





China's Modernization Approach: A Genuine Break from the Past or a Repackaging of familiar Developmental Discourse for African States?

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Abstract

Many new states in the developing world after their independence adopted the western modernization approach which focuses on liberal democracy and capitalism as a panacea to their problem of low industrial productivity and underdevelopment. However, several decades after, the western modernization approach has not been able to bring about much development to the poor countries of the global south. Against this background, this article with the use of in-depth interviews and secondary materials examines the credibility of the Chinese modernization approach as a viable alternative to development in developing countries. Specifically, it examines the basis of the Chinese modernization approach and also investigates the extent to which the approach is a credible alternative to the western modernization approach. It also examines the significant differences in the Chinese and western modernization model. The findings of the study reveal that the Chinese developmental model offers a lot of significant innovations to African states which makes it to be a credible alternative developmental model to the western modernization model. This is because it demonstrates the importance of state led developmental approach for a developing country in need of development. In spite of this significance, the Chinese model is not a fit for all system, hence it recommends that African states learn from the Chinese experience and evolve a system that fits their needs based on lessons learnt from the model.

Introduction

Development theories or models are multi variate in nature because of the plethora of paradigms about the path way to development for a developing nation. Some of the most important paradigms within development studies include modernization theory, dependency theory, neoclassical theory, structuralism among several others. These theories provided hypothetical explanations about the causes of underdevelopment and the prescribed options or path way for development for states in dire need of development. However, Development studies from the late 1950s and early 1960s witness the dominance

of the western modernization approach as the pathway to development for the countries in the global south. The approach is described as a theory that uses a systematic process to move underdeveloped or developing countries to a more sophisticated level of development (Reyes, 2001). It is basically an American and Euro-centric normative model of development while its focus is on cultural change directed at institutional structures in non—industrialized countries (Bubaker, 2015). Basically, the theory explains disparity in developmental status of states by pinpointing different values, systems and ideas believed in by states (Martinussen, 1997).

The success of this model in the global north has been attributed to the adoption of this approach which is based on democracy, capitalism and largely industrialization. As a consequence of this, many new states in the developing world switched to the practice of liberal democracy and capitalism as a panacea to their problem of low industrial productivity and acute state of under-development. However, several decades after, the western modernization approach has not been able to bring about much development to the poor countries of the global south. Even post industrial models such as the neo liberal paradigm has offered little hope for development in the global south. Developing countries in the global south continue to demonstrate several negative indices of under development why living standards continue to deteriorate. Against this background, this article with the use of in-depth interviews and secondary materials examines the credibility of the Chinese modernization approach as a viable alternative to development in developing states of Africa. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to: (a) assess the basis of the Chinese modernization approach and also investigates the extent to which the approach is a credible alternative to the western modernization approach; (b) examine the significant differences in the Chinese and western modernization model. These objectives of the study are significant because of their potential to provide an insight into the Chinese modernization approach as an alternative developmental strategy for developing states.

Methodology

This study is qualitative and it generates data from both primary and secondary sources. For the primary data, in-depth interview method was adopted and it was conducted with 25 respondents that are purposively selected for the study. The interviewees include 5 respondents selected from Chinese embassy in Nigeria, 5

respondents from Nigeria Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The respondents were selected because of their role as policy makers and advisors on these issues. It also include 15 respondents from three Nigerian Universities who have done an extensive research work in this area. The data for the study will also be generated from secondary materials such as books, articles and online publications. Data generated for the study were analyzed through the use of thematic content analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of Structuralism is adopted as the appropriate framework for this study. Structuralism is a development theory that focused on structural aspects that stagnate economic growth of developing countries. Basically, it has to do with the transformation of a country's economy from the reliance on an agrarian system to a more industrialize system. The basis of the theory is that economic growth in developing states requires state intervention to sustain the operation of the market system. The origin of the theory can be traced to the 1950s and 1960s in Latin America which explains about the necessity of state intervention in the region's quest for economic growth and development. The theory is mostly associated with Latin American scholars. According to the proponents of the theory, there is a need for major structural changes in governance and economy of less developed countries which are to be spearheaded by the government. The logic of this model is that new industries initially do not possess the economies of scale that is required to compete with their competitors from developed economies. As a result, they need to be protected until they are able to gather strength to compete in the global capitalist market. The theory developed as a response to the inability of modernization theory and liberal approach to solve Latin America's endemic problem of vulnerability to external forces, poverty and social exclusion (Kay, 1998).

