comprehensive explanation of variation in policy outcomes in developing countries, particularly in contexts where external actors play a decisive role in shaping both political authority and economic transformation.

3. Cement Production and Crude Oil Refining in Nigeria: A Brief History

3.1. Cement Production in Nigeria

Cement production in Nigeria has evolved from near-total import dependence in the colonial and early post-independence periods to domestic self-sufficiency following the Backward Integration Policy (BIP). In the decades before independence and into the 1960s, cement consumption was almost entirely met through imports, reflecting a non-interventionist colonial economic strategy and the absence of local industrial capacity (Salihu, 2023).

Initial efforts at domestic production emerged in the 1960s and 1970s under import-substitution industrialisation strategies. Regional governments, often in partnership with foreign firms, established cement plants; however, these ventures were heavily reliant on expatriate expertise and failed to build indigenous technological and organisational capabilities. As a result, domestic output remained limited relative to demand, which expanded rapidly during the oil boom years. Figures 4 and 5 show that imports continued to dominate supply during this period despite modest gains in local production (Salihu, 2022).

Figure 4: Cement consumption in Nigeria 1946 - 2014, by origin of production (by metric tonnes)

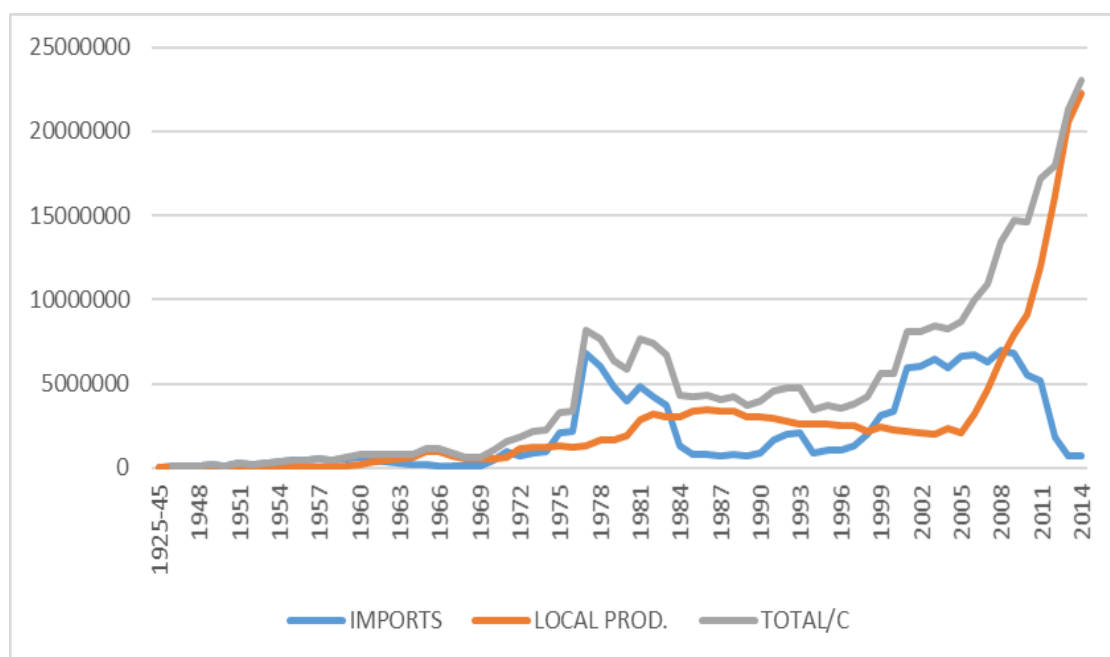
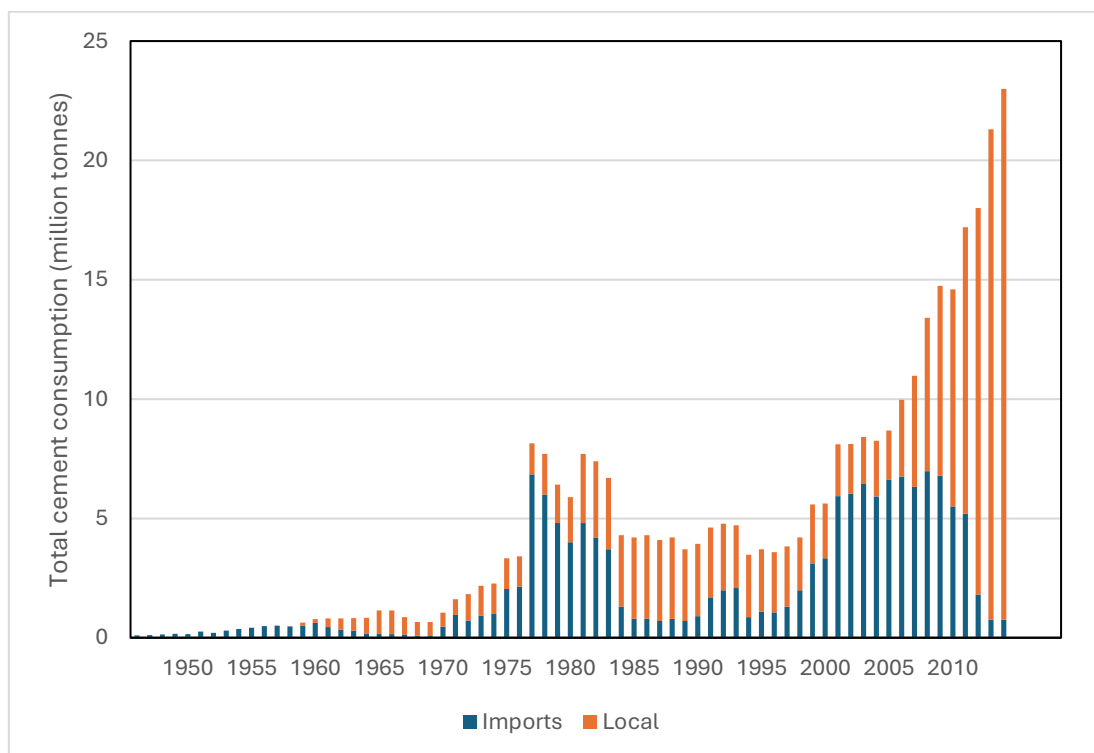


Figure 5 Cement consumption in Nigeria 1946 - 2014, by origin of production



Source: Author based on data from Pugh & Ajayi (1990), Akinyoade & Uche (2018) and Fieldwork

The limitations of massive cement importation became evident during the 1970s, notably in the “cement armada” crisis, which exposed the inefficiencies of import dependence. However, subsequent state-led industrialisation efforts were undermined by weak policy coordination, rent-seeking, and declining fiscal capacity. The shift to structural adjustment in the mid-1980s further constrained domestic production, as trade liberalisation and macroeconomic instability rendered local firms uncompetitive. By the 1990s, Nigeria remained heavily reliant on cement imports.

However, a turning point occurred after the return to democratic rule in 1999, when policymakers started to adopt more targeted, sector-specific industrial strategies. Hence, the introduction of the backward integration policy (BIP) in the cement sector in the early 2002 marked a decisive shift towards domestic production. The policy linked import licences to

commitments for local investment, effectively compelling firms to develop upstream cement manufacturing capacity.

The success of the BIP was closely tied to the role of indigenous entrepreneurs, particularly Aliko Dangote. Building on prior experience in cement importation and related manufacturing sectors, Dangote possessed the financial, managerial, and organisational capabilities required for large-scale investment in domestic production (Salihu, 2023). Through substantial investments in integrated plants and active engagement with policy enforcement, Dangote and other less dominant firms/entrepreneurs drove rapid expansion in local capacity.

The above Figures 4 and 5 capture this structural transformation: over the 2000s and early 2010s, the composition of cement supply shifted decisively from imports to domestic production. By the mid-2010s, Nigeria had achieved self-sufficiency in cement and, in some cases, export capability (Salihu, 2003, 2025)

3.2. Crude Oil Refining in Nigeria

The petroleum refining process, like cement manufacturing, is a highly capital-intensive process (see figure 2 in appendix 1 for a pictorial depiction of the process). The trajectory of Nigeria's refining sector - from state-led initiatives to the current reliance on private entrepreneurs - provides essential context for understanding the structural and political conditions that shape the DPR and the challenges it faces today.

Oil was first discovered in Nigeria in 1956 at Oloibiri in the Niger Delta by Shell D'Arcy Petroleum after nearly five decades of exploration (Shell Nigeria, n.d.). Production began in 1958 at 5,100 barrels per day, and that year Nigeria exported crude oil for the first time (ibid). From 1960, exploration licences were granted to other firms, including Mobil, Texaco Overseas, and Elf (Shell Nigeria, n.d.; NNPC, 2020; Usman, 2022). Nigeria's position as

Africa's leading oil producer was consolidated after 1970, driven by rising global prices and the country's accession to OPEC (Usman, 2022).

Post-independence economic growth rapidly outpaced domestic refining capacity, creating heavy reliance on imports. To reduce this dependence, Shell-BP constructed Nigeria's first refinery at Port Harcourt, commissioned in 1965 with a 38,000 barrels-per-stream-day (bpsd) hydro-skimming configuration (Ogbuigwe, 2018). In 1972, the Federal Government acquired a 50% stake (later raised to 60%) forming the Nigeria Petroleum Refining Company (NPRC), which operated profitably under private management. A catalytic reforming unit added in 1972 raised capacity to 60,000 bpsd (ibid). Full nationalisation occurred in 1978 when the government acquired the remaining 40%, integrating the refinery into the newly formed Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) following its establishment in 1977 (Steyn, 2009; Ogbuigwe, 2018).

Growing demand led to the commissioning of the Warri refinery in 1978 (100,000 bpsd) and Kaduna refinery in 1980 (dual configuration: 50,000 bpsd fuels plant and 50,000 bpsd lubricants plant) (see table 3 below). The latter required imports of waxy crude from Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, as Nigerian crude lacked properties for lubricant production (Ogbuigwe, 2018; Onojake, Osuji & Oforka, 2012).

Table 1: List of Nigerian State-owned refineries with their capacities, locations and year of commissioning

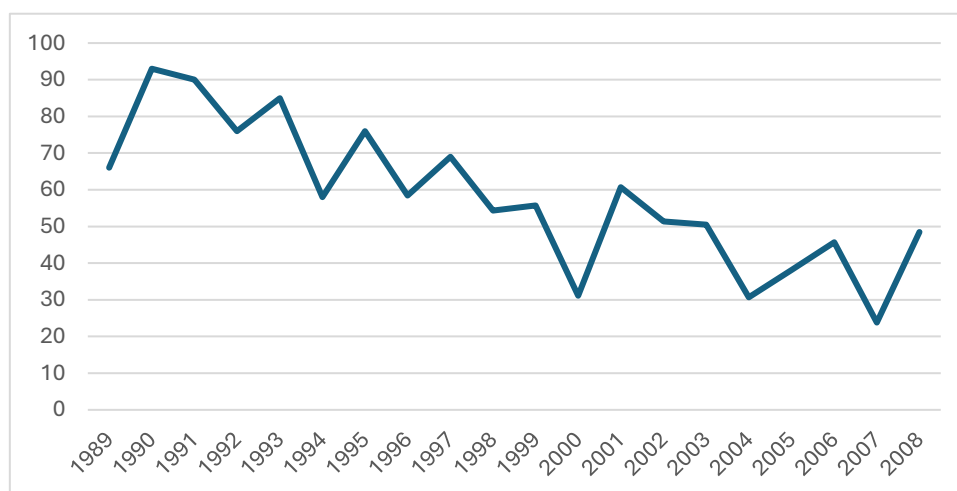
Refinery Name	Location	Capacity (Bpsd)	Year of Commission
Port Harcourt Refining Company I (PHRC I)	Rivers State	60,000	1965
Warri Refining and Petrochemical Company (WRPC)	Delta State	125,000	1978
Kaduna Refining and Petrochemical Company (KRPC)	Kaduna State	110,000	1980

Port Harcourt Refining Company II (PHRC II)	Rivers State	150,000	1989
Total		445,000	

Source: Iheukwumere, Moore, & Omotayo (2020).

Despite these investments, state refineries declined from the late 1980s due to underinvestment, poor maintenance, and governance failures, leading to steady decline in capacity utilisation levels over the years (see table 4 and figure 2 below). By the 2010s they were largely inoperative (Ogbuigwe, 2018). This collapse created a paradox: an oil-rich nation reliant on imports for over 80% of domestic fuel needs, with refined petroleum accounting for 38.3% (US\$21 billion) of total imports in 2023 (WTO, 2024). Fuel subsidies compounded fiscal strain, rising from ₦2.1 trillion in 2011 to ₦4.3 trillion (US\$9.3 billion) in 2022 (BBC News, 2023).

