

Asongu, Simplice; Nwachukwu, Jacinta C.

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Reconciliation of the Washington Consensus with the Beijing Model in Africa

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Reconciliation of the Washington Consensus with the Beijing Model in Africa

Forthcoming in China and Africa: Cooperation to Competition

Simplice Asongu

African Governance and Development Institute,
P. O. Box 8413, Yaoundé, Cameroon.
E-mail: asongusimplice@yahoo.com

Jacinta C. Nwachukwu

Department of Economics, Finance and Accounting,
Faculty of Business, Environment and Society,
Coventry University
Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5DH, UK
Email: jacinta.nwachukwu@coventry.ac.uk

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Research Department

Reconciliation of the Washington Consensus with the Beijing Model in Africa

Simplice A. Asongu & Jacinta C. Nwachukwu

March 2016

Abstract

In this study, we argue that an approach which will reconcile the two opposing camps in Sino-African relations and bring the most progress is a “middle passage” that greases contradictions and offers an accommodative, balanced and pragmatic vision on which Africans can unite. We present a case under which countries can substantially enhance the prospect of development if an African consensus builds on a merger between the Western and Chinese models. We balance national interest with human rights, sovereign authority with individual rights and economic goals with political rights. The chapter presents arguments on the need for a development paradigm in Africa that reconciles the Washington Consensus with the Beijing Model. The analytical framework is organised in three main strands, notably: