

# Leadership and Developmental Models: The Case of China and Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This study looks at two powerful countries' political leadership and their capacity to formulate ideas that might influence the modernization of their countries. The study shows that to propel their country towards economic progress and prosperity, political leaders must design, formulate, and carry out realistic short- and long-term goals. The study employed content analysis and collected data through homogenous purpose sampling. This investigation selected several criteria for analysis, including political leadership, economic policies, ideological beliefs, and Chinese and Nigerian visions. The framework for understanding this study is based on developmental state theory. It emphasizes the political leader's proactive and strategic intervention in driving a state's economic development and transformation. The paper posits that the trajectory of any civilization is contingent upon the nation's stable and ideological political leadership, which endeavors to alter the economic, political and cultural foundations of society. Therefore, the political leadership of the nation must be at the centre of any effective modernization vision. The path to economic development, according to this work's conclusion, is predicated on stable political leadership, a vision, a purpose, and an objective that may spur both short- and long-term, realistic policy action that satisfies the needs and desires of the populace.*

**Keywords:** Chinese and Nigerian visions, developmental state model, economic development, political leadership, policy-making

## 1. Introduction

This work is located within the precincts of political leadership and the policy framework. Political leaders are critical in society through the authority of the government they wield to assess the distribution of power and resources, build relationships with stakeholders, and make decisions that can significantly impact the well-being of a nation and its people. Donahue (2003) explains political leadership through the evolving definition of public leadership: the term's broad definition refers to "people who accept responsibility for defining and pursuing the public good." In pursuing these objectives, they create ideas or visions. A vision can be seen as a concept or a vision of the people's or nation's aspirations. Its focus perhaps rests on the individual or the personality of the people. The challenges for today's leaders are to find and communicate a better vision of society than the old one and encourage others to share that vision. Vision does not descend from above, but it depicts knowing precisely what you desire and having a clear vision. The vision articulates specific values and principles, and a clear articulation of a process is needed for it to succeed (Guo, 2003). Umoh (1997) posits that visions are the ability to create or invent what does not exist; it is the ability to achieve what we have not become. Vision clarifies purpose, gives direction, empowers us to perform beyond our resources, bonds people together, becomes the constitution of a country, a criterion for decision-making, gives a sense of unity and purpose, and provides great strength in times of uncertainty. The concept of vision is encapsulated in different ways and notions from country to country; we observe the American vision, the Russian economic plans, the Chinese vision, and the Nigerian vision, to mention a few. The fact is that these countries have set specific guidelines and principles based on their values to launch their countries into a state of rapid economic development and progress.

The communist leadership of the country champions the Chinese vision with the aim of the overall development of the nation-state. It makes specific projections of economic prosperity, increasing the country's gross domestic product and fortifying the socialist state. Its vision has been designed based on the ideologies of past and present leaders. Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Xi Jinping's visions have all been fused into one central vision for the Chinese state. On the other hand, Vision 2020 was conceived by Nigeria to guarantee the country embraces and institutionalizes a culture of long-term planning. Its plans focus on ensuring that the government becomes the safest, fastest-growing, and fastest-emerging market. They aimed to use specific, clearly defined parameters to facilitate this objective. Its goal of becoming an emerging market economy hinges on its ability to conquer and use key emerging markets as its benchmarks for further economic growth.

From the above, we can assert that political leadership exists to create visions and guarantee the rights of their citizens to life, safety, and possessions through the proper distribution of state resources. Nigerian and Chinese economies are the largest within their geographical zone, with potential to explode even higher in the future. However, with a burgeoning population, resources become strained and even scarce, plunging the nation into a catastrophic stream of poverty, unemployment and gross underdevelopment (Banwo, 2019).

This study, therefore, attempts to fill the gap in political leadership by showing that leadership exists to facilitate the modernization of their societies. It hinges its arguments on formulating a policy like the Chinese Vision or the Nigerian Vision 2020 that will be the harbinger of transformation and rejuvenation of the nation-state. Hence, it finds a meeting point between leadership virtues, ideologies, visions, policy formulation, implementation, and execution. This study aims to identify leadership strategies among two unique countries and discuss how they have influenced people's lives, created wealth opportunities, and eliminated poverty and unemployment in their polities. Specifically, this work examines the Chinese vision crafted by the Chinese leadership and the Nigerian Vision 2020 designed by the Nigerian government. In pursuing these goals, the study explores the Chinese and Nigerian political leaderships and the Chinese and Nigerian vision towards achieving the modernization of their countries. Following this introduction, the second section discusses the theoretical framework, and the third section discusses the methodology. The fourth section presents the research results, the fifth is the research implication, and the last section concludes the work.