This model challenges the hypothetical prepositions of the modernization and liberal theory that markets is a self regulating system that returns to stable equilibrium position rather than as a substantive expression of national or international power status of the contracting parties (Di Fillippo, 2009). The implication of this is that the state in the developing countries have important role to play in the market in other to achieve sustainable economic growth. This theory is relevant to the study because of its appropriateness in explaining the subject matter of the study. Specifically, it helps to understand the importance of the role played by the Chinese government in enabling relative political stability which is pivotal for its economic growth and development. Furthermore, it also helps to understand the factors responsible for the Chinese modernization approach with the capability to make predictions about its probability of becoming a credible alternative to the western modernization approach.

Chinese Modernization Approach: Basis and Principles

The concept of modernity in the western context is a byproduct of historical and cultural forces that resulted in the era of enlightenment, forces of European histories and culture that is different from that of China (Golden, 2006). This European modernity was introduced into China's history through the forces of European imperialism (Ibid). However, it will be a herculean task to understand Chinese approach to modernization without comprehending this part of history. This is because; China's dissatisfaction with the western imposed modernization model is percussion to its invention of a home grown model which is refers to as the Chinese modernization. The Chinese model of modernization is a combination of free market system with an authoritarian form of governance. According to Zhao (2010), china's modernization approach

is based on two factors. The first is that China basically adopted some elements of liberal economic policy by giving greater access to foreign direct investments as well as domestic investments. The resulting effect is that the system enhances labour flexibility, low tax and regulatory burden as well as the creation of an outstanding infrastructure that supports credible investment. This was through the integration of private sector and state spending. The second component of the model is the enabling of the ruling party to sustain its firm grip on government, army, internal security apparatus, courts and free flow of information (Callick, 2007). As a consequence, China has established a positive linkage between political stability and economic growth as well as a relatively perfect balance between a capitalist system and an authoritarian system in its effort to sustain its modernization efforts with its persistent economic growth (Zhao, 2010). As argued by Jiang (2023), China's modernization strategy is anchored on the imperial mode, whose path dependence is the foundational operational mechanism of the Chinese society. This means that China did not abandon its imperial systems in its quest for modernization. Furthermore, Dari and Oyuna (2014) noted that the Chinese modernization approach is characterized by a complex, dynamic and non uniform process. This is similar to the unstructured multi-linear model that characterized the developmental strategy adopted by the Soviet Union in its socialist national economy in its early stage. They identified three stages of Chinese process of modernization which include: Early, Revolutionary and Reformation stages. Each of these stages according to these scholars has its own goals, challenges and constraints. At the first stage, the desire is to win over national independence. This is due to the fact that China had been colonized by British imperialists while the western way of life has also been imposed throughout the period of imperialism.

This stage is essential because of the centrality of culture to modernity. This implies that modernization requires embracing and fortifying a country's culture. Hence the desire for political independence will enable the Chinese authority to be in control of their destiny. The major challenge of this stage is about to how bring an end to the influence of the erstwhile imperialists and sustain their independence. At the second stage, which occurs after independence, the main goal under this stage is to seek innovations about new political systems, achieve national economic recovery as well as mass projects on industrialization. The goal of this stage is to essentially transform the Chinese society through modernization of its political, social and economic systems. The third stage of the Chinese modernization process is characterized by a concern for realistic developmental concept by giving consideration to national peculiarities such as revival of national spirit of the Chinese people. This process of modernization embarked upon by the Chinese authorities has revolutionized the Chinese traditional societies in three different ways. The first is that the traditional society which was conservative in nature was replaced by a new desire for futuristic goals with the determination to achieve them. This means that the Chinese society has become more open to the progressiveness in the international system which is made possible by globalization. Specifically it made closeness to be replaced with openness by its allowance of foreign direct investments and foreigners into the Chinese society. The second is about the greater emphasis on collectivity which resulted in the assimilation and synchronization of various interests in the society. The third is that modern science has instigated the spirit of analytics and criticism in the Chinese society. The Chinese modernization process is characterized by four major principles that were initiated by Den Xiaoping in 1979 during the initial phase of the reform

while debates were not allowed on these principles within the people's republic of China (Shambaug, 2000). These cardinal principles as enunciated by him include:

- The principle of upholding the communist path
- The principle of upholding the people's democratic dictatorship
- The principle of upholding the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)
- The principle of upholding Mao Zedong Thought and Marxism-Leninism

Upholding the Communist Path

Theoretically, communism as a political and economic ideology is an egalitarian and peaceful principle that advocated for a society whereby people attain the highest social, political and economic progress (Salaam and Usman, 2015). The system is characterized by absence of antagonism and class differences while private property ownership is abolished. This ideal political and economic creed that is attributed mainly to Karl Marx serves as the major principle of Chinese modernization in a revised form. As a cardinal principle of the Chinese modernization approach, it emphasizes on collectivism in the exercise of political power as well as the management of economic resources. This implies that government and the market are directed towards ensuring the good of all which is a basic principle of communism as a political and economic ideology. This makes China to have the most State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the world than any other state (Pieke and Hoffman, 2022). This is in contrast to individualism under the western modernization approach where political and economic power is exercised by a privileged few. Hence, the communist path is hold sacrosanct in the Chinese modernization approach while the system does not allow any criticism of the system.

Upholding the people's democratic dictatorship

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a cardinal principle of Marxism which emphasizes the importance of the vesting political power in the people for the sake of political stability. This principle is a derivative from the first one which emphasizes on political and economic collectivism. Specifically, political power under the principle as practiced in China is vested in the people and they are seen as the supreme authority in the Chinese state. This is against the exercise of political power by a privilege few under the western modernization system.

The principle of upholding the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

One party system is an integral feature of socialist democracy which symbolizes a symbol of political stability which is needed for sustainable economic growth. The logic behind this is that political pluralism under multi party system usually brings about political instability. Hence, an entrenchment of one party system has the potential to bring about high level of unity and the much needed political stability in the system. It is on the basis that this principle guarantees that upholding of the Chinese Communist Party as the dominant political party in China.

The principle of upholding Mao Zedong Thought and Marxism–Leninism

Marxist Leninism is a political ideology that is describe as the largest faction of the global communist movement after the after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917-1923 and it was a dominant political and economic ideology among socialist countries in the 20th century (Lansford, 2007). The ideology believes in a two stage process of communist revolution is required to replace capitalism. Hence, it further expatiates that the state should control the, means of production in other to pave way for an eventual communist society that will be classless and stateless (Cooke,

1998 and Morgan, 2015). While China continues to uphold the collectivist principle promoted by this ideology, it has indeed favour a market economy under the vanguard of the Chinese Communist party which is responsible for the management of the country's economy. The Chinese modernization strategy since the holding of power by the Communist Party of China has made distribution and management of public resources for the achievement of the common prosperity of all ethnic group and regions in the country (Ren and Shen, 2023). This collectivist approach to economic management differentiates China significantly from the western modernization model that focus on profit motive of the minority group. It has also help to consolidate the power of the CCP as decision making system is also based on consultation with stakeholders that represent relatively all interests. In this regard, China can thus be described as a modern socialist state that has successfully integrated itself into the global economy. For instance, before 1978, China had a closed economy with a government tight fist on the control of its economy. These four principles are indications of the fact that in theory, China is a communist state that subscribe to the tenets of communism in a revised way and this has enabled it to preserve its ideological stability and legitimacy of the CCP as response to the global democratic movement. Subsequently, the principles are given further legitimacy by their inculcation into the constitution of the People's Republic of China in 1982(Song, 2015).

Results and Discussion

Chinese Modernization: A Credible Alternative or an extension of the Old Rhetoric

Most observers and scholars on Chinese modernization approach are optimistic about the credibility of the model as a substantive alternative to development that can be emulated by developing countries. However, this section examines the credibility of the claim that the Chinese

modernization is indeed significant and can serve as a good alternative to western modernization approach in a modified form. This is against the background of the failures of several developmental paradigms such as the neo liberal model, western modernization and other Keynesian models. Specifically, the model has been contended to be a better replacement for the western modernization approach as well as other models that have failed to mirror the model of developments in developed countries in the developing countries. The Chinese approach according to one observer who is also a respondent for this study is described as:

A very complex and slow process which endured over time. This means that it is not a developmental approach that develops overnight, but represents a clear departure from the western model (Interview, 16.09.2023).