Figure 6: Average Annual Capacity Utilization for the Port Harcourt Refinery



Source: Author based on data from Ogbuigwe (2018)

From figure 2 above, capacity utilisation for the Port Harcourt refinery shows a declining trend over the years, albeit in the 1990s performance was, in this particular case, still high especially in the first half of the decade, peaking at 93% in 1990. In the 2000s, refining capacity utilisation

further deteriorated across the industry generally as demonstrated by trends in the Port Harcourt refinery whose refining capacity persistently fluctuated downwards throughout the decade. It began at 31.1% in 2000, briefly peaking at 60.7% in 2001, before dropping to a decade-low of 23.8% in 2007.

Initial privatisation attempts, such as the 2007 sale of the Port Harcourt and Kaduna refineries to Dangote for US\$561 million and US\$160 million respectively, were reversed amid public opposition and allegations of procedural flaws (Lawal & Okwe, 2007; Udeze, 2009). Subsequently, the government introduced a three-stage licensing regime under the (now defunct) Department of Petroleum Resources: Licence to Establish, Approval to Construct, and Licence to Operate (Vanguard Nigeria, 2015). This framework encouraged private refining through modular plants (1,000–30,000 bpsd) and large-scale conventional refineries (Adeosun & Oluleye, 2017).

The most ambitious outcome of this policy shift is the Dangote Petroleum Refinery (DPR), a 650,000 bpsd single-train facility (the largest of its kind globally) commissioned in 2023. Positioned as a transformative project, DPR was expected to restore domestic refining, reduce import dependency, and bolster energy security. Its development marks a significant departure from state dominance towards a private-led model in Nigeria’s downstream oil sector (see table 5 for the list of major private refineries in Nigeria).

Table 2: List of private refineries with a valid permit to operate in Nigeria (As of March 2021)

S/No	Name	Location	State
1	Waltersmith Refining & Petrochemical Company Limited	Ibigwe	Imo
2	OPAC Refineries	Umuseti, Kwale	Delta
3	Niger Delta Petroleum Resources (Train 3)	Ogbele	Rivers
4	Dangote Oil Refinery Company	Lekki Free Trade Zone	Lagos

5	Edo Refinery and Petrochemical Company limited	Ikpoba-Okha L.G.A.	Edo
6	Lowrie Refinery Limited	Ika North LGA	Delta
7	Excel Refinery Limited	Peretorugbene Community, Ekeremor L.G.	Bayelsa
8	Conodit Refinery Nigeria Limited	Umukwata	Delta
9	Duport Midstream	Egbokor, Orhionmwon L.G.A.	Edo
10	Clairgold Oil & Gas Engineering Limited	Koko	Delta
11	Ogini Refinery Limited	Ogini, Kwale	Delta
12	Etopo Energy Plc	Burutu	Delta
13	Gasoline Associates International Limited	Ipokia	Ogun
14	NPDC/ND WESTERN OML 34 JV	OML 34 field, Advertisement Ughelli East, Ughelli North LGA	Delta
15	Frao Oil Nigeria Limited	Uzere	Delta
16	Kingdom Global Trading Petroleum & Gas Nig. Ltd.	Okwagbe, Ughelli south L.G.A	Delta
17	Resource Petroleum & Petrochemicals International Incorporated	Ibeno	Akwa Ibom
18	Gazingstock Petroleum Company Limited	Abalagada Community, Ndokwa East LGA	Delta
19	Amakpe International Refineries Limited	Ibeno, Eket	Akwa Ibom
20	Atlantic International Refineries and Petrochemical Limited	Okpoama, Brass	Bayelsa
21	Azikel Petroleum Limited	Obunagha, Yenagoa L.G.A	Bayelsa
22	Allegiance Energy and Power Limited	Esit EketAkwa	Ibom Stats

Source: the defunct Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR)

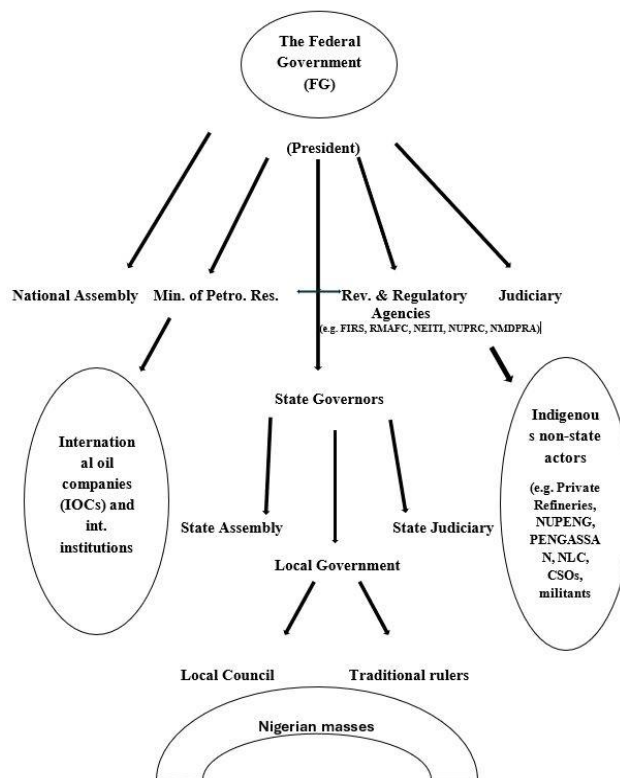
4. The political economy of oil rents redistribution in Nigeria

The Nigerian petroleum sector constitutes a classic case of resource-based rentierism in a competitive clientelist political settlement. Since oil became the backbone of Nigeria's political economy especially from the 1970s, successive ruling coalitions (military and civilian alike) have deployed discretionary control over oil rents to stabilise their regimes, consolidate power, and construct networks of political loyalty and voter mobilisation. This centralisation of rents reflects on the one hand, constitutional provisions such as Section 44(3) of the 1999 Constitution, which vests ownership and control of mineral resources in the Federal Government thereby enabling an enduring pattern of top-down rent allocation. On the other hand, the Nigerian presidential system has, through both formal and informal means, led to what Van de Walle refers to as the “*centralisation of power around the presidency*” which has resulted in “*pervasive clientelism that structures the relationship between the state and the citizenry.*” (Van de Walle, 2003).

Thus, effectively, Nigerian presidents have historically exercised near-monopolistic control over the oil sector, using institutional levers, including the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), and regulatory agencies such as the recently renamed Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) and Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), to allocate rents strategically (see the rent flow in figure 3 below). This process has rarely conformed to any transparent market logic; rather, oil blocks, oil import licences, and recently refining permits are often distributed based on political patronage, cementing elite loyalty and reproducing competitive clientelism.

The introduction of oil block awards under General Ibrahim Babangida in 1991 formalised this logic of patronage, allowing elites to accumulate capital through signature bonuses and access to production-sharing agreements, while reinforcing presidential discretion in resource allocation. Even with the advent of open, formal bidding processes under democratic rule from 1999 to date, oil rent distribution continues to be shaped by informal networks and elite bargaining, which underscores the limits of formal institutional reforms.

Figure 7: Nigeria's oil rents flow pyramid



Source: Author

Figure 3 above illustrates the centralisation of oil rents within the federal government (FG) headed by the presidency, with cascading flows of rents to state governments/governors, state assemblies, local councils, and traditional institutions/rulers, all of whom remain subordinated to federal-level patronage either formally through budgetary allocations or informally through

awards of contracts or other guises. Apart from international (multilateral) oil companies (IOCs), indigenous actors/organisations such as the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and the Nigerian Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), two powerful organisation of transporters of petrol/gas to retail sellers across Nigeria, have also served as beneficiaries of oil rents heist in Nigeria. According to a serving Senator, IOCs mostly “*underreport the barrels of oil they mine and offer millions of dollars in bribes to officials*” (Interview 1). Recalling his encounter with a British expatriate during a legislative oversight function, Senator Gobir revealed that he was offered three million in euro, pound and dollars as bribes not to continue for an offshore journey to oversee and report on IOCs activities. “*Even the president, Chief of Naval, Chief of Army, Inspector General, everybody knows this*”, revealed the expatriate while prevailing on Senator Gobir to take in the bribes.

Oil rents perform a dual function: they are simultaneously a fiscal instrument and a political currency that underwrite both the formal state apparatus and informal networks of clientelism. This rent-distribution regime extends beyond state actors to encompass international oil companies (IOCs), labour unions (e.g., NUPENG, PENGASSAN), community-based movements, and insurgent groups in the Niger Delta, each of which extracts concessions as part of a complex rentier equilibrium. See appendix A table 1 and 2 for the for the list/highlight of influential people who own both oil prospecting leases (OPLs) and oil mining leases (OMLs) in Nigeria.

Formal statutes such as the Petroleum Industry Act (2021) ostensibly seek to rationalise rent management, but in practice, discretion still persists. The presidency’s dominance is reinforced by overlapping institutional mandates, an ineffective judiciary, and the capture of the legislature, which, while formally responsible for oversight, is often complicit in rent distribution. At subnational levels, governors replicate this model, managing allocations from

the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) and leveraging oil-derived revenues for localised patronage. This system generates what Jessop (2013) terms a “rentier state apparatus,” where fiscal centralisation and elite bargaining undermine long-term developmental planning. The dominance of oil rents has entrenched economic statism (Lewis, 1994), fostering recurrent cycles of rent capture and rent-seeking, which have historically limited Nigeria’s structural transformation and industrial diversification.

5. Dangote’s Divergent Trajectories: Why Success in Cement Contrasts with Struggles in Oil Refining

Both the cement and petroleum refining industries are categorised as resource-based manufactures that are characterised by use of “capital, scale and skill-intensive technologies” (Lall, 2000). Generally, but not always, competitiveness in these types of industries arise “from the local availability of natural resources” (ibid). Moreover, in addition to the reliance of both industries on transport networks/logistics for downstream distribution and consumption, the requirements of learning and capabilities are relatively similar for both. Hence, this would, naturally, make the move from cement to oil refining attractive for Dangote since “the process of structural transformation...favor nearby goods in the product space” and that “firms will only find it profitable to move to [the production of] nearby goods” (Hausmann & Klinger, 2007). In terms of rents, both industries enjoy huge regulatory/discretionary rents type that are easy to harness, with cement mainly being domestic-market oriented and petroleum export-oriented (Pritchett, Sen, and Werker, 2018; Salihu, 2023)

However, despite these similarities between the two industries and the same competitive-clientelist macro political settlement under which they operate, the puzzle is: *why has Dangote succeeded in cement manufacture but struggles in the crude oil refining industry?*

Drawing on the extended PS theory we introduced in section 2.2 and data from interviews and desk research, we argue below that three factors appear to have accounted for Dangote’s

struggles in the petroleum refining industry against the backdrop of his success in the cement sector. These are: (i) the emergence of a financially autonomous and assertive ruling coalition under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT), which altered prior state-Dangote relations; (ii) differences in power distribution among actors/organisations across the cement and oil sectors; and (iii) the influence of foreign actors/organisations and global power relations.

5.1. The emergence of a financially autonomous and politically assertive ruling coalition under PBAT

Nigeria exhibits a competitive clientelist political settlement (Roy, 2017), characterised by a fragmented elite bargain in which the durability of ruling coalitions depends upon the continuous redistribution of rents to a wide array of constituencies (see Figure 7, Section 4). This configuration places considerable pressure on political elites to mobilise both on budget and off-budget resources to sustain political financing. This is consistent with the observation that in many developing country contexts, there are relatively few large-scale economic organisations capable of providing such financing through formal, legal channels in exchange for preferential policy treatment (Khan, 2010). Hence, among the strategies used by successive ruling coalitions in Nigeria is the creation of discretionary rents for domestic capital/entrepreneurs who, in return, provide political financing (Lewis, 1994, Salihu, 2025).

This pattern of state-capital quid pro quo defined Nigeria's political settlement particularly since the return of competitive democracy in 1999.

Hence, under successive ruling coalitions, Mr Aliko Dangote, benefitted from extensive state-enabled incentives, including subsidised foreign exchange, tax holidays, and protective import restrictions or bans on products he locally produces or imports, such as cement, sugar, food items etc. For instance, a leaked US Embassy cable confirms that “*many products on Nigeria's import ban lists are items in which Dangote has major interests*” (Wikileaks, 2005).

In fact, Dangote's close ties to successive governments have also directly shaped policy outcomes. For instance, a private discussion between him and President Obasanjo in the early 2000s was what reportedly led to the introduction of the protectionist Backward Integration Policy (BIP) in the cement industry in 2002. Under the BIP, Dangote rose to become the dominant cement producer in Nigeria, and now across 9 African countries. In fact, the rents from cement not only facilitated Dangote's attainment of his current position as the richest African with a net worth of \$32.3 billion², but also enabled his subsequent diversification into other sectors including petroleum refining.