## **2. Theoretical Framework: Developmental State Theory**

The Developmental State Theory is a concept in political economy that emerged from studying post-World War II economic development in East Asia. This theory posits that a proactive and strategically interventionist government can effectively stimulate national economic growth and industrialization. The term "developmental state" was coined to describe countries like Japan and South Korea, where the state assumed a central role in directing economic development through disciplined planning and market-friendly policies (Johnson, 1982). The key characteristics of developmental states share several defining characteristics that differentiate them from other state governance models.

1. Autonomous and Capable Bureaucracy: A skilled, autonomous bureaucracy is crucial for the developmental state, operating without excessive political or private sector influence and crafting and implementing detailed economic policies and interventions (Evans, 1995).
2. Embedded Autonomy: Evans (1995) also introduced the concept of embedded autonomy, where the state maintains a close yet autonomous relationship with the private sector, allowing it to gather crucial information for informed policy-making.

3. Long-term Economic Planning: Developmental states prioritize long-term economic planning, focusing on strategic sectors to enhance national economic status globally, unlike neoliberal states that prioritize short-term gains (Woo-Cumings, 1999).
4. Market Conforming Interventions: The state's role is not to replace the market but to shape and create conditions for industrial and technological advancement through policies like targeted subsidies, technology transfer, and competition management (Amsden, 1989).

The developmental state theory challenges neoclassical economics' belief in minimal state intervention in the economy. It suggests that well-executed state intervention can lead to successful economic outcomes, surpassing laissez-faire approaches under certain conditions. This model has been influential in explaining East Asia's rapid industrialization and serves as a blueprint for other nations aiming for similar transformations (Johnson, 1982; Woo-Cumings, 1999). However, critics have argued that the model requires specific political and institutional contexts and may need to be more easily replicable in different socio-political environments (Haggard, 1990). Additionally, concerns about cronyism, corruption, and suppression of democratic elements have been raised due to the heavy-handed governance style associated with developmental states (Hutchcroft, 1998).

### **3. Methodology**

Data were collected from two primary sources. The Nigerian and Chinese visions, as depicted in its economic blueprint, were downloaded from Nigerian and Chinese databases through the internet. The purposive random sampling method selected relevant information related to the subject matter. Economic policies were downloaded from the internet, specifically on how they facilitate national development, sustainable growth, wealth generation, and national rejuvenation. Hence, the data for this work were considered representative of how they expedited development through economic policies as engraved in the Nigerian and Chinese visions. The data used for this work were analyzed through content analysis, which aims to compare two government policies embedded in their policy frameworks, whose main objective is to develop their respective states.

### **4. Research Results**

This section explores the role of political leadership in the economic development of China and Nigeria, contrasting their approaches and outcomes within the framework of the developmental state theory. We analyze the distinct visions and strategies employed by each nation's leaders, evaluating how these have shaped their respective paths to modernization.

#### **4.1. Chinese and Nigerian Political Leadership**

##### **4.1.1. Chinese Political Leadership**

The leadership of the People's Republic of China (PRC) rests on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which is vested with the power to control the affairs of the state through the constitution and the established laws of the country. Specifically, the Communiqué of the 3rd Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CCP held in December 1978 set the goals of constructing and re-establishing the legal system in China. The Communiqué stated that it is imperative to strengthen the socialist legal system so that democracy is systematized and written into law in such a way as to ensure the stability, continuity, and full authority of this democratic system and these laws; there must be laws for people to follow. These laws must be observed, their enforcement must be strict, and lawbreakers must be dealt with: '有法可依, 有法必依, 执法必严, 违法必究' (The laws must be observed, there must be rules to go by, Law breakers must be prosecuted). The legislative work should have an essential place on the agenda of the

National People's Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee. Procuratorial and judicial organizations must maintain their independence as is appropriate; they must faithfully abide by the laws, rules, and regulations, serve the people's interests, and keep to the facts; they must guarantee the equality of all people before the people's law and deny anyone the privilege of being above the law." Since then, these statements have become the PRC's legal reform guidelines (Brodskaard & Yongnia, 2006).