This according to Chen and Naughton (2016) is a developmental effort that evolve over a period of 37 years from 1978-2015 and the system continue to evolve with different levels of adaptation at both political and economic level. This period is breakdown into different eras which include 1978-1985, 1979-1989, 1993- 1999, 1992-2010 and 2013-2015. Each of these periods had designated political and economic objectives that the government set out to achieve. The periods are in a non linear form because of different sets of political and economic objectives that the state was trying to pursue at the same time. It is the actualization of the different set of political and economic agenda that were set out by the Chinese government that resulted in what is been refer to as the Chinese modernization approach. The developmental model of the Chinese by its nature is characterized by trans formativeness, institutional innovation; guiding role of values and the awareness of the material connect between man and nature as well as global transparency (Liu and Xiong, 2023). Furthermore,

Naughton (2007) argued about the gradual evolvement of the Chinese modernization approach as he noted that:

Chinese approach of development, in the beginning, was followed because reformers literally did not know where they are going; they were reformers "without a blueprint" and merely seeking ways to ameliorate the obvious serious problems of the planned economy. The approach to transition was starkly different in Eastern Europe and Boris Yeltsin's Russia (and Latin America). In those countries, the predominant objective of committed reformers was to move as rapidly as feasible to a modern market economy, reformers did not believe that their governments could correct distortions in their economy (Naughton 2007,p. 86).

The implication of this is that the success of the Chinese modernization approach was as a result of high level of commitment and endurance on the part on the people and government of China. According to Yang (2022), the CPC adopted a party centric path to modernizing the country while its adoption of democratic centralism in its power structure clearly differentiates it from the western representative democracy. This is supported by another respondent as he noted that:

Chinese modernization approach is an inspiration for global development and a suitable challenge to the western modernization model which has dominated developmental discourse for decades (Interview, 12.09. 2023).

This implies that it is an alternative developmental model that can encourage other developing countries to pursue their own path to development and not necessarily by coping China or the western nations but by evolving their own home grown solution. This will enable them to pursue a kind of development that is dynamic, sustainable and truly progressive. With this home grown approach, China has emerged has the world largest economy using the

purchasing power parity as the bench mark while based on official exchange rate; it is world second largest economy (Hou, 2014 and Interview, 15.8.2023). The most essential component of China's political economy is the presence of a virile invasive government and the dominance of the political over the economic and the social system (Chen and Naughton, 2016). The strong involvement of the government in the economy is providing the relative stability that is needed for the sustenance of the country's economic growth. According to Zhang and Zhao (2023), the china's peculiar modernization strategy has propelled it into the ranks of modernized countries within an amazing period of 40 years. The implication of this strategy for a developing nation is that government withdrawal from the market has dire consequences for economic growth. Hence, government is expected to be involved in the market to ameliorate shocks in the system. These shocks are usually caused by unforeseen economic circumstances which market forces may not be able to respond to and which the fragile economy may also not be able to cope with. Structuralism which is the framework for this study provided a further analytical support for this by its advocacy for state intervention as a panacea for development in developing countries. As captured by Amsden (2009):

The establishment of control mechanisms to change the status of the countries of the

“rest” is a key variable for understanding the uniqueness in the process of economic development. The international implications of the Chinese model of development in the Global South of the states that today can be considered as emerging economic powers. Hence, the mechanism of reciprocal control of the ‘rest’ thereby transformed the inefficiency and venality associated with government intervention in a collective good, as well as the ‘invisible hand’ of the control mechanism led by the North Atlantic market turned chaos and selfishness forms of market in a general welfare”(Amsden, 2009, p.39).

This Chinese modernization approach in contrast to the western modernization approach is termed or designated as the Beijing consensus. The Beijing consensus was an invention of John Cooper Rano in his work “Notes on New Physics of Chinese power which was published in 2004. The work summarizes China's unique approach to development with significant emphasis on the special role of the state in the management of the economy. He used the nomenclature as a neology in development studies to contrast the Washington consensus which he described as a more conventional approach. The summary of the Washington consensus as enunciated by Williamson (1990) is highlighted on table 1