Thus, almost all successive ruling coalitions prior to the advent of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT) coalition conferred discretionary favours on Dangote or his businesses including the Dangote Petroleum Refinery (DPR). In fact, at the commissioning of the DPR on 22 May 2023, Dangote acknowledged the decisive backing of the Buhari administration for his refinery, the DPR, praising the then CBN Governor Godwin Emefiele as someone who "*moved mountains*" to ensure the project's success, adding: "*Without Governor Emefiele's courageous support and backing, this project would not have stood a chance of successful completion*" (Usim, 2023). In addition to providing guarantees for foreign loans, the government of then President Muhammadu Buhari under which Emefiele was Governor reportedly provided Dangote with, among other incentives, duty waivers on imported capital equipment and subsidised foreign exchange for the construction of the DPR.

Data on the amount of foreign exchange Dangote benefitted from are hard to come by. However, Reuters (2016) reviewed foreign-exchange transactions over an 11-week period from March to May, 2016 and found that Dangote-affiliated companies purchased at least \$161 million in subsidised hard currency from the central bank, approximately 9% of total

² [Forbes \(2026\)](#)

allocations. In fact, in one week in March, they accounted for roughly one in every eight dollars sold. While comparative data on their share of foreign trade is unavailable, access to official rates, rather than the more costly parallel market, likely conferred an estimated benefit of about \$100 million for Dangote within this period (Reuters, 2016).

In return, Dangote has provided substantial political financing to successive ruling coalitions (Odijie & Onofua, 2020). In fact, leaked Wikileaks cable noted that he “*contributed 200 million naira... to Obasanjo’s first term election campaign, and in 2003 at least another 1 billion naira... Dangote is a known contributor to the PDP party*” (Wikileaks, 2005). Also, he is reported to have pledged about US\$1.7 million worth of cement towards the PDP national secretariat (Kura, 2011; Salihu, 2023, 2025). In fact, in 2018, the Buhari All Progressives Congress (APC)-led administration named him a member of the APC Presidential Campaign Council (The Punch, 2018), underscoring the cross-party nature of his political influence.

Through this symbiotic exchange, Dangote has succeeded in cementing a robust mutually beneficially relationship with successive ruling coalitions at least since the advent of democracy in Nigeria in 1999.

However, in 2023 something happened that appeared to have reconfigured the state-Dangote relationship in ways that resulted in unprecedented challenges for Dangote/the DPR.

The declaration of PBAT as the winner of Nigeria’s presidential election in February 2023, gave rise to, for the first time since 1999, the emergence of a ruling coalition that was distinctive in two fundamental respects:

One, for the first time in Nigeria’s democratic history, a coalition came to power without significant, if any, support of the traditional political financiers (i.e. domestical capital like Dangote) and major powerbrokers, effectively making the coalition the first financially independent one since 1999.

Two, and to a large degree because of the first point, the PBAT ruling coalition appears to be the most powerful, both horizontally through weakening excluded opposition factions, and vertically via assertive control of internal factions to protect its own political-economic interests. Through what is alleged to be huge financial inducement ([Sahara Reporters](#), 2025) and weaponisation of state institutions such as the judiciary and anti-corruption agencies ([ICIR Nigeria](#), 2025, [The Punch](#), 2026), PBAT's ruling party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), currently controls 31 out of Nigeria's 36 states. In fact, the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) alleged that PBAT has *“captured the judiciary and legislature, rendering both arms of government impotent and subservient”*, warning that *“If this descent into one-man rule is not halted, Nigeria will wake up to find its democracy dead and buried”*([ARISE News](#), 2025).

The evidence on financial independence came from PBAT himself made the following admission:

“I have no cabal. I have no sponsors. The money I spent on the elections was my personal fortune.” (The State House, 2024).

Also, PBAT's unique political influence and capacity to pursue and protect his own interest was ascertained by a former state Governor, Mr Sule Lamido (Interviews 2 & 3) who remarked that:

“None of them [past Nigeria's presidents] were made by their personality alone; they came from institutions, from contexts that empowered them. Tinubu, however, is different. He's defined largely by his personality, not any institutional backing. Buhari tried four times and [despite his popularity] couldn't win alone [without backing from Tinubu], which shows it [Buhari's eventual victory] wasn't just about him [being popular].” ([Daily Trust](#), 2024a).

“Nigerian politicians must fear Tinubu... the fear isn't of him, but rather his capacity to stand firm for the wrong reasons... Every decision he's made has been for his interests. Just look at the government - it's essentially an extension of him.” ([Daily Trust](#), 2024a).

“Tinubu is very daring; he is his own creation, he is a self-made man, right from Chicago, what he went through on the streets.” ([Daily Trust](#), 2024b)

In fact, Lamido's assessment of PBAT's unique power and influence could not be more accurate for, not the choice of his Southwestern Yoruba region's socio-cultural group, the Afenifere³; not supported by all four most powerful former Nigerian army Generals⁴; not anointed (some even claim opposed) by the outgoing President from his own party⁵; gambling with a same-faith ticket⁶; and lacking a strong support base, PBAT single-handedly self-financed his way into the much coveted office of Nigeria's President.

At the root of PBAT's power and influence lies his vast financial fortune. There are some hypotheses about the sources of the enormous wealth possessed by PBAT who, unlike his immediate past predecessor (former President Muhammadu Buhari), came to office with

³ In fact, during the campaigns, acting Leader of Afenifere, Chief Ayo Adebajo, warned Nigerians against voting for Tinubu saying that they “will suffer” if they do so ([ThisDay](#), 2024).

⁴ All the following four most powerful Nigeria's former army Generals did not support Tinubu: Olusegun Obasanjo, Aliyu Gusau, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, and Theophilus Y. Danjuma.

⁵ Former President Buhari introduced abrupt policies such as the sudden re-designing of Nigeria's naira notes, which many thought were targeted at scuttling PBAT's electoral chances.

⁶ Nigeria being multicultural, presidential tickets have historically paired the president and his vice from different religions and regions (e.g., Muslim/Christian and Northerner/southerner)

serious questions over his personal and public integrity. As the governor of Lagos for eight years, PBAT, according to some sources, used that position to “*amass enormous wealth for himself and family*”⁷ (People’s Gazette, [2020](#), [2021](#), [2024](#)). In fact, former head of Nigeria’s anti-corruption agency (the EFCC), Mr Nuhu Ribadu, who, ironically, is current National Security Adviser (NSA) to PBAT, had in a 2006 report investigating 36 state governors described Tinubu’s case as being of “*an international dimension*” ([Ocnus, 2006](#)). Also, [US court documents](#) featured PBAT “*a case of massive drug trafficking and money laundering*” in Chicago, USA, leading to funds forfeiture by him and his Chicago associates in the 1990s ([Sahara Reporters, 2022](#); [OCCRP, 2024a](#)⁸).

Thus, a combination of unique financial independence and assertive political control and dominance makes the PBAT ruling coalition stands out among its predecessors. This tilts the state-business balance of power in Nigeria and, hence, for the first time, altered the traditionally cordial state-Dangote relations thereby creating challenges for Dangote/the DPR.

With effective horizontal and vertical control over political and economic actors and organisations, and hence, high enforcement capabilities, the PBAT ruling coalition could choose to work with or sideline Dangote, depending on whether it has the incentives to do so, or its interests align with those of the prominent entrepreneur. Subsequent events proved that the PBAT ruling coalition, especially in its first two years in office, did not seem to have found the incentives and mutual interest to work with Dangote as per tradition. This was proven by the unprecedented public confrontation between Dangote and officials of the PBAT ruling coalition over the DPR.

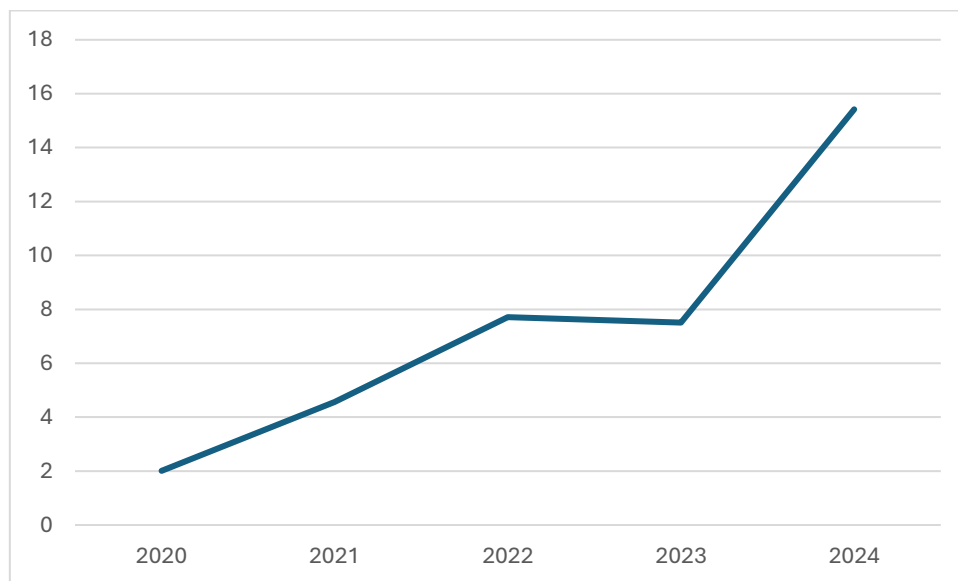
⁷ Peoples Gazette (2024)

⁸ The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), founded in 2006, is a global investigative journalism network focused on organized crime and corruption, ranked 69th among top NGOs in 2017.

Before we analyse the nature and causes of this confrontation, it is instructive here to state two fundamental facts about the state of Nigeria’s oil industry. First, despite being among world’s leading crude oil producers, Nigeria remains heavily dependent on imported refined fuels. This dependence persists even after Nigeria has spent over ₦11.35 trillion (US\$25 billion) between 2013 and 2023 to rehabilitate its three state-owned petroleum refineries in Port Harcourt, Warri, and Kaduna (Reuters, 2023), followed by series of institutional reforms, notably the liberalisation of the oil and gas industry and the enactment of the Petroleum Industry Act (2021).

Second, Nigeria’s petrol imports bills have risen steeply in the past five years (see figure 1 below for the trend). In fact, by mid-2025, refined-fuel imports costs had already reached ₦4.13 trillion (US\$2.8 billion) (NBS, 2025a; Sahara Reporters, 2025). This development has been seen by many as a paradox because while Nigeria continues to import billions of dollars’ worth of refined petrol, the DPR, which began operation in January 2024, exported over 1.1 billion litres between June and September 2025 (Billionaires Africa, 2025).

Figure 8: Nigeria’s refined petrol imports costs, 2020–2024 (₦ trillion)



Source: Compiled by Author based on data sourced from NBS (2024, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c), Sahara Reporters (2025) and Nairametrics (2025)

Also, for each barrel of unrefined crude Nigeria exports, it forfeits approximately US\$1,000 in potential value addition (Oil Price, 2024). However, according to statistics, the DPR produces 104 million litres of light petroleum products daily comprising 57 million litres of petrol, 20 million of jet fuel, and 27 million of diesel (Dangote Refinery, 2025). Thus, given that domestic consumption averages 46 million litres per day, this implies a theoretical surplus of 58 million litres available for export, after the DPR has met domestic demand. Hence, the economic case for Nigeria to refine its own crude, capture lost value, conserve foreign exchange, create jobs and catalyse the development of its downstream petroleum value chain is strong.

Yet, the PBAT ruling coalition through the CEO of the oil sector regulator, the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), Mr Farouk Ahmed expressed a different viewpoint:

“We cannot rely on one refinery to feed the nation because Dangote is requesting that we suspend or stop imports, especially of AGO and DPK, and direct all marketers to his refinery. That is not good for the nation in terms of energy security, and it is not good for the market because of the monopoly. (Daily Trust, 2024c).

While this may appear to be a normal economic ideological disagreement between the PBAT government as a proponent of market liberalisation and Dangote as an advocate of protectionism, our investigations reveals that beneath the veneer of the economics of this disagreement lies politics. Among members⁹ of the PBAT ruling coalition there were suspicions that during the 2023 elections that Dangote offered only limited support for then-candidate Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s campaign. In fact, it is alleged that the billionaire business mogul

⁹ In its narrow definition, members of the PBAT ruling coalition consist of mostly Yoruba technocrats who have been closely working with Tinubu from when he was the Governor of Lagos to when he became Nigeria’s president and appointed them into important federal positions. In its broad sense, it comprises of all appointees of the PBAT government.

“invested heavily in the [opposition] PDP candidate Atiku Abubakar’s presidential campaign” (Africa Confidential, 2024b).

However, three of our well-informed respondents (Interviews, 4, 5 & 6) are unanimous that this is not anything new, with one respondent (Interview 6) adding that *“but he [Dangote], like other big businessmen usually hedge their bet by supporting more than one candidate”*. However, as the respondent added, Dangote’s alleged heavy investment in the People’s Democratic Party (PDP)’s candidate Atiku did not sit well with the Tinubu camp, noting that, *“It wasn’t just a matter of business, it became personal when Dangote was seen by Tinubu loyalists as more aligned with Atiku’s camp.”* Hence, as another respondent (Interview 7) observed, *“from the outset, the administration regarded Dangote with suspicion, interpreting his alleged support for the PDP candidate during the election as a political affront rather than mere commercial positioning that, according to some accounts, compelled him to put a foot in the camps of both leading presidential contenders.”*

Beyond Dangote’s limited support for Tinubu’s 2023 campaign, it can be argued that the PBAT coalition’s posture toward Dangote and the DPR may reflect efforts by the PBAT ruling coalition to consolidate its support in PBAT’s natal region of the south, where Dangote has for long been perceived as a crony capitalist enriched through the influence of northern political elites/establishment and state patronage. In this context, any open public confrontation (symbolic or substantive) with Dangote would attract the support a constituency long resentful of the business mogul.