The CCP is more than the traditional notion of a party; it controls society and social life in every aspect, from top to bottom, through its organizational cells. The influence of the Party in society is immense, and its role is critical. Since the law governs social life, it is inevitably influenced or, more precisely, directed by the Party (Zou, 2006). Formally established in Shanghai on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1921, the CCP began as an underground Marxist-Leninist party organized into smaller groups that operated on "democratic centralism." In theory, the CCP's democratic centralism allows for debate and policy discussion among party members but requires unquestioning policy support once a decision is made. In practice, democratic centralism has created a hierarchical political dynamic where senior Party officials expect disciplined compliance from junior officials. Still, junior officials are allowed to comment on policy proposals before making decisions. The Party's most influential policy and decision-making entity is the Politburo and its Standing Committee, comprised of the Party's two dozen or so most potent senior officials. The rest of the Party's formal structure consists of layers of local, municipal, and provincial party congresses and committees. The most crucial body in this structure of congresses is the National Party Congress, a critical meeting that the Party convenes in Beijing once every five years to set the country's overall policy direction and choose the members of the Party's Political Bureau (Politburo) and other senior Party officials. Lower-party organizations are subordinate to higher-party organizations, but lower-party committees select the members of higher-party congresses. The result is an interactive relationship where senior party officials obtain and retain political power by maintaining the loyalty or support of lower-party organizations. The contemporary CCP is organized into an expansive, hierarchical network of organizations that reach into many aspects of society; their presence exists in universities, schools, think tanks, state-owned enterprises, private corporations, and foreign-owned companies (Dumbaugh & Martin, 2009). Chinese politics is characterized by a fusion of the official ideologies of Marxism, Leninism, Maoism, and Chinese Imperial ideological orthodoxy; it also emphasizes military power. Its structure shows a high degree of correspondence with that of the traditional imperial state, in which power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals without institutional constraints on that power, such that the domination of the Party-State over all of China is immersed and comprehensive. Therefore, it uses the law as a penal tool of the rule to govern the populace and maintain its power (Fu, 1993).

In essence, the CCP was formed based on strict compliance with the rule of law, maintenance of stability and continuity, and serving the people's core interests. They also safeguard the people's lives and ensure that everybody is equal under the law. They are also expected to impact directly the lives of its citizens and enforce the Marxism-Leninism-Maoism ideologies. Furthermore, the urban growth model in China, driven through local-state actions on property, demonstrates the use of the developmental state but highlights problems for the regulator and broader areas of policy objectives to address socioeconomic issues (Cao, 2009; Knight, 2014).

The Chinese government therefore is a system of government that has the full control, authority and power of the political, social and cultural aspects of the society to ensure that people's interests are served, kept and protected.

#### 4.1.2. Nigerian Political Leadership

The leadership of the Federal Republic of Nigeria rests with a democratically elected president, a judiciary, and the legislative arm of government. Before independence, Nigeria had different entities with their own customs, traditions, organizations, and social functioning; however, when Britain took over

government, such practices became no longer profitable. It designed a federalist system of government that was based on ethnicity, and as such, the north was dominated by the Hausa, the east by the Igbo, and the west by the Yoruba. Unobtrusively, the British gave more power and autonomy to the south, while the north was vested with federal power (Chang, 2007). Nevertheless, despite these three major ethnic groups, they all resolved to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation under God, which is dedicated to promoting inter-African solidarity, world peace, international cooperation, and understanding. This oath was solemnly enshrined in the constitution, which is the legally binding document for the country. The constitution was created to promote the good government and welfare of all persons in the country on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice, as well as to consolidate the unity of the people (Ikime, 1985).