Table 1
The Washington Consensus

| S/No | Point | Later Revised or Qualified |
|------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Fiscal Discipline | |
| 2 | Reordering of public expenditure | |
| 3 | Liberalized interest rate | * |
| 4 | Competitive exchange rate | * |
| 5 | Trade liberalization | |
| 6 | Liberalization of inward FDI | * |
| 7 | Privatization | * |

| S/No | Point | Later Revised or Qualified |
|------|--|----------------------------|
| 8 | Deregulation to ease barriers for firms entry and exit, | * |
| 9 | Strong protection of property rights | * |
| 10 | Tax reform that combines broad tax base with moderate marginal rates | * |

Source: (Williamson, 1990)

The points listed in Table I represents the set of issues that Williamson (1990) proposed everyone in Washington should be contented with and they also represent what is needed as significant policy reforms in Latin America. It is on this basis that he tagged these set of points as Washington consensus. The points with tags are those that has been revised and found acceptable as substantive needed economic policies in the west as recommended by him. The Washington consensus as encapsulated by Williamson 1990 is a globalised adaptation of the modernization theory, which advocated that developing countries should emulate Western institutions in order for them to attain the level of development in the West in the modern world (World Foresight Forum, 2011). The effects of the Washington on consensus have been noted in several studies as

an instrument of imperialism. According to Omonihu and Okonkwo (2018) in their study on the effect of Washington consensus on Africa's development with Nigeria as an example, they argued that the consensus is a strategy for perpetuating underdevelopment in Africa. Furthermore, Hickel, (2020) and Momoh, (2023) also argued that neo-liberal institutions such as International Monetary Fund and World Bank have used their stringent conditionalities to perpetuate developmental crisis in sub Saharan Africa. This validates the theoretical framework for the study as it shows how the consensus have been used as an instrument of imperialism to stagnate development in the developing countries of Africa. On other hand, table II on the next page is an illustration of the set of points that are tagged as Beijing consensus.

Table 2

Beijing Consensus

| S/No | Points |
|------|---|
| 1 | Innovation-Based Development |
| 2 | Economic success measured not by per capita GDP growth but by its sustainability and level of equality |
| 3 | Self-determination for China and for other countries vis-à-vis the United States: Opposition to the Washington Consensus Globalization on their own terms Chinese influence by example, not weaponry Develop asymmetric capabilities to balance against the United States |

Source: (Ramo, 2004)

The set of items on table II represents the alternative developmental model to Washington consensus as developed by Joshua Cooper Ramo in 2004. This different aspects of China's approach to development is what is collectively referred to as the Beijing consensus. The most important feature of these set of points is their dynamic and innovative nature. Another important factor is that development under this model is not measured by economic growth but by the extent of sustainability of the system and the level of equality. Specifically, the model does not advocate a fit for all prescription, but developmental reality interpreted based on peculiar needs of a state. It is on the sharp basis of its departure from the Washington consensus that earns it commendable recognition from scholars as a model capable of replacing the western modernization model. For instance, it has been argued that the political and economic success that has been achieved by China in over four decades has made it the largest biggest potential ideological competitor to liberal democratic capitalism since the end of communism (Ash, 2008). In spite of the notable significance of the Chinese modernization approach, it has been criticized on the basis that it is not a worthwhile competitor to the western modernization approach while Ramo's coinage of Beijing consensus has been described as a misguided and inaccurate account of China's actual reform experience (Kennedy, 2010). However, this criticism has not diminished the importance of the Chinese model as an alternative developmental approach. This is because it offers many useful innovations that can be utilize for by a developing nation.

Chinese and western modernization model:

Significant Variances

The Chinese and Western modernization models is based on the economic creed of free markets system which is otherwise refer to as capitalism. However, despite the similarity in their economic ideology, the two systems differ in the aspect of the political framework provided for the sustenance of their economic systems. In this regard, the focus of this section will be on an elaborate discussion about the significant differences between the western modernization approach and the Chinese model of development. The Chinese model as earlier discussed is a blend of a free market system with an authoritarian system. Apart from this, political and economic power under the Chinese system is exercised on a collective basis while the CCP exercises this power on behalf of the people. The western modernization model on the other hand is based on the practice of liberal democracy and free market economic system. An obvious sharp contrast between the two models is the idea of political plurality in one instance and political censorship on the other hand. The CCP as the ruling party in China is vested with the authority to take political and economic decisions for the good governance of the people's republic of China. In spite of the differences between the western and Chinese model of development, the area of convergence between the two models is that they both operate a free market system that allows for both foreign and local investment from individuals and groups. However, their differences are highlighted on table III on the next page.