Hence, early in its tenure, the PBAT coalition began probe into official foreign exchange allocations to the DPR leading to a raid on the Dangote Group’s Lagos headquarters by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), for investigation of forex awards from 2013 to 2023 (Africa Confidential, 2024b). Dangote attributed the raid to Abuja officials intent

on causing him “*unwarranted embarrassment.*” Soon after, the Central Bank Governor Godwin Emefiele, previously praised by Dangote at the DPR commissioning for facilitating its completion, was dismissed, arrested, and prosecuted by the PBAT administration.

In July 2024, Dangote reduced the government’s/Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited’s (NNPCL) equity in the refinery from 20% to 7%, reportedly due to unmet oil delivery commitments (Reuters, 2024). Meanwhile, state regulators, once known to “tilt the playing field in [Dangote’s] favor’ (Wikileaks, 2005), turned hostile. This was most evident in public disputes between Dangote and the CEO of the oil regulator (NMDPRA), Mr Farouk Ahmed, who escalated to the point of questioning the DPR’s operational license and output quality, stating:

“Dangote Refinery is still in the pre-commissioning stage. It has not been licensed yet. I think they are about 45 per cent to completion.... Dangote’s current AGO (diesel) suffers from the lowest quality in terms of sulphur content, falling short of West Africa’s requirement of 50 parts per million (PPM)” (Daily Trust, 2024c).

The DPR, through spokesman, Anthony Chiejine, rejected these claims: *“Our diesel is produced currently at significantly lower levels of sulphur; as such, we find baseless the allegation.... What we are producing is 80 percent of what is being imported into the country”* (Business Day, 2024b).

Not only that, securing crude oil domestically - traditionally managed by the NNPCL, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), and international oil companies (IOCs) - became increasingly difficult, compelling DPR to import crude from as far as the United States, Ghana, and elsewhere.

Several respondents noted that this is an irony for an oil-rich state like Nigeria. As one industry expert remarked, *“It’s absurd that Nigeria, with its vast reserves, cannot supply its own flagship*

private refinery” (Interview 8). Another policy analyst added, “*The fact that the refinery has to look abroad for crude underscores systemic inefficiencies and political undercurrents in the domestic oil allocation process*” (Interview 9).

In contrast, state-Dangote relations during the Olusegun Obasanjo government that introduced the Backward Integration policy (BIP) for the cement industry was not hostile. In fact, the two parties had robust symbiotic relations often attributed to the transformation of Nigeria from a net cement importer to an exporter (Akinyoade & Uche, 2018; Salihu, 2023, 2025).

5.2. Differences in power distribution across the cement and oil sectors

The divergence between Dangote’s success in cement and his struggle in petroleum refining can also be explained by the differing distribution of power among players across the two sectors. In cement, the distribution of power is relatively compact and concentrated in few players i.e. Dangote, Abdussamad Isyaka Rabiou of BUA Cement, and Lafarge, all of whom were already into the bulk cement import and resell business before the BIP incentivised them into domestic manufacture. The existence of these few players makes coordination easier and collective action in pursuance of favourable policy enactment and enforcement less problematic.

Thus, largely because of this nature of the cement industry, it was easier for the then Obasanjo ruling coalition, whose interests aligned with those of sector players especially Dangote, to govern market entry through licensing, tariffs, import restrictions, and similar BIP provisions, while Dangote progressively internalised the chain from quarrying to production, haulage and distribution. This pattern of state protection and firm-level capabilities development mutually reinforced each other and led to the transformation of Nigeria from a net cement importer to a self-sufficient producer. Dangote as the dominant entrepreneur currently produces 35.25 million tonnes of cement per annum (Mta) and exported cement and clinker amounting to 1.2Mt in 2024. In comparative terms, therefore, cement became a sector in which the

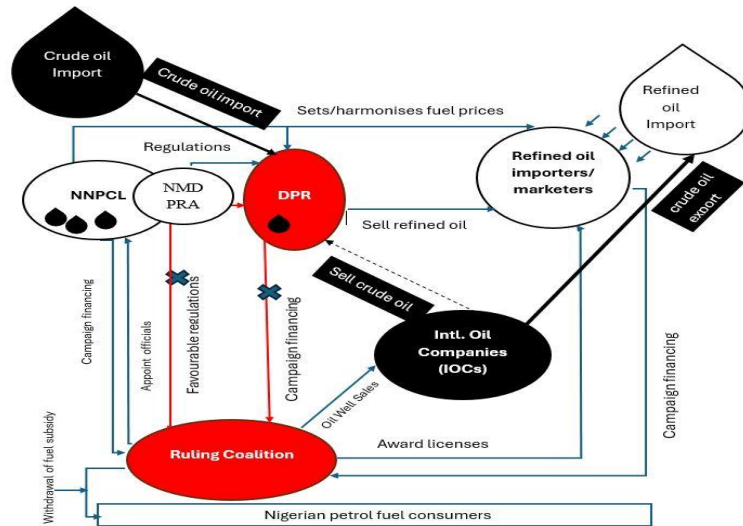
Nigerian state could feasibly privilege domestic capital (Aliko Dangote and Abdussamad Isyaku Rabi) without destabilising a major transnational rent network or threatening the interests of powerful international actors/players. In fact, as indigenous players, both Dangote and Rabi leveraged not only their capabilities but also their influence to push to the fringes of the cement market margins the French multinational, Lafarge. However, this in no way threatened the interests of France to justify powerful transnational resistance or investment in policy distortion.

However, petroleum refining is structurally different. Refineries rarely control their own most strategic input (crude oil). Unlike limestone and clinker in cement, crude supply is governed by an upstream regime involving multiple actors and organisations with varying power and capabilities such as NNPC, NUPRC, international oil producers, traders/marketers, transporters, labour associations, and pre-existing contractual obligations. Thus, downstream producers such as the DPR are therefore dependent on decisions made elsewhere in the chain. The NUPRC's domestic crude schedule for the first half of 2024 projected that Dangote alone would require 325,000 barrels per day, equal to 61.675 million barrels over six months (NUPRC, 2023). Yet, Reuters reported in August 2024 that, since operations began, the DPR had received only about half that requirement, while total refinery demand in Nigeria significantly exceeded the volumes actually secured through the formal process. Thus, in practical terms, this meant that a mega-refinery could exist without guaranteed command over domestic feedstock. The core issue, then, is not merely capacity, but the fragmentation of power across multiple sector players and organisations that can delay, dilute, or redirect supply (Reuters, 2024a, 2024b).

This fragmentation also makes petroleum a much denser arena of organised interests than cement. In addition to the refinery itself, the downstream field includes importers, independent

marketers, depot owners, state traders, shipping and logistics intermediaries, and sectoral regulators whose statutory mandates partly overlap (see figure 10 below).

Figure 9: Actors/Organisations in the Petroleum Refinery Industry



Source: Author

Public argument in the sector reflects this complexity and multiplicity of conflicting actor interests. Dangote, for instance, constantly resorts to framing the issue as, like in cement, one of import-substituting industrial policy pursuit arguing that the “Nigeria First” principle (a BIP version of sort) ought to extend to petroleum refining industry. On their part, marketers, regulators, and members of the PBAT ruling coalition replied in explicitly anti-monopoly terms. IPMAN, for example, argued that Nigeria should “*continue to import even as we buy locally*” (MoneyCentral, 2025), because a ban would weaken the ability to check inflation and monopoly. Hence, whatever one’s normative position, these statements reveal an industry in which several organised groups possess enough leverage to contest any attempt to constrain domestic market for local refiners, even one with very large sunk costs (Reuters, 2026).

The size of the rent stream at stake also helps explain why actors/organisations in the oil industry are so powerful and durable. According to the WTO, refined petroleum accounted for 38.3 per cent (\$21.4 billion) of Nigeria’s imports in 2023 (\$56 billion), the largest single share

(WTO, 2024). National Bureau of Statistics data then showed that “other oil products” imports amounted to ₦4.805 trillion in Q4 2024 and ₦3.787 trillion in Q1 2025 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2025a, 2025b). Those magnitudes indicate that refined-product imports remain a major channel of accumulation and commercial turnover. Cement rents have certainly been lucrative, but they have been far more domestic in territorial reach and easier for the state to police through straightforward protectionist instruments. Petroleum rents, by contrast, sit at the intersection of foreign exchange markets, shipping, international supply contracts, subsidy legacies, and domestic retail distribution. The implication is that the pro-import coalition is not simply ideologically liberal; it is also materially anchored and invested in a very large commercial system or mosaic of rent distribution.

In fact, both open sources (Katina Times, 2024; Truth Nigeria, 2024; Sports_Doctor2, 2024; Facebook, 2024) and anonymous interviews/sources (4, 5, 7, 8, 9; AnonXNG, 2024) allege that PBAT and his family profit from subsidy removal and refined fuel imports through their interests in Oando Plc, managed by PBAT’s nephew, Wale Tinubu. Activist Dr. Garus Gololo, for example, claimed that Tinubu now owns “17 oil wells in the Niger Delta,” managed through a Malta-based refinery by his children (Scooper News, 2024). Other respondents suggested that “PBAT’s cronies or supporters and some of the NNPC officials” are involved in the Malta trade “possibly to save up money for mobilisation of voters and powerbrokers in the next election [2027]” (Interview 10). Another respondent stated: “If you are looking for hard, paper evidence about Tinubu’s connection to Oando or the guys in the Malta refinery imbroglio, I may not have such... However, there are visible dots you and I can connect to make a line... You know about the biological relations between Oando’s Wale [Tinubu] and the president and the recent acquisition of the Italian Agip Oil Company by Oando? You also know that the main character in the Malta saga is the President’s appointee who works with some elements in the NNPC. For God’s sake, what does this tell you and I?!” (Interview 11).

Author's investigations confirm two key facts: first, since Tinubu's inauguration, Oando Plc has expanded its portfolio, including the US\$783 million acquisition of Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) in August 2024 (Oando Plc, 2024). Second, while Nigeria imported no petrol from Malta between 2017 and 2022 (The Cable, 2024), by 2023, when PBAT government came on board, imports through a cabinet-linked intermediary were valued at US\$2.8 billion (Truth Nigeria, 2024b). The intermediary, Abdulkabir Aliu, both an oil trader and member of PBAT's Presidential Economic Coordination Council, acknowledged his role but maintained he had not 'violated any rule' (Truth Nigeria, 2024b).

The Nigerian oil sector is also unusual in the power of its organised labour as a veto actor. In September 2025, NUPENG suspended a threatened strike only after Dangote agreed to unionisation provisions brokered with the state. Later the same month, PENGASSAN ordered members in major oil and gas firms to halt gas and crude supplies to the refinery in response to alleged victimisation of unionising workers, before the dispute was eventually de-escalated through conciliation (Nairametrics, 2025b, Reuters, 2025b). Whether one interprets these disputes primarily through the lens of labour rights or industrial conflict, the analytical point is straightforward: in petroleum, organised labour can directly threaten plant operations and energy flows. Thus, this is a qualitatively different environment from the cement where Dangote "*co-opted some opposing stakeholders and reduced the occurrence of articulated and organized opposition to the policy from some of the losing stakeholders such as opposition parties and civil society groups*" (odijie & Onofua, 2020)

Dangote himself acknowledged the unique configurations of power among players in the oil industry when he remarked thus: "*I never knew that the oil industry mafia is stronger than the drug cartel; it's a big cartel*" (Peoples Gazette, 2024b; Vanguard News, 2024). Clearly, this is not merely a rhetorical observation. It captures the central feature of the refining sector: Dangote may be technologically and organisationally formidable at the plant level, but he

remains politically and commercially dependent on actors who control crude allocation, licensing, logistics, labour peace and market access. In cement, by contrast, Dangote's technological, financial, investment and organisational capabilities and power combined with the state's protective instruments to neutralise relatively less powerful and concentrated sectoral actors/organisations. In refining, these actors/organisations are diffuse and dispersed across rival strategic centres of influence.

Therefore, although both cement and petroleum industries are resource-based, they possess different configurations of holding power. The cement sector enabled a state-backed domestic capitalist to consolidate position through relatively straightforward protective interventions. The oil sector places the same capitalist in a far more crowded and contested institutional terrain, where his investment remains dependent on upstream cooperation, regulatory discretion, and the continued acquiescence of actors who benefit from imports. This dynamic therefore highlights one of our paper's wider claim: industrial outcomes are shaped not simply by policy ideas or entrepreneurial ambition and techno-organisational capabilities, but by the sectorally specific organisation of power through which rents are allocated, defended and contested.