Nigeria as a federation, a colonial heritage necessitated by her multi-culturalism, has 36 states, a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), and a 774 local government area structure. It adopted the United States presidential system in 1979, replacing the British parliamentary system of government. It has three tiers of government: legislative, executive, and judiciary, as provided institutionally, working in tandem for the growth and development of the country through the instrumentality of checks and balances and separation of powers. There is a bicameral legislature, the Senate and the Federal House of Representatives (lower house or chamber), commonly referred to as the National Assembly, under the leadership of the Senate President and the Speaker, respectively. While the National Assembly is the legislative arm under the Senate President and Speaker, the executive is under the President, and the judiciary interprets the laws initiated by the executive and made by the legislative arm. This structure is replicated at the state and local government levels. While the governor/chairman (executive), House of Assembly/councilor (speaker/leader) (legislature), and judiciary. With time, the centre becomes overconcentrated with power, while the component units are appendages relying on their share of the “national cake” (Chikendu, 1987). The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a sovereign nation based on the principles of democracy and social justice. Its sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria and its government; its government derives all its power and authority from the constitution. The primary purpose of the government is to provide security and welfare for the people, as well as facilities for and encouragement of free mobility of the people, goods, and services throughout the Federation (Chimakonam & Ogar, 2015).

The Nigerian government, in essence, practices democracy and derives its power from the constitution. The government is expected to ensure unity of the state, freedom, equality, justice, and welfare and provide a thriving environment where people can be safe.

## **4.2. The Chinese and Nigerian Visions**

### **4.2.1. The Chinese Vision**

The Chinese vision provides the impetus for a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nations, which would be powered by socialism with Chinese characteristics, patriotism, prosperity, and a more decisive and assertive China. Every government's core interest is maintaining stability within their societies; with stability, a government can formulate and implement policies that can propel the nations to greater heights. China is no exception (Banwo, 2015). The Chinese vision itself is not a new economic policy for China. It has had economic blueprints in the past, such as the Deng Xiaoping economic reform in the early 1980s. His core thesis is hinged on the premise known as *致富光荣* (to become rich is glorious), which is used to justify the establishment of affluent entrepreneurial households. The Xi Jinping Chinese vision is designed around three steps of development strategy which has its historical origins in the nineteenth century when China encountered the Opium Wars. The first step aims to strategically increase and leapfrog the country's GDP tremendously from 2000 to 2010. The second step was to commence from 2010 to 2020, aiming to achieve a moderately prosperous society for the citizenry. This era was dubbed a period of walking towards the grand vision in which the middle class would have the Chinese vision

fulfilled. The third and final stage of the economic process encapsulated in the Chinese vision is for China to be a rich and powerful socialist nation by 2050. The Chinese vision is linked with China's modernization drive, which, in modern times, scholars have dubbed a new Sino-Renaissance era within the global community. Xi Jinping emphasized the need for a peaceful international environment and a stable international order as factors that will facilitate the success of the Chinese vision. Some economic strategies towards realizing the Chinese vision include the establishment of the New Silk Roads, a.k.a. the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to create an overall development for China and nations worldwide. The BRI serves as a geopolitical and geoeconomics game-changer, a foreign policy concept, and a driver towards China's modernization and development up to 2050 (Bakken, 2018).

The Chinese vision is rooted in the firm belief that politics drives the country's economic development. This concept has been promoted as a national goal, which has been reiterated and emphasized by different regimes of the state. The concepts of communist society, substantive democracy, modernization or harmonization, and commitment to the long term are consistent with Chinese political philosophy. Thus, scholars have opined that it is embedded in the following:

Firstly, the international dimension aims to reshape the global balance of power and advance a counterweight to the international liberal order. In doing so, the government promoted the New Development Bank (BRICS Bank) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB); these institutions are both elements of this strategy. The political dimension, which advocates that China's modernization process must be attainable through the power of the Chinese communist leadership, emphasizes the infusion of its historical and modern policies together. Hu Jintao, the former Chinese premier, called for a strategy which pushes for a moderately prosperous nation. Xi Jinping advocated the "Four Comprehensives," which bridge previous historical ideologies. Likewise, Mao Zedong thought, the Deng Xiaoping theory, the three representations of Jiang Zemin, and the scientific outlook on development promoted by Hu Jintao all promoted the same ideologies.

Secondly, there is the economic dimension, which is built on long-term goals that aim at maintaining an initial average growth rate of 6.5 percent and then pushing towards a higher GDP rate. Likewise, restructuring the economy was driven by low-quality exports and public investments in an economy with a more vital role for services, domestic consumption, and high-quality goals. Furthermore, it provides job opportunities by redesigning its industrial structure, promoting new sectors, and closing up non-productive industries.