Table 3*Differences between the Western and Chinese Model of Modernization*

| S/No | Western Model | Chinese Model |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Liberal Capitalism | State Capitalism |
| 2 | Liberal Democracy | Socialist Democracy |
| 3 | Individualism | Collectivism |
| 4 | Win/Lose approach to economic activities | Win/Win Approach to economic activities |
| 5 | Imperial approach to industrialization | Non imperial approach to industrialization |

Source: (Field Work, 2023)

At the economic level, both western and Chinese model espoused different variants of capitalism. For the west, the focus is on liberal capitalism which is a free market system that advocated for limited government intervention in the market. Under the system, the market is expected to be regulated mainly by the forces of demand and supply while the government is expected to play limited role of providing law and order for the system. The Chinese model on the other hand advocated for a free market oriented system with strong government intervention. The extent of the government intervention is a major differentiating factor about the kind of capitalism that is practiced by the duo. The second factor that differentiates the two is the political framework that is provided for the regulation of the system. Under the western modernization model, the operating political system is the liberal democracy which allows for political competition among various political parties. The Chinese model on the other hand favors a socialist form of democracy which allows the existence of a single party as the legitimate party for the system. The socialist democracy is essentially a one party or political framework that allows only one political party to run the affairs of the state (Monyani, 2018). The argument for this is that a one party system if well structured engenders political stability which is needed for the development of the state (Ibid).

The third factor is the issue of individualism versus collectivism as the basis for the organization of the society and most especially at the political and economic level. The western modernization model subscribed to the ideology of liberalism which emphasize on the primacy of an individual in political and economic relations. The implication of this is that the individual is seen as the basic unit of the society and as such relations in the society should be on individual basis. According to Awofeso and Udokang(2015), liberalism is a philosophical idea that stresses the freedom and rights of every individual and also believes in freedom within the social context and individual realm both politically and economically. One of the central themes of the liberal ideology is the concept of individualism. This refer to the believe in the supreme importance of the individual over any social group or collective body (Heywood, 2003). This idea of individualism serves as the basis for the allocation of political and economic resources in the west. As a consequence of this, inequality increases in the society as those who have continue to pullulate while the have-nots continue to wallow in abject poverty. According to Marx, individualism gives rise to the acquisition of private property which in turn results in primitive accumulation of wealth at the expense of the mass of the people. The Chinese model on the other hand subscribes to the ideology of Marxism/Leninism. This is a **collectivist ideology**

that emphasizes the primacy of the group in political and economic relations. As a political ideology, it advocated for the control of means of production as well as the suppression of political opposition in order to promote collectivism which will eventually result in a classless society (Adrain, 1994; Cookie, 1998; Busky, 2002; and Morgan, 2015). This ideology is the basis of the four principles that governs the Chinese modernization process. As a collectivist ideology, the individual is seen as subordinate to a social group or any other social organization (Nolen, 2023). In spite of its adoption of free market system, the collectivist principle has been used constantly to regulate the economic activities of the people's republic of China.

The fourth differentiating factor is their approach to trade relations and other forms of economic activities. The western modernization system because of its emphasis on the profit for the capitalist class can be describe as a zero sum game where a party lose and the other party wins. Under the Chinese modernization, the government performs the role of a leveler, which makes wealth to be pervasive in the society. According to a respondent:

The role of the Chinese government as a leveler in the Chinese political system has contributed immensely to increased standard of living in China and also helps to eradicate abject poverty which was prevalent many years ago (Interview, 16.08.2023).

Furthermore, it has helped China in more than two decades to move from the periphery to the center of the global economic system thereby shifting the geographical core of capitalist accumulation process (Vadell, et al, 2014).