5.3. The influence of foreign actors and global power relations.

A third reason why Dangote's refining venture has faced stronger resistance than his cement business lies in the existence and weight of foreign actors and global market structures within the petroleum sector. However, the two dimensions of the conventional Political Settlements (PS) theory (Khan, 2010, 2018) exclusively focus on how domestic distributions of power influence policy institutions. Thus, the PS theory does not factor in nor explain about how external actors/organisations, that is, foreign countries, supply networks, international traders, multinational oil producers, and shifts in world market regulation, can affect the performance of domestic policy institutions by feeding back into domestic political-economic incentives

structure. In the Nigerian downstream case, however, the influence of external players and linkages are not peripheral. They are constitutive of the rents at stake. Hence, for a more persuasive reading, we introduce a third PS dimension (section 2.2). This additional dimension highlights the impact of external actors, organisations, linkages and international power dynamics on domestic institutional performance. Unlike the original two dimensions, which focus solely on internal power and capability distributions, this extension recognises that political settlements in developing countries exist within an open global system, where external actors can influence both power relations and institutional effectiveness.

At its core, the framework maintains that institutions are effective when distributive outcomes align with the distribution of power. However, it departs from the original by acknowledging that both the macro, meso and micro political settlement can be shaped externally. Foreign governments, multinational corporations, and international financial institutions may affect domestic resources contestations/conflict and cooperation by imposing constraints, providing resources, or supporting particular factions and interests. Looking at Dangote's divergent trajectories in the cement and petroleum industries through this lens, we identified four mechanisms through which external actors/organisations/linkages feedback into domestic distribution of power, capabilities, rents and incentives.

The first mechanism is competitive pressure from discounted imported products. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Price Cap Coalition made clear that their policy objective was to keep Russian crude and petroleum products flowing to world markets while lowering the revenues accruing to the Russian state (U.S. Treasury, 2022, 2023, 2024). That design did not target African refiners specifically, but it did create conditions under which discounted Russian-origin barrels and products could circulate internationally. Dangote's complaint in July 2025 must be read in that context. He argued that discounted Russian petroleum products were finding their way to Africa and "severely undercutting" local production based on full

crude pricing, thereby producing an “unlevel playing field” for domestic refiners (MoneyCentral, 2025). Whether or not one accepts all the rhetoric surrounding “dumping”, the structural point is sound: Nigeria’s refinery must compete not in a protected infant-industry environment, but in a market already reshaped by geopolitical sanctions, discounted cargoes and external arbitrage opportunities.

The second mechanism operates on the crude-supply side. Official Nigerian documents show that domestic crude allocation has required repeated regulatory intervention. The NUPRC’s 2024 Annual Report records that the Commission drafted and gazetted the Domestic Crude Supply Obligation (DCSO)¹⁰-related regulations, facilitated domestic supply to Dangote and other refiners, convened stakeholder meetings, issued domestic obligations, and then faced repeated producer “pushbacks”, waiver requests and complaints from operators and equity partners (NUPRC, 2025). In fact, Reuters simultaneously quoted, in early August 2024, the DPR spokesperson, Mr Anthony Chiejina, who expressed their refinery’s challenge thus:

“Our concern has always been that the NUPRC is pushing, but the international oil companies are not following the instructions. Consequently, we often purchase the same Nigerian crude from international traders at an additional \$3-\$4 premium per barrel which translates to \$3-\$4 million per cargo.” (Reuter, 2024)

By February 2025, the regulator (NUPRC) had gone further, warning that export permits would be denied for cargoes diverted away from domestic refineries, while indicating that Dangote alone would require 550,000 bpd in the first half of 2025 (Reuters, 2024a, 2025a). This sequence is analytically revealing. It shows that the state struggles to redirect crude toward domestic refining in the face of formidable resistance from multinational oil producers (who

¹⁰ The Petroleum Industry Act, which governs Nigeria's oil sector, obliges oil producers, including multinational corporations, to allocate designated quantities of crude oil to domestic refineries prior to any exportation, a policy known as the domestic crude supply obligation (DCSO).

owns 88 per cent of the oil blocks in Nigeria)¹¹ and possibly default on their obligations against the force of pre-existing contracts, trader relationships and established export logics. In other words, these multinational oil actors/organisations do not merely coexist with domestic refining stakeholders; they actively constrain them for reasons just mentioned.

The third mechanism concerns the way the DPR itself reorganises the regional and transatlantic oil product markets. A leading global data and analytics firm that provides near-real-time intelligence on physical commodity markets, including crude oil, refined products, and liquefied natural gas, Kpler, estimated in early 2025 that, at full capacity, gasoline could account for around 294,000 bpd of DPR's output and explicitly warned that this expansion would pressure Europe-to-West Africa gasoline flows:

“The refinery[DPR]’s priority remains increasing gasoline yield. At full capacity, gasoline is expected to account for 294 kbd (45%) of its 650 kbd potential. Current yields stand at 32-35%, leaving significant room for growth. This expansion will disrupt global trade flows, pressuring Europe-to-West Africa gasoline flows. Dangote’s evolution continues to reshape Atlantic Basin supply dynamics, reinforcing its role as a key player in regional and global refined products markets.” (Kpler, 2025a)

Subsequent market data point in the same direction. Argus reported that Nigeria became a net gasoline exporter in March 2026, with imports falling to 41,000 bpd, the lowest level in Kpler's records (Argus Media, 2026). Kpler's September 2025 refinery status review also noted outright closures or crude-processing cessations at major plants such as Grangemouth in the United Kingdom and the Wesseling section of Shell's Rheinland complex in Germany (Kpler, 2025b). These closures may not be attributed to Dangote alone since refining economics are shaped by multiple factors. Nevertheless, the timing and market commentary strongly suggest

¹¹ [Sahara Reporters](#) (2013)

that a new West African refining pole has begun to unsettle established Atlantic Basin trade routes. This supports the view of an industry expert (Interview 8) who captures the point well when they posited that:

“Once fully operational, [the DPR] poses a competitive threat to the refining and trading interests of major European companies” (Interview 8).

A fourth mechanism is the continuing regulatory and legal struggle over market access. Reuters reported in May 2026 that Dangote filed a fresh lawsuit seeking to overturn import licences issued to marketers and NNPC, arguing that the permits undermined its operations and violated the legal position that imports should occur only when domestic supply is insufficient (Reuters, 2026). The significance of the case is not simply juridical. It underlines the fact that the central conflict remains unresolved even after the refinery has scaled up output: the issue is whether the state will reserve the domestic market for local production when capacity exists as Dangote claims (Reuters, 2024c), or whether it will continue to licence imports in the name of competition and supply security. Some continued imports may be defensible during a ramp-up phase, and the concern about over-reliance on a single supplier is not wholly without merit. Yet the persistence of import licensing even as domestic capacity rises is consistent with a political economy in which the interests of powerful and diffuse domestic and international actors/organisations do not align with those of Dangote/the DPR or domestic refining generally.

Thus, it is clear that Nigerian elites, regulators, organised commercial actors, and multinational oil companies operate within a system in which lucrative rents/value are captured from importation, intermediation, foreign exchange transactions, and external supply relationships. Domestic refining, by contrast, requires the successful redirection of crude, capital, regulation and logistics toward national value addition. That redirection threatens not only domestic

entrenched domestic interests but also external actors/organisations, suppliers and trading patterns that have long treated West Africa as a lucrative destination market. In fact, this proposition can equally derive theoretical support from Bayart's extraversion theory in the sense in which a formally sovereign state or ruling coalition may still privilege outward-facing rent strategies over domestic productive deepening. Hence, in the end what is reproduced is not simply import dependence, but a political settlement in which external linkages continue to structure internal incentives.

The broader implication here is that the DPR/Dangote's difficulties are not reducible to the idiosyncrasies of an entrepreneur or a ruling coalition. Rather, they reveal how deeply Nigeria's downstream petroleum sector remains inserted into not only internal but also external distribution of power and capabilities and circuits of rents accumulation. In cement, the foreign dimension was comparatively weaker and easier to manage through domestic protection. In refining, diffuse and stronger power distributions, foreign supply chains, global pricing regimes, trader positions, and multinational upstream interests raise the cost of privileging domestic refining. In other words, in the petroleum sector the domestic balance of power is being shaped continuously by actors, organisations, price structures and trade routes that lie partly outside the domestic political settlement but decisively affect what domestic institutions can or will do.

6. Conclusion

This paper explores Dangote's divergent trajectories in cement and petroleum refining. It shows that this divergence is best explained not only by the emergence of a financially independent and politically assertive ruling coalition under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT) but also by differences in the depth and breadth of the distribution of power and capabilities among actors and organisations across the two sectors, which influences the divergent industrial policy outcomes. In cement, a relatively compact constellation of powerful actors, aligned incentives

and interests under the Obasanjo and subsequent ruling coalitions, weak and manageable domestic opposition/interests, and little or no resistance from foreign actors/organisations/interests allowed the Backward Integration Policy (BIP) to be enforced and domestic productive capacity to expand to the point of substituting imports. In refining, by contrast, the Dangote/ the Dangote Petroleum Refinery (DPR) appear to have entered a denser and more contested arena in which crude allocation, market access, organised labour, regulation and trade are influenced by a wider set of domestic and foreign actors/organisations, whilst the Tinubu ruling coalition has proved more autonomous and less dependent on traditional business financiers than its predecessors. This makes policy enforcement costlier.

The paper therefore makes two original contributions to the literature and to policy debate. The first is theoretical: it extends political settlements theory by treating domestic settlements as open rather than closed systems and by showing how international actors/organisations, trade routes, pricing regimes and foreign commercial interests can alter the enforceability of domestic industrial institutions. The second is empirical: it offers one of the first systematic political-economy analyses of the Dangote Petroleum Refinery and, in so doing, helps explain why a project that appears economically compelling can still face sustained institutional friction/obstacles. The policy implication is straightforward but important. Large-scale industrial investment, even when backed by substantial domestic capital, will not by itself deliver structural transformation unless states/ruling coalitions can also secure enforceable institutions for input access, regulatory coherence, market coordination and the management of external pressures.

These conclusions should, however, be read with appropriate caution. The analysis is based on a comparative case study of two sectors within one country and is centred on a highly prominent entrepreneur/conglomerate, which may limit the extent of immediate generalisation. Finally, the refinery's operating environment remains fluid. Public reporting after the completion of the

manuscript still indicates that crude-supply frictions and market-access disputes have not been fully resolved, with a fresh 2026 lawsuit filed by Dangote against the PBAT government over fuel import licences. These dynamics suggest that the political settlement around domestic refining should be understood as evolving rather than settled.

References

1. Adeosun, Olumide, and Ayodele Oluleye. 2017. "Nigeria's Refining Revolution." <https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/nigerias-refining-revolution.pdf>
2. Adetayo, S. (2020). The ethics of state capture: Dangote and the Nigerian state. *The Palgrave Handbook of African Social Ethics*, 371-388.
3. Africa Business Communities. (2016, June 13). *Trade Union Congress honors Aliko Dangote with award for job creation in Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://africabusinesscommunities.com/news/trade-union-congress-honors-aliko-dangote-with-award-for-job-creation-in-nigeria.html>
4. African Business. (2018, September). *The Dangote effect*. African Business. <https://african.business/2018/09/economy/dangote-effect/>
5. Agbakahi, L. (2022). Petroleum Refineries in Nigeria: why do they perform so poorly? *Centre for Energy, Petroleum, Mineral Law and Policy*. University of Dundee Retrieved from: <https://sites.dundee.ac.uk/energyhubplus/wp-content/uploads/sites/195/2022/07/CAR-2022-Lizabetha-Agbakahi.pdf>
6. Aja, K. [@FinPlanKaluAja1]. (2025, September 29). "If Dangote refinery is indeed shut down, then it's clear it's the voice of Malta and the hand of Malta I understand Nigeria ..." [X post]. X. <https://x.com/FinPlanKaluAja1/status/1972318045013250245>
7. Akinola, A. O. (2019). Rent seeking and industrial growth in Africa: The case of Dangote's cement industry. *The rest: journal of politics and development*, 9(1), 6-17.
8. Akinyoade, A., & Uche, C. (2018). Development built on crony capitalism? The case of Dangote Cement. *Business History*, 60(6), 833-858.
9. Amaza, M. (2019). Discretionary Awards of Oil Blocks in Nigeria: A State Capture Culture Passed Down from the Military Government. *Friedrich Boll Stiftung*.
10. AnonXNG. (2024, August 15). Thread of tweets. X. <https://x.com/AnonXNG/status/1816857417721712741>
11. Argus Media (2025, July 7). *Nigeria's imports of European gasoline hit record low*. Argus Media. <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news-and-insights/latest-market-news/2707535-nigeria-s-imports-of-european-gasoline-hit-record-low>
12. Argus Media. (2026, 10 April). *Nigeria a net gasoline exporter for first time in March*. Available at: <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news-and-insights/latest-market-news/2812637-nigeria-a-net-gasoline-exporter-for-first-time-in-march>
13. Arise News. (2025, August 11). *HURIWA: Tinubu's control of judiciary and legislature driving Nigeria towards dictatorship*. Available at: <https://www.arise.tv/huriwa-tinubus-control-of-judiciary-and-legislature-driving-nigeria-towards-dictatorship/>
14. Asoko Insight. (2023, June 7). *Nigeria cement market*. Retrieved from <https://www.asokoinsight.com/content/market-insights/nigeria-cement-market>