Thirdly, there is the ideological dimension, which aims to revive Chinese culture and traditions from Confucianism. This emphasizes harmony, a better society for peace, and the importance of family ties. The ideological implications of humanity are human obligation, rational thinking and taking actions, flexible ways to change with changes, and prudent consideration in dealing with challenges and risks (Goldstein, 2016).

The Chinese vision has a central thought: political leadership drives economic development, which is perhaps why its vision is founded on all the economic blueprints of the great communist leaders of China. Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao's economic ideologies have been merged together. It also believes that culture and economic development are closely linked. While it is imperative to develop, society must not forget its culture and traditions. Its economic vision of a prosperous society has been championed globally through certain institutions the state has created.

#### 4.2.2. The Nigerian Vision

The Nigerian vision represents the government policy and blueprint discussed in the NV20:2020 document. This blueprint aims to improve the standard of living of its people, revive its economy, and

transform the nation into a prosperous entity. What, then, makes NV20:2020 unique or different from other economic policies? The simple fact is that this economic plan is a vision and an economic blueprint whose basic tenets are all embedded in other strategies that preceding administrations had instituted previously. This plan offers a holistic approach to transforming the Nigerian polity through a social, economic, institutional, and environmental dimension. It aims strategically to improve the citizenry's living standards while recognizing the nation's enormous resource endowment. The economy is a crucial sector that plays a dynamic role in actualizing this vision; hence, the policy planners intend to strengthen the domestic industry while making the country less oil-dependent. The National Planning Commission described this vision as a policy document to optimize the critical sources of economic growth. To achieve the vision of the economic policy, it aimed at stimulating primary production, increasing production of processed and manufactured goods for export, stimulating domestic and foreign trade in value-added goods and services, and strengthening the linkages among the key sectors of the economy (Thomas & Brycz, 2014).

Nigeria's vision is to revitalize its economy by boosting its primary production by developing the natural mineral industry to increase output and efficiency. It also aims to improve agriculture by producing more raw materials such as citrus and palm oil and expanding irrigated areas to 25% in 2020. The oil and gas industry will also be advanced to stimulate local value added. By 2020, it is hoped that steel production will be 12.2 million tonnes. A major thrust of its economic plan is also to boost its production for export. To achieve this, the government has set some guidelines and will import technology, increase industrial parks, exports of non-oil goods, processed goods for exports and the research and development sector. In order to stimulate domestic and foreign trade, the government aims to increase the trade of domestic and foreign non-oil production and increase trade through South-South integration with BRIC. Likewise, the government aims to bolster the production of small and medium sized firms through credit access and regional specialization of the industry (Asaju & Akume, 2012). The Nigerian Vision 2020 can be summarized into four dimensions, they are:

- Firstly, the social dimension stipulates that Nigeria should be a just, peaceful, equitable, and harmonious society where its citizens can be supported with a healthcare and educational system for all that sustains a life expectancy of nothing less than 70 years.
- Secondly, the economic dimension specifies that Nigeria should become a viable, resilient and diversified global economy with an internationally competitive manufacturing sector that is lightly integrated and contributes only 25% to the GDP.
- Thirdly, the institutional dimension hypothesizes that Nigeria should be a stable and functional democratic society where the rights of the citizens are guaranteed to choose their leaders with a market-friendly institution through the provision of the basic infrastructures to provide a globally competitive business environment.
- Fourthly, the environmental dimension conjectures that Nigeria should have a high level of environmental consciousness that enables and supports sustainable management of its resources and natural endowments to ensure equitable representation for the benefit of its citizenry in the present and the future (Bature, 2013).

The overall theme of the vision is to unleash economic prosperity and wealth creation while bridging the infrastructural gap in the country. Likewise, it intends to optimize the sources of economic growth to increase productivity and competitiveness. Furthermore, it aims to build a productive, competitive, functional human resource base for economic growth and social advancement. Additionally, the vision states the need to improve governance, security, law and order, engendering more efficient and effective use of resources and promoting social harmony and a conducive business environment for the emergent

economy. Lastly, it intends to develop a knowledge-based economy within the polity (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).