The fifth factor has to do with their approach to industrialization which forms the core of modernization under the two models. Under the western modernization model, imperial ambition plays a critical role in their process of industrialization (Interview, 16.09.2023). Specifically,

the west engaged in slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. This affords them the opportunity to have access to cheap labor and raw materials which is highly essential for the growth of their industries. According to Rodney (2005), Western Europe in its imperial relations with Africa ascertains the transfer of wealth from Africa to Europe. This transfer of wealth occurs throughout Africa's imperial relationship with Europe from the slavery period to the post-colonial era. The Chinese modernization on the other hand in its over four decades has been based on friendship between China and other developing countries and developed countries on the basis of equality of states. For instance, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been described as a tool of economic diplomacy which intends to deliver trillions of dollars for infrastructure financing for Asia, Europe and Africa (Hurley et al, 2018). As a global developmental strategy, it was adopted by the Chinese government in 2013 to invest in infrastructural development in more than 150 countries and international organizations (World Bank, 2019). As at August 2023, about 155 countries were listed to have signed up for the BRI (Christopher, 2022). While the initiative has been criticized or interpreted as a plan for a sinocentric international trade network (Cohan, 2017), it has not been viewed as an instrument of imperialism and most especially by the countries that have signed up to it. Significantly, the initiative has made several states and their people to have favorable opinion about China as an economic model as well as an attractive partner for their developmental needs (Brautigam, 2020). This shows that China in its approach to industrialization and modernization has basically utilized a non imperial approach compared to the western imperial method. The data on table three demonstrates the difference between the Washington consensus on table 1 and the Beijing consensus on table two. The essence is to give more clarity to the two models of development.

Conclusion

The study examined the basis of the Chinese modernization approach and also investigates the extent to which it can be described as a credible developmental alternative. It also identifies and discusses the basic differences between the Chinese modernization and western modernization model. The Chinese approach to development is basically a mix of free market system with democratic dictatorship. The system by its nature is dynamic and complex while the government responds to changes both usual and unusual shocks in the system. In the Chinese example, the system has been very useful as it has made China to move from the status of developing nation in the 1970s to the second largest economy. However, political culture of the Chinese plays a very important role in its blending of a free market system with dictatorial governance. Historically, China has been ruled by series of dynasties and even when its monarchical system was abolished in 1949, it was replaced with democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the Chinese communist party. Another important factor is the belief of most Chinese in the ideology of Confucianism which is described as a theory of governance and a way of life (De Barry, 1989). This peculiar political culture of the Chinese as well as their political experience makes the excessive state intervention in the economy to be sustainable. However, the evolving political system in China can be described as a stakeholder democracy. This is because of its constitutional prescription that the state shall be governed by a people's democratic dictatorship that is led by a working class while the state institutions are expected to adhere to the principles of democratic centralism (NPC, 2019). Hence the Chinese workers or middle class represents the major stakeholders in the Chinese political system. It is on this basis that the PRC describes China's democratic system as a socialist consultative democracy (Qinglin, 2013) as well as

a whole process people's democracy (Drinhausen, 2023).

In spite of the peculiarity of this model to China, it offers a lot of significant innovations to African states which makes it to be a credible alternative developmental model to the western modernization model. The first is that it demonstrates how a free market system can be organized to promote equality rather than inequality and promote common good as opposed to what is presently obtainable under the western modernization approach. Secondly, it demonstrates the significance of state intervention in the management of the economy of a developing state because of its fragility and vulnerability to the market forces in the international capitalist system. Hence, this state intervention helps to respond to the different kind of shocks in the system. Thirdly, the Chinese model of development shows the high level of resilience and dynamism that is required by a developing country in its quest for modernization. In spite of this significance, the Chinese model is not a fit for all system while its greatest take away is that developing countries should strive to adopt and adapt a model of development that best fits their political and economic situation. In this regard, a hybridization of the two models may be essential. This is because developmental approach is multifaceted and an examination of an alternative developmental paradigm like the Chinese model is essential for a relative equal global development.

Recommendation

In line with the findings of the study, some recommendations are suggested for further research and policy choices by the government. For the government of African states, there are lessons they should learn from China about the role of state in the development of developing states. While the study does not recommend a complete adoption of the Chinese model because

of its peculiarity to the Chinese system, it recommend that based on the Chinese system, African states should evolve their own developmental model that fits their economic needs. Furthermore, there is also the need for policy makers to redirect economic policies of chauvinist capitalism by making government policies to serve public interest and not the in interest of the minority. Future research should have as its focal point, the evolving of developmental paradigm that can provide an insight on a development paradigm for Africa with little or no reliance on external development partners. While the Chinese model already provides an insight, there is the need for the development of a paradigm that focus on the needs of Africa.

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