15. Australian Institute of Petroleum. (2017, September 1). *Refining petroleum*. Australian Institute of Petroleum. <https://www.aip.com.au/resources/refining-petroleum>
16. Ayemoba, A. (2016). Trade union congress honours Aliko Dangote with award for job creation in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://africabusinesscommunities.com/news/trade-union-congress-honors-aliko-dangotewith-award-for-job-creation-in-nigeria.html>
17. Bayart, J.-F. (1993). *The state in Africa: The politics of the belly*. London & New York: Longman.
18. Bayart, J.-F. (2000). *Africa in the world: A history of extraversion*. *African Affairs*, 99(395), 217–267. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/723809>
19. BBC News. (2023, May 29). *Bola Tinubu inauguration: Fuel subsidy removed in Nigeria*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-65737846>
20. Behuria, P. (2016). Centralising rents and dispersing power while pursuing development? Exploring the strategic uses of military firms in Rwanda. *Review of African Political Economy*, 43(150), 630-647.
21. Behuria, P., Buur, L., & Gray, H. (2017). *Studying political settlements in Africa*. *African Affairs*, 116(464), 508–525.
22. Billionaires Africa (2025, September 16). Africa’s richest man leads record fuel exports from Dangote refinery. Billionaires.Africa. <https://www.billionaires.africa/2025/09/16/dangote-refinery-africa-richest-man-fuel-exports/>
23. Bloomberg. (2024, May 22). *Nigeria taps Tinubu’s ally to build a \$13 billion highway*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-05-22/nigeria-taps-tinubu-s-ally-to-build-a-13-billion-highway>
24. Bloomberg. (2024b, April 18). *Nigeria’s Dangote oil refinery ramps up production with US crude*. Bloomberg. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-04-18/nigeria-s-dangote-oil-refinery-ramps-up-production-with-us-crude>
25. Bloomberg. (2025, October 25). *Aliko Dangote – Bloomberg Billionaires Index*. Bloomberg. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/billionaires/profiles/aliko-dangote/?embedded-checkout=true>
26. Business Day (2025, August 19). *More European refineries struggle as Dangote ramps up output*. BusinessDay NG. <https://businessday.ng/energy/article/more-european-refineries-struggle-as-dangote-ramps-up-output/>
27. Business Day. (2024, December 30). *Warri refinery starts operations, runs at 60% capacity — Kyari*. <https://businessday.ng/energy/article/warri-refinery-starts-operations-runs-at-60-capacity-kyari/Business-Information/Pages/Industry-History.aspx>

28. Business Day. (2024b, July 23). *Dangote says some NNPC officials, traders have blending plants in Malta*. BusinessDay. <https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/dangote-says-some-nnpc-officials-traders-have-blending-plants-in-malta/>
29. Daily Trust. (2024a, November 8). *Why Nigerian politicians must fear Tinubu – Sule Lamido*. Retrieved from <https://dailytrust.com/why-nigerian-politicians-must-fear-tinubu-sule-lamido/>
30. Daily Trust. (2024b, August 31). *Tinubu owes Buhari nothing, he knows ex-president worked against him – Sule Lamido*. Retrieved from <https://dailytrust.com/tinubu-owes-buhari-nothing-he-knows-former-president-worked-against-him-sule-lamido/>
31. Daily Trust. (2024c, July 20). *Dangote refinery not yet licensed – NMDPRA*. <https://dailytrust.com/dangote-refinery-not-yet-licensed-nmdpra/>
32. Dangote Industries Limited. (2024). *Dangote Cement Acquires 2,000 Trucks for Distribution of Products*. Dangote Industries Ltd. <https://www.dangote.com/dangote-cement-acquires-2000-trucks-for-distribution-of-products/>
33. Dangote Petroleum Refinery. (2025, February 26). *Official statement on the reduction in ex-depot price of PMS by N65*. Dangote Refinery. Available at: [Dangote Petroleum Refinery – Dangote Petroleum Refinery](#)
34. Dangote Sugar Refinery. (2020, July 2). *Dangote Sugar acquires Savannah Sugar*. Retrieved from <https://dangotesugar.azurewebsites.net/2020/07/02/dangote-sugar-acquires-savannah-sugar/>
35. Danielsen, A. L., & Kim, S. (1988). OPEC stability: an empirical assessment. *Energy economics*, 10(3), 174-184.
36. Energy News Africa (2025, August 19). *European refineries face survival test as Dangote disrupts gasoline trade*. Energy News Africa. <https://energynews.africa/2025/08/19/european-refineries-face-survival-test-as-dangote-disrupts-gasoline-trade/?utm>
37. Facebook. (2024, August 22). *Danbello Malta and Tulumbu* [Video]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=search&v=1137562620682762&external_log_id=059160ec-b73c-48a7-aff4-ed0730f45810&q=danbello%20malta%20and%20tulumbu&locale=en_GB
38. Financial Times. (2013, October 10). *Aliko Dangote: Africa's richest man*. Financial Times. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/da3c79c8-3145-11e3-b478-00144feab7de>
39. Forbes. (2023, February 18). *Africa's richest people 2023*. Forbes Africa. <https://www.forbesafrica.com/billionaires/2023/02/18/africas-richest-people-2023/>

40. Forbes. (2026, March 10). *Aliko Dangote*. *Forbes*. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/profile/aliko-dangote/>
41. Gazette Nigeria. (2022, November 08). *U.S. court releases certified true copies of Bola Tinubu's drug dealing, money laundering case in Chicago*. Retrieved from <https://gazettengr.com/u-s-court-releases-certified-true-copies-of-bola-tinubus-drug-dealing-money-laundering-case-in-chicago/>
42. Gboyega, A., Soreide, T., Le, T. M., & Shukla, G. P. (2011). Political economy of the petroleum sector in Nigeria. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, (5779).
43. Hadejia, H. (2023, January). *Actors, likely alliances and winner of Nigeria's 2023 presidential polls*. SOAS ACE Consortium. Retrieved from <https://ace.soas.ac.uk/publication/actors-likely-alliances-and-winner-of-nigerias-2023-presidential-polls/>
44. Hausmann, R., & Klinger, B. (2006). The evolution of comparative advantage: the impact of the structure of the product space. *Center for International Development and Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University*.
45. Hausmann, R., & Klinger, B. (2007). *The structure of the product space and the evolution of comparative advantage* (CID Working Paper No. 146). Center for International Development, Harvard University. <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/cid/files/publications/faculty-working-papers/146.pdf>
46. Hickey, S., & Hossain, N. (2019). *Politics of education in developing countries: from schooling to learning* (p. 256). Oxford University Press.
47. ICIR Nigeria. (2025, August 12). *Tinubu using EFCC as political tool to decimate opposition - Atiku*. *ICIR Nigeria*. Available at: <https://www.icirnigeria.org/tinubu-using-efcc-as-political-tool-to-decimate-opposition-atiku/>
48. Iheukwumere, O. E., Moore, D., & Omotayo, T. (2020). Investigating the challenges of refinery construction in Nigeria: a snapshot across two-timeframes over the past 55 years. *International journal of construction supply chain management*, 10(1), 46-72.
49. Itaman, R., & Wolf, C. (2021). Industrial policy and monopoly capitalism in Nigeria: Lessons from the Dangote Business Conglomerate. *Development and Change*, 52(6), 1473-1502.
50. Itaman, R., Salihu, H., & Wolf, C. (2026). *From scale to stagnation: The impact of industrial conglomerates on Nigeria's industrial ecosystem*. *Competition & Change*. Advance online publication. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/10245294261448936>
51. Katsina Times. (2024, August 12). *Malta allegation: Clear the air, Mr. President*. Katsina Times. <https://katsinatimes.com/news-analysis/details/4232/malta-allegation-clear-the-air-mr-president>

52. Kelsall, T., Schulz, N., Ferguson, W. D., vom Hau, M., Hickey, S., & Levy, B. (2022). *Political Settlements and Development: Theory, Evidence, Implications*. Oxford University Press.
53. Khan, M. H. (2010). *Political settlements and the governance of growth-enhancing institutions* [Research Paper]. SOAS, University of London. Retrieved from https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/9968/1/Political_Settlements_internet.pdf
54. Khan, M. H. (2010). *Political settlements and the governance of growth-enhancing institutions*. SOAS, University of London.
55. Khan, M. H. (2018). Political settlements and the analysis of institutions. *African affairs*, 117(469), 636-655.
56. Kpler (2025, September 24). *Refinery status monthly – September*. Kpler. <https://www.kpler.com/blog/refinery-status-monthly---september?utm=&utm=&utm=&utm>
57. Kpler. (2025a, 12 February). *Dangote: What to Expect in 2025*. Available at: <https://www.kpler.com/blog/dangote-what-to-expect-in-2025>
58. Kpler. (2025b, 24 September). *Refinery status monthly - September*. Available at: <https://www.kpler.com/blog/refinery-status-monthly---september>
59. Kura, S.Y.B. (2011) “Political parties and democracy in Nigeria: Candidate selection, campaign and party financing in Peoples’ Democratic Party”, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Volume 13, No.6.
60. Lall, S. (2004). *Reinventing industrial strategy: The role of government policy in building industrial competitiveness* (G-24 Discussion Paper No. 28). United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/gdsmdpbg2420044_en.pdf
61. Lawal, Y., & Okwe, M. (2007). Dangote, Otedola Dump refineries the business environment. Retrieved from <https://www.thenigeriabusiness.com/energy63.html>
62. Lewis, P. (2009). *Growing apart: Oil, politics, and economic change in Indonesia and Nigeria*. University of Michigan Press.
63. Lewis, P. M. (1994). Economic statism, private capital, and the dilemmas of accumulation in Nigeria. *World Development*, 22(3), 437-451.
64. Mabanft. (2015, December). *Refining process*. Mabanft UK. <https://www.mabanft.co.uk/news/industry-glossary-energy-encyclopaedia/refining-process/>
65. Money Central (2025, July 28). Dangote seeks refined product imports ban as marketers kick. *MoneyCentral*. <https://moneycentral.com.ng/companies/article/dangote-seeks-refined-product-imports-ban-as-marketers-kick/?utm>

66. MoneyCentral. (2025, July 28). *Dangote seeks refined product imports ban as marketers kick*. MoneyCentral. <https://moneycentral.com.ng/companies/article/dangote-seeks-refined-product-imports-ban-as-marketers-kick/>
67. Nairametrics. (2025, March 10). *Nigeria's petrol imports hit record ₦15.42 trillion in 2024 despite refinery operations*. <https://nairametrics.com/2025/03/10/nigerias-petrol-imports-hit-record-n15-42-trillion-in-2024-despite-refinery-operations/>
68. Nairametrics. (2025b, September 9). *NUPENG suspends two-day strike as Dangote group agrees to unionisation deal*. Nairametrics. <https://nairametrics.com/2025/09/09/nupeng-suspends-two-day-strike-as-dangote-group-agrees-to-unionisation-deal/>
69. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2024). *Petroleum products distribution statistics full year 2023*. National Bureau of Statistics.
70. National Bureau of Statistics Q3, Nigeria. (2024, December 6). *Foreign trade in goods statistics: Q3 2024* [PDF]. <https://microdata.nigerianstat.gov.ng/index.php/catalog/84/download/1062>
71. National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria. (2025a). *Foreign trade in goods statistics: Q1 2025* [PDF]. <https://microdata.nigerianstat.gov.ng/index.php/catalog/84/download/1226>
72. National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria. (2025b, March 7). *Foreign trade in goods statistics: Q4 2024* [PDF]. <https://microdata.nigerianstat.gov.ng/index.php/catalog/84/download/1159>
73. National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria. (2025c, December 6). *Foreign trade in goods statistics* [Microdata catalog]. <https://microdata.nigerianstat.gov.ng/index.php/catalog/84>
74. National Bureau of Statistics. (2024). *Petroleum products distribution statistics full year 2023*. National Bureau of Statistics. Available at: <https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241566>
75. National Bureau of Statistics. (2025a). *Foreign trade in goods statistics: Q4 2024 Report*. Available at: <https://share.google/oPH4OVWUAq9jdA69j>
76. National Bureau of Statistics. (2025b). *Foreign Trade Statistics Report Q1 2025* Available at: <https://share.google/dhWCZL1dhZWdYY4Zg>
77. News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). (2024, July 26). *No one is manipulating my administration – Tinubu*. Retrieved from <https://nannews.ng/2024/07/26/no-one-is-manipulating-my-administration-tinubu/>

Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation: <https://nnpcgroup.com/NNPC-Business/>

78. NNPC. (2020, May 1). *History of the Nigerian Petroleum Industry* Retrieved from

79. NUPRC (2025) *2024 annual report* (PDF). Available at: <https://www.nuprc.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UPDATED-NUPRC-2024-ANNUAL-REPORT-1.pdf>
80. NUPRC. (2023). Domestic crude oil supply requirement of operational refineries in Nigeria for first half, 2024. Available at: <https://www.nuprc.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/DOMESTIC-CRUDE-SUPPLY-OBLIGATIONS.pdf>
81. NUPRC. (2023). *Domestic crude supply obligations*. Available: <https://www.nuprc.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/DOMESTIC-CRUDE-SUPPLY-OBLIGATIONS.pdf>
82. Oando PLC. (2024, August 22). *Oando PLC completes \$783 million acquisition of Eni's subsidiary, Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC)*. Oando PLC. <https://www.oandopl.com/press-release/oando-plc-completes-783-million-acquisition-of-enis-subsiary-nigerian-agip-oil-company-naoc>
83. Oblong Media (2024, July 24). *I'm not afraid of anybody: I'll fight them head on and I'll say more as we progress—Aliko Dangote*. Oblong Media. <https://oblongmedia.net/2024/07/24/im-not-afraid-of-anybody-ill-fight-them-head-on-and-ill-say-more-as-we-progress-aliko-dangote/>
84. Ocnus. (2006, September 29). *Looting: EFCC report indicts 15 governors*. Retrieved from https://www.ocnus.net/artman2/publish/Africa_8/Looting_EFCC_Report_Indicts_15_Governors_26047_printer.shtml
85. Odijie, M. (2024). Nigeria's Sugar Master Plan: Ignoring losers from industrial policy can be costly. *Development Policy Review*, 42(2), e12752.
86. Odijie, M. E., & Onofua, A. O. (2020). Political origin and persistence of industrial policy in Africa. *Globalizations*, 17(6), 974-989.
87. Ogbuigwe, A. (2018). Refining in Nigeria: history, challenges and prospects. *Applied Petrochemical Research*, 8, 181-192.
88. Ogbuigwe, A. (2018). *Legal Issues in the Niger Delta Resource Dilemma: A Collection of Essays*. Anpez Centre for Environment and Development.
89. Ohalezim, A., & Ngang, P. N. (n.d.). *Assessing the impact of imported refined crude oil from the EU on Nigeria's economic growth and development*. Regional insight :Regional Studies Association. <https://regions.regionalstudies.org/ezine/article/issue-15-oil-imports-eu-nigeria/#:~:text=Nigeria%20is%20currently%20the%20second,demand%20being%20met%20through%20imports.>
90. Ohimain, E. I. (2014). The success of the backward integration policy in the Nigerian cement sector. *International Journal of Materials Science and Applications*, 3(2), 70-78.

91. Oil Price (2024, August 5). *Nigeria loses \$1,000 per barrel of crude oil it exports*. OilPrice. <https://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Nigeria-Loses-1000-per-Barrel-of-Crude-Oil-It-Exports.html>
92. Onojake MC, Osuji LC, Oforka NC (2012) Preliminary hydrocarbon analysis of crude oils from Umutu/Bomu fields. *Egypt J Pet* 22(2):217–224
93. Oqubay, A. (2025). *Industrial policy and economic development: Theory, strategy, and practice* (Palgrave Studies in African and Development Economics). Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-83829-3>
94. Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). (2024a, November 14). *US blocks records on Nigerian president's alleged drug ties*. Retrieved from <https://www.occrp.org/en/news/us-blocks-records-on-nigerian-presidents-alleged-drug-ties>
95. Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). (2024b, August 20). *Sons of Nigerian president and his tycoon friend owned a company together*. Retrieved from <https://www.occrp.org/en/news/sons-of-nigerian-president-and-his-tycoon-friend-owned-a-company-together>
96. Peoples Gazette. (2020, November 23). *Exclusive: Bank documents expose how Tinubu-linked shell company moved N16.4 billion after Alpha Beta scandal*. Peoples Gazette. Retrieved from <https://gazettengr.com/exclusive-bank-documents-expose-how-tinubu-linked-shell-company-moved-n16-4-billion-after-alpha-beta-scandal/>
97. Peoples Gazette. (2021, February 13). *"How Tinubu's Alpha Beta Consulting has been accused of siphoning billions of naira in Lagos revenue to private accounts since 2002."* [Social Media Post]. X(formerly Twitter). Retrieved from <https://x.com/GazetteNGR/status/1360644476289638406>
98. Peoples Gazette. (2024, December 31). *Bola Tinubu tops list of world's most corrupt organised crime persons of the year in 2024*. Peoples Gazette. Retrieved from <https://gazettengr.com/just-in-bola-tinubu-tops-list-of-worlds-most-corrupt-organised-crime-persons-of-the-year-in-2024/>
99. Peoples Gazette. (2024b, September 16). *Nigeria's oil mafias stronger than drug cartels: Dangote*. Peoples Gazette. <https://gazettengr.com/nigerias-oil-mafias-stronger-than-drug-cartels-dangote/>
100. Plato. (2007). *The Republic* (D. Lee, Trans.; 2nd ed.). Penguin.
101. Premium Times. (2012, November 27). *Tinubu's firm, others get N90b construction contract in Ogun*. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/108798-tinubus-firm-others-get-n90b-construction-contract-in-ogun.html>

102. Premium Times. (2023, May 22). *Our refinery will supply first product to market by July—Dangote*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/business-news/599862-our-refinery-will-supply-first-product-to-market-by-july-dangote.html>
103. Pritchett, L., Sen, K., & Werker, E. (Eds.) (2018). *Deals and development: The political dynamics of growth episodes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
104. Pritchett, L., Sen, K., & Werker, E. (Eds.). (2017). *Deals and development: The political dynamics of growth episodes*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198801641.001.0001>
105. Reinert, E. S. (1995). Competitiveness and its predecessors—a 500-year cross-national perspective. *Structural change and economic dynamics*, 6(1), 23-42.
106. Reinert, E. S. (2003). Compensation mechanisms and targeted economic growth: Lessons from the history of economic policy. In *The Employment Impact of Innovation* (pp. 198-222). Routledge.
107. Reinert, E. S. (2020). *Industrial policy: A long-term perspective and overview of theoretical arguments* (IIPP Working Paper Series, WP 2020-04). UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose. https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10195905/1/Reinert_final_industrial_policy_reinert_16_jun.pdf
108. Reuters. (2012, September 9). *Special report: In Nigeria, a concrete get-rich scheme*. Reuters. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/uk/special-report-in-nigeria-a-concrete-get-rich-scheme-idUSBRE88916U/>
109. Reuters. (2016, June 23). *Africa's richest man got a fistful of dollars in Nigerian currency squeeze*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/business/finance/africas-richest-man-got-a-fistful-of-dollars-in-nigerian-currency-squeeze-idUSKCN0Z90ZO/>
110. Reuters. (2023, May 31). *Nigeria spent \$25 billion to fix refineries, outgoing parliament says*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigeria-spent-25-bln-fix-refineries-outgoing-parliament-2023-05-31/?utm>
111. Reuters. (2024a, August 10). *Dangote Refinery says Nigeria must enforce crude supply for local refiners*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/dangote-refinery-says-nigeria-must-enforce-crude-supply-local-refiners-2024-08-10/?utm>
112. Reuters. (2024b, 12 August). *Nigeria's Dangote Refinery, others seek 597,700 bpd of oil amid tight supply*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/nigerias-dangote-refinery-others-seek-597700-bpd-oil-amid-tight-supply-2024-08-12/>
113. Reuters. (2024c, 30 October). *Dangote says refinery has 500 mln litres of petrol in storage, can meet Nigeria's demand*. Available at:

- <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/dangote-says-refinery-has-500-mln-litres-petrol-storage-can-meet-nigerias-demand-2024-10-30/>
114. Reuters. (2025a, 3 February). *Nigeria to block oil export permits for producers who do not fill refinery quotas*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigeria-block-oil-export-permits-producers-who-do-not-fill-refinery-quotas-2025-02-03/>
 115. Reuters. (2025b, September 28). *Nigeria's oil union orders halt of gas supply to Dangote refinery over mass sackings*. Reuters. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/business/world-at-work/nigerias-oil-union-orders-halt-gas-supply-dangote-refinery-over-mass-sackings-2025-09-27/>
 116. Reuters. (2025c, 1 October). *Nigeria oil union agrees to call off strike after talks with Dangote Petroleum*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/nigeria-oil-union-agrees-call-off-strike-after-talks-with-dangote-petroleum-2025-10-01/>
 117. Reuters. (2026, 15 May). *Dangote files new lawsuit against Nigeria over fuel import licences*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/dangote-files-new-lawsuit-against-nigeria-over-fuel-import-licences-2026-05-15/>
 118. Roy, P. (2017). *Anti-Corruption in Nigeria: A political settlements analysis*. SOAS ACE Working paper No. 002. Available at: <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/24854/1/ACE-WorkingPaper002-Nigeria-AntiCorruption-170822.pdf>
 119. Sahara Reporters. (2013, March 14). *ThisDay: Real ownership of indigenous oil blocks revealed - Segun Adeniyi*. Retrieved from <https://saharareporters.com/2013/03/14/thisday-real-ownership-indigenous-oil-blocks-revealed-segun-adeniyi>
 120. Sahara Reporters. (2013, March 14). *THISDAY: Real ownership of indigenous oil blocks revealed*. Sahara Reporters. Available at: https://saharareporters.com/2013/03/14/thisday-real-ownership-indigenous-oil-blocks-revealed-segun-adeniyi#goog_rewarded
 121. Sahara Reporters. (2022, June 8). *Corruption allegations against Tinubu linger as 70-year-old ex-Lagos governor becomes ruling party's presidential candidate*. Retrieved from <https://saharareporters.com/2022/06/08/corruption-allegations-against-tinubu-linger-70-year-old-ex-lagos-governor-becomes-ruling>
 122. Sahara Reporters. (2024, December 31). *Nigerian President Tinubu ranks third among world's most corrupt leaders – Report*. Sahara Reporters. Retrieved from <https://saharareporters.com/2024/12/31/nigerian-president-tinubu-ranks-third-among-worlds-most-corrupt-leaders-report>

123. Sahara Reporters. (2025, November 7). *EXCLUSIVE: Tinubu government gifts each governor joining APC N250 billion, senator N1 billion, rep member N500 million for defection*. Sahara Reporters. <https://saharareporters.com/2025/11/07/exclusive-tinubu-government-gifts-each-governor-joining-apc-n250billion-senator>
124. Sahara Reporters. (2025, September 22). *Nigerian government fails to supply 45% of crude oil required by local refiners in eight months*. SaharaReporters. Retrieved from <https://saharareporters.com/2025/09/22/nigerian-government-fails-supply-45-crude-oil-required-local-refiners-eight-months>
125. Salihu, H. (2023). *Successes and failures of industrial policies in Nigeria: the cases of the cement, textiles, and iron and steel industries* (Doctoral dissertation, SOAS University of London).
126. Salihu, H. (2025). Accounting for Divergences in Industrial Policy Performance in the Cement and Textile Industries in Nigeria. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 61(7), 1168–1190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2025.2456904>
127. Sanjaya Lall (2000). *The technological structure and performance of developing country manufactured exports, 1985–1998* (QEH Working Paper No. 44). University of Oxford, Queen Elizabeth House. Available at: https://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/pdf_docs/qehwps44.pdf
128. Scooper News. (2024, August 10). *Shocker: Tinubu has 17 oil wells in Niger Delta; he pays himself fuel subsidy, Garus Gololo alleges*. Scooper News. <https://www.scoopernews.com/2024/08/10/shocker-tinubu-has-17-oil-wells-in-niger-delta-he-pays-himself-fuel-subsidy-garus-gololo-alleges-vi/57328776>
129. Shell Nigeria. (n.d.). *Shell in Nigeria: History*. Retrieved December 25, 2024, from <https://www.shell.com.ng/about-us/shell-nigeria-history.html>
130. Sports_Doctor2. (2024, August 15). *Nasan Rijiyar Mai din Tinubu Guda Goma sha Bakwai a Niger Delta*. X. https://x.com/Sports_Doctor2/status/1822186177014726787
131. Steyn, P. (2009). Oil exploration in colonial Nigeria, c. 1903–58. *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 37(2), 249-274.
132. The Cable. (2024, August 10). *Revealed: Tinubu's Economic Council member behind petrol imports from Malta, Russia*. The Cable. <https://www.thecable.ng/revealed-tinubus-economic-council-member-behind-petrol-imports-from-malta-russia>
133. The Cable. (2024b, July 22) “Dangote: Some NNPC personnel, oil traders have blending plant in Malta”. Available at: <https://www.thecable.ng/dangote-some-nnpc-personnel-oil-traders-have-blending-plant-in-malta/?utm>

134. The Forbes. (2025, April 2). *The world's black billionaires 2025*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jabariyoung/2025/04/02/the-worlds-black-billionaires-2025/>
135. The Punch (2018, December 28). *2019: Dangote, Tinubu, Otedola make APC presidential campaign council*. The PUNCH. <https://punchng.com/2019-dangote-tinubu-otedola-make-apc-presidential-campaign-council/>
136. The Punch Nigeria. (2026, May 4). *Protest rocks Federal High Court over deregistration of opposition parties*. Punch Nigeria. Available at: https://punchng.com/just-in-protest-rocks-federal-high-court-over-deregistration-of-opposition-parties/#google_vignette
137. The State House, Abuja. (2024, July 26). *President Tinubu: I have no cabal or sponsors to compensate*. <https://statehouse.gov.ng/news/president-tinubu-i-have-no-cabal-or-sponsors-to-compensate/>
138. ThisDay. (2022, November 4). *Adebanjo to Nigerians: You'll suffer if you vote for Tinubu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/11/04/adebanjo-to-nigerians-youll-suffer-if-you-vote-for-tinubu/>
139. Truth Nigeria. (2024a, August 15). *Tinubu family accused of massive oil refining scam linked to Malta*. Truth Nigeria. <https://truthnigeria.com/2024/08/tinubu-family-accused-of-massive-oil-refining-scam-linked-to-malta/>
140. Truth Nigeria. (2024b, August 22). *Tinubu's appointee behind \$2.8 billion petrol import scam linked to Malta*. Truth Nigeria. <https://truthnigeria.com/2024/08/tinibus-appointee-behind-2-8-billion-petrol-import-scam-linked-to-malta/>
141. U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2023, February 22). *Oil and petroleum products explained: Refining crude oil*. U.S. Energy Information Administration. <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/oil-and-petroleum-products/refining-crude-oil-the-refining-process.php#:~:text=Modern%20separation%20involves%20piping%20crude,may%20have%20vacuum%20distillation%20units.>
142. U.S. Treasury Dept. (2022, December 2). *Fact sheet: Limiting Kremlin revenues and stabilizing global energy supply with a price cap on Russian oil*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. Available at: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1141?utm>
143. U.S. Treasury Dept. (2023, October 12). *Price Cap Coalition advisory for the maritime oil industry and related sectors* (Press Release JY1797). U.S. Department of the Treasury. Available at: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1797?utm>
144. U.S. Treasury Dept. (2024, February 23). *Phase two of the price cap on Russian oil: Two years after Putin's invasion*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. Available at:

<https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/phase-two-of-the-price-cap-on-russian-oil-two-years-after-putins-invasion?utm>

145. Ubochioma, W. (2021). BUA Group vs. Dangote Group debacle: Competition law and limits of price fixing. *The Guardian Nigeria*. <https://guardian.ng/features/law/bua-group-vs-dangote-group-debacle-competition-law-and-limits-of-price-fixing/>
146. Udeze, B. (2009). *Why Africa? A continent in a dilemma of unanswered questions*. Xlibris Corporation.
147. Usman, Z. (2022). *Economic diversification in Nigeria: The politics of building a post-oil economy*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Retrieved from <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/58886>
148. Van de Walle, N. (2003). Presidentialism and clientelism in Africa's emerging party systems. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(2), 297-321.
149. Vanguard News. (2024, June 13). *Foreign mafia tried several times to sabotage \$19 billion refinery - Dangote*. Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/06/foreign-mafia-tried-several-times-to-sabotage-19-billion-refinery-dangote/>
150. Vanguard Nigeria (2015, August 6). *Buhari approves 65 licences for private refineries*. Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/08/buhari-approves-65-licences-for-private-refineries/>
151. Wallis, W. (2013) 'Aliko Dangote: Africa's richest man', *The Financial Times*, October 11, 2013.
152. Wei, S. J. (2001). Domestic crony capitalism and international fickle capital: is there a connection?. *International finance*, 4(1), 15-45.
153. White, L., & Rees, L. (2018). Dangote's expansion: driving African capitalism. *Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies*, 8(2), 1-25.
154. Whitfield, L. 2011. 'Competitive Clientelism, Easy Financing and Weak Capitalist: The Contemporary Political Settlement in Ghana'. DIIS Working Paper 27. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
155. Whitfield, L., O. Therkildsen, L. Buur, and A. Mette Kjaer. 2015. *The Politics of African Industrial Policy: A Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
156. Wikileaks (2005) 'Aliko Dangote and why you should know him', retrieved via: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05LAGOS362_a.html
157. Wokoro, J., & Emeka, N. (2009). Beyond petroleum production to community development: international oil companies as proxy governments. *Tex. J. Oil Gas & Energy L.*, 5, 323.

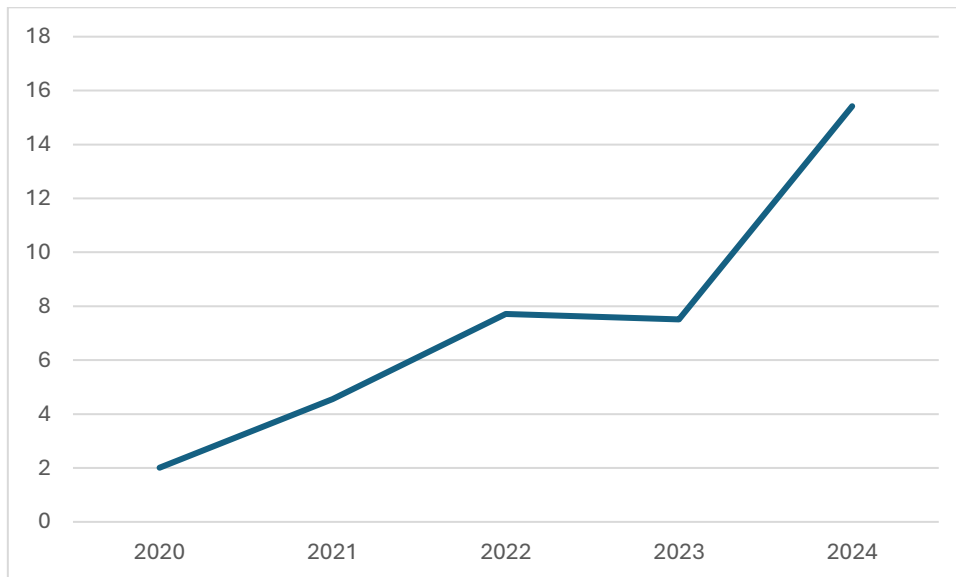
158. World Atlas. (2024). *The world's largest oil reserves by country in 2024*. Retrieved December 29, 2024, from <https://www.worldatlas.com/industries/the-worlds-largest-oil-reserves-by-country.html>
159. World Bank. (2023). *Nigeria overview*. Retrieved [30/12/2024], from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview#:~:text=The%20poverty%20rate%20is%20estimated,largest%20poor%20population%20after%20India.>
160. World Trade Organization. (2024). *Trade policy review: Nigeria* (Report No. WT/TPR/S/462). Retrieved from: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/s462_e.pdf

Interviews:

1. Interview 1, with Senator Shuaibu Gobir, Interviewer: Farin Wata TV. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suPDUNIzXLs>
2. Interview 2, with Alhaji Sule Lamido, former Governor of Jigawa State, Interviewer: The Daily Trust ([Daily Trust](#), 2024a). Available at: https://dailytrust.com/why-nigerian-politicians-must-fear-tinubu-sule-lamido/#google_vignette
3. Interview 3, with Alhaji Sule Lamido, former Governor of Jigawa State, Interviewer: The Daily Trust ([Daily Trust](#) (2024b)). Available at: <https://dailytrust.com/tinubu-owes-buhari-nothing-he-knows-former-president-worked-against-him-sule-lamido/>
4. Interview 4, with Anonymous, politician, Interviewer: Hamisu Salihu (20/04/2025)
5. Interview 5, with Anonymous, politician, Interviewer: Hamisu Salihu (26/02/2025)
6. Interview 6, with Anonymous, Public Affairs Analyst, Interviewer: Hamisu Salihu (07/03/2025)
7. Interview 7, with Anonymous, NGO, Interviewer: Hamisu Salihu (22/04/2025)
8. Interview 8, with Anonymous, Industry Expert, Interviewer: Hamisu Salihu (08/06/2025)
9. Interview 9, with Anonymous, Analyst, Interviewer: Hamisu Salihu (02/06/2025)
10. Interview 10, with Anonymous, politician, Interviewer: Hamisu Salihu (23/01/2025)
11. Interview 11, with Anonymous, politician, Interviewer: Hamisu Salihu (07/06/2025)
12. Interview 12, with Alan Gelder, consultancy Wood Mackenzie's vice-president of refining, chemicals and oil markets, Interviewer: Bloomberg (April 18, 2024). Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-04-18/nigeria-s-dangote-oil-refinery-ramps-up-production-with-us-crude?embedded-checkout=true>

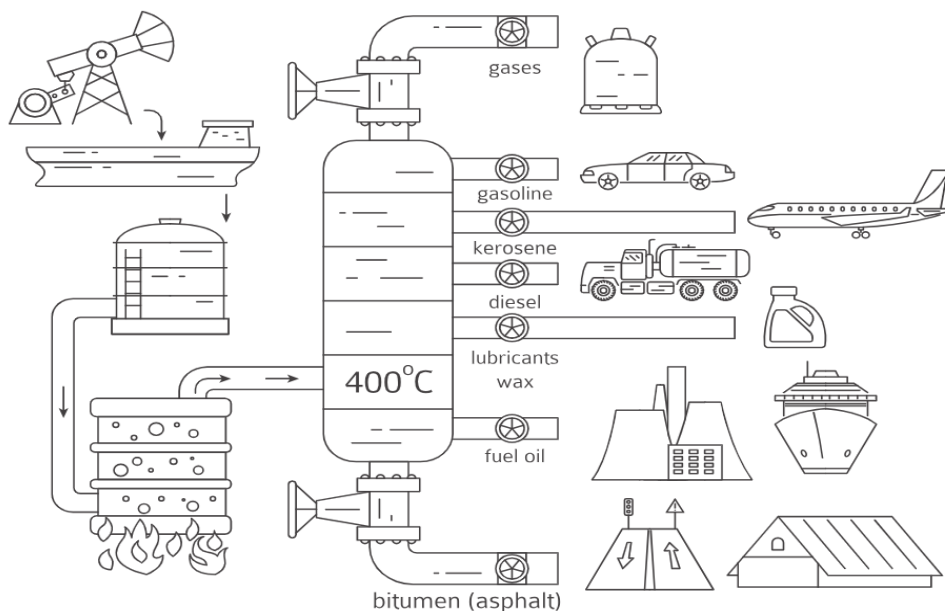
Appendix
Appendix 1

Figure 10: Nigeria's refined petrol imports costs, 2020–2024 (₦ trillion)



Source: Compiled by Author based on data sourced from NBS (2024, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c), Sahara Reporters (2025) and Nairametrics (2025)

Figure 11: The petroleum refining process



Source: [Mabanaft \(2015\)](#)

Appendix 2

Dimension	Cement Manufacturing	Oil Refining
<i>Capital intensity</i>	High fixed and sunk capital requirements for plant and equipment	Very high fixed and sunk capital requirements for large-scale refinery complexes
<i>Industrial capabilities (Lall framework)</i>	Requires basic to intermediate capabilities (operation, maintenance, process control)	Requires basic to intermediate or advanced capabilities (operation, complex process engineering, systems integration)
<i>Energy intensity</i>	Highly energy-intensive, especially in clinker production	Highly energy-intensive, with energy both as input and for internal processing
<i>Economies of scale</i>	Significant economies of scale; efficient production at large plant sizes	Strong economies of scale; efficiency depends on very large processing volumes
<i>Barriers to entry</i>	High barriers due to capital costs, infrastructure, and regulation	Very high barriers due to capital intensity, technological complexity, and regulatory requirements

<i>Infrastructure dependence</i>	Relies on transport networks and stable power supply	Relies on transport, ports, pipelines, and stable energy and utility systems
<i>State involvement</i>	Subject to industrial policy, tariffs, and environmental regulation	Subject to extensive regulation, including pricing regimes, subsidies, and environmental controls
<i>Environmental impact</i>	Significant CO ₂ emissions and environmental footprint	Significant emissions, pollution risks, and environmental hazards
<i>Risk and investment horizon</i>	Long investment horizon with exposure to domestic demand cycles	Long investment horizon with exposure to global price volatility and input shocks
<i>Market structure</i>	Tends toward oligopolistic, regionally concentrated markets	Tends toward oligopolistic structures, often with global integration
<i>Learning and capability accumulation</i>	Incremental learning-by-doing and gradual productivity improvements	Learning-by-doing with steeper capability requirements and more complex upgrading processes
<i>Role in industrialization</i>	Foundational for construction and infrastructure development	Strategic for energy security and industrial linkages