The Nigerian vision was a vision and prototype designed by the government to ensure prosperity for all while ensuring that the nation's natural resources were used competitively by reviving the ailing manufacturing industry. The government also focused on making Nigeria an internationally competitive market that would encourage foreign investment and entrepreneurs into its dwindling business terrain.

#### **4.3. Developmental State in China and Nigeria**

Regarding creating and managing a developmental state by political leaders, China's model shares many similarities with the broader East Asian approach. However, it has unique characteristics tailored to its specific needs and conditions (Baek, 2005). It has underpinned the model with state-control finance and government support for state-owned enterprises, which will heavily rely on exports and domestic savings. It is a hybrid between the dynamism of the private sector and the vital role of the government, urging an able state to regulate and foster economic development. Guided by centralized political control and economic management, it takes care of severe principal-agent problems, allowing for fiscal decentralization (Bolesta, 2007).

China's practice of the Developmental State model has been instrumental in achieving the "Chinese Vision," which encompasses economic modernization, global competitiveness, and improved living standards for its citizens. The model's emphasis on state-led solid development, strategic industrial policy, and centralized planning has facilitated this vision in several significant ways, which include the following:

- **Economic Modernization and Growth:** Throughout 2018, China's real annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 9.5%, making it one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. The World Bank called this rate of growth "the greatest sustained increase by a significant economy in recorded history. Owing to this prosperity, China has been able to quadruple its GDP every 8 years and contributed to the estimated 800 million individuals who were lifted out of poverty (Morrison, 2019). China's rapid economic growth, driven by its Developmental State policies, has been foundational in transforming its economy from primarily agrarian to a leading global industrial power. According to Naughton (2007), the government's focus on heavy investment in infrastructure and prioritization of key sectors like manufacturing and technology has spurred this modernization. Key sectors where China's Developmental State model has led to significant economic growth and modernization include manufacturing and technology, with heavy investment in financial capital, policy incentives, and special economic zones. China also prioritizes innovation, R&D, and financial sector reform.
- **Industrial Upgrading and Technological Innovation:** China's high-tech sector has grown dramatically. From 1995 to 2008, China's high-tech product exports increased by 33% yearly, from \$10 billion to \$416 billion in US dollars in value. High-tech exports have increased far faster than overall exports, currently accounting for around 29% of total exports (Wang *et al.*, 2020). The state's active role in promoting research and development and its support for high-tech industries has propelled China into a leading position in various technological domains. This strategy aligns with the Chinese Vision of becoming an innovation-oriented society. According to Brandt and Rawski (2008), the Chinese state policies have brought development into the electronics, green energy, and biotechnology sectors.
- **Social and Economic Equity:** China has accomplished amazing things in the last several decades in terms of social and economic changes. Reform efforts to eliminate sociopolitical and economic

solutions that offer financial empowerment and opportunities to end poverty in the nation have escalated, particularly since the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006–2010) (Zhou & Zhu, 2019). One of the pillars of the Chinese Vision is social harmony and equity, which the Developmental State model has addressed through programs aimed at reducing poverty and improving access to services. Ravallion and Chen (2007) document how economic growth under this model has significantly reduced poverty rates, enhancing social stability and equity. The scholars reveal that economic growth and job creation, rural development and agricultural reforms, social safety nets and subsidies, urbanization and infrastructure development, and education and skill development are all offshoots of the Chinese practice of the Developmental State model.

- Global economic integration and influence: China's developmental state strategy has also focused on integrating the country more deeply into the global economy. Kennedy (2010) highlights how China has used state strategies to protect its industries and expand its influence in global trade, aligning with its vision of being a significant global player. China's global strategy includes export-led growth, foreign direct investment policies, participation in international institutions, development of global brands, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and currency internationalization. China capitalizes on its rapid economic growth by establishing special economic zones for foreign enterprises. China also supports domestic firms by promoting technology transfer and local capabilities. These strategies aim to enhance China's economic sovereignty and reduce its dependency on the US dollar.

Sustainability and long-term planning: the Five-Year Plans, a series of social and economic development initiatives, illustrate China's commitment to sustainable development. These plans reflect the developmental state's emphasis on long-term goals and sustainability, which is crucial for realizing the broader Chinese vision of a harmonious society. The plans focus on economic restructuring, environmental policies, social welfare, innovation, urban planning, and global integration. They aim to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability and social welfare, reducing environmental impacts and increasing economic resilience. The plans also emphasize renewable energy use, healthcare, education, and housing, promoting global integration and cooperation (Wang *et al.*, 2020; Wong, 2012). These comprehensive plans align with the Developmental State model, ensuring economic advancement does not lead to environmental degradation or social instability.

Developmental state models have been less common in Africa, including Nigeria, though many initiatives aim to emulate aspects of the East Asian model. Political instability, corruption, and lesser bureaucratic autonomy have often hindered similar success. However, efforts in countries like Ethiopia and Rwanda show potential. With its strategic visions like Vision 2020 and more recent plans, Nigeria aims to harness solid political leadership to drive development, although outcomes have been mixed due to the issues mentioned. Therefore, the potential practice of the Developmental State model in Nigeria, particularly in line with its Vision 2020, presents a complex scenario. The vision encompassed improvements in socio-economic development, infrastructure, and a stable democracy. Implementing a Developmental State model in Nigeria to achieve these goals involves several challenges and opportunities.

## 1. Economic Diversification and Industrial Policy

One of the primary facets of the Developmental State model is the strategic creation of robust industrial policies that focus on economic diversification. Nigeria's economy has been heavily reliant on oil, which makes it susceptible to global oil price fluctuations. Efforts to diversify the economy have been articulated in various national plans, including Vision 2020.

- i. Opportunity: Diversification into agriculture, manufacturing, and services can create jobs and reduce economic volatility.

ii. Challenge: Implementation has been inconsistent due to fluctuating commitment from successive governments and challenges such as corruption and inadequate infrastructure.

## 2. Infrastructure Development

Significant investment in infrastructure is crucial for a developmental state. Nigeria's infrastructure in terms of power, roads, and communication needs substantial improvement to support economic growth.

i. Opportunity: Nigeria could leverage its large population and regional position to develop a robust internal and regional market.

ii. Challenge: Financing such infrastructure projects is a significant hurdle, compounded by issues of project mismanagement and corruption.

## 3. Institutional Capacity and Governance

A successful developmental state requires a capable, efficient, and autonomous bureaucracy. Governance in Nigeria has been hindered by inefficiencies and corruption, which undermine the effectiveness of public institutions.

i. Opportunity: Reforming public institutions to make them more autonomous and accountable could help in the effective implementation of policies.

ii. Challenge: Political will and public trust are needed to drive such reforms, which have historically been lacking.

## 4. Human Capital Development

Investing in education and healthcare is crucial for developing the human capital necessary for economic development.

i. Opportunity: Nigeria's young population could be a significant asset if well-educated and healthy.

ii. Challenge: Currently, public education and healthcare systems are underfunded and poorly managed.

## 5. Political Stability and Economic Management

The developmental state model requires a stable political environment and sound economic management, areas where Nigeria has faced significant challenges.

i. Opportunity: Establishing political stability could attract more foreign investment and encourage local entrepreneurs.

ii. Challenge: Nigeria's political landscape has been characterized by instability, which affects long-term economic planning and implementation.

While the Developmental State model provides a promising framework for achieving the goals outlined in Nigeria, its implementation may face considerable challenges. Institutional reforms, improved governance, and sustained economic policies are crucial for this model to be successfully adapted to Nigeria's context.

## 5. Research Implications

The political systems of China and Nigeria differ significantly; while China practices communism, Nigeria practices democracy. Nevertheless, they exist to provide for the welfare of the people and champion ideologies or visions that can impact the general society at large. According to the theory of the Developmental State, effective governance involves the state actively formulating and implementing policies and visions that drive national development. Every great leader has conjured a vision for his state; nations craft and implement visions successfully. Every country has successfully witnessed some form of modernization with the thoughts, ideas, and philosophical connotations being designed.

Likewise, China's and Nigeria's political leadership differ significantly in their contexts; however, they both champion their modern states' modernization, progression, and development. Chinese political vision aims to make China a prosperous country practicing socialist democratic system with Chinese characteristics that meet the country's historical and national needs (Shi & Chen, 2020; Das, 2016; Ning, 2008). The vision also hinges its premises on directly assisting people to fulfill their dreams. It firmly believes that politics and economics are interwoven and that the country's political leadership drives the economy (Ferdinand, 2016; Qing-feng, 2009). While it has long-term goals of economic growth, it also aims to revive ancient Chinese culture and traditions among the people while fostering ideologies that promote harmony, obligations, and rational thoughts (Li-jie & Yushan, 2015).

On the other hand, the Nigerian economic plan aims to transform all areas of the economy; it offers an economic, institutional, and environmental approach to its solution to Nigeria's underdevelopment. It also aims to directly impact the lives of its citizens by improving the state of security and the use of the enormous and vast resources of the nation-state. The plan has also mentioned the need to engage in international collaborations and alliances to boost its development; emphasis on foreign trade, research, technology, and industrial centers are some of the specificities.

While China has developed sporadically due to its consistency of ideas and visions, Nigeria's vision of economic development over the years has been riddled with poor policy planning, which affects its execution (Agbazuere, 2020). Nigeria's vision also has not been consistent with previous administrations, and the instability of the polity affects economic planning and development. Adeyemi (2001) opined that the preponderance of policy lapses compounded by the high incidence of poorly implemented projects in the public sector investment program led to the failure of earlier economic plans.

Furthermore, the developmental state theory discusses the essence of initiatives and why they work in our societies. The Chinese and the Nigerian governments have initiated creative policies that would engineer their respective countries on the development path. These initiatives have to be realistic and attainable. Obadan (2003) observes that policymakers with overly ambitious plans that seek to achieve too many objectives with unrealistic targets coupled with conflicts in objectives, as seen in some poor economic planning end up achieving nothing.

The Chinese vision also emphasizes promoting its culture and traditions (Zhai, 2018), while the Nigerian government has not done that in its plan. The essence of a national culture cannot be overemphasized because it gives the people a sense of identity and belonging (Kirloskar-Steinbach, 2010). Nwankwo (1986) states that the absence of a national culture can influence Nigeria's genuine formulation of an economic plan, and attitudes toward productivity, social values, and priorities embedded in the national culture impact work ethics and economic discipline, which control sustained and stable economic growth.

Also, following the developmental state model, the Chinese leadership vision has hinged development on certain traits: solid political leadership, consistent ideologies and development plans, and long-term agendas and initiatives (Fan, 2006; Gu *et al.*, 2009). It has also crafted developmental policies around

China's engagement with the rest of the world. It firmly believes that its modernization and progression are linked with the events of the world. While according to Bello & Neba (2023), Nigeria has made strides in engaging with the global economy, but its development policies have often been influenced by short-term political agendas rather than a coherent, long-term vision. Unlike China's integrated approach, Nigeria's development efforts are often fragmented, leading to slower progress in achieving sustained economic growth and modernization.

## 6. Conclusion

Governments serve the interests and welfare of the people and create realistic plans for their nation-states. The Chinese government emphasizes the importance of political leadership in economic planning and development, while the Nigerian government must champion its policies and not rely solely on market forces. Both societies focus on their markets, with the Chinese vision concentrating on emerging markets and engaging citizens in the age of globalization.

The Nigerian vision aims to revitalize the agricultural economy, refocus the economy away from oil dependency, and create more industrial and manufacturing parks. The government emphasizes regional integration and economic globalization through strategic alliances. The Chinese vision emphasizes local consumption as a driver of economic growth while defining the government's role in the market, including market price control and credit lowering.

Economic planning and development require a stable political institution, environmental considerations, and the preservation of traditional cultures and traditions. Stability ensures the nation's prosperity and the development of consistent ideas that create wealth and economic prosperity. Governments must also respect the environment and preserve traditional cultures and traditions to maintain their values and philosophies.

The Developmental State model underlines the role of the government in steering economic activities through informed, strategic interventions rather than leaving the market forces entirely to their own devices. This model supports the argument that Chinese and Nigerian political leaders must have it as their vision to actively guide economic development while integrating traditional values and environmental considerations to prevent cultural erosion and environmental degradation.

This description in this work is limited by the broad scope of political and economic variables across two vastly different countries. Future research could focus on comparative case studies that detail the implementation of the Developmental State model in similarly diverse contexts, assessing the effectiveness of specific governmental interventions in promoting sustainable development.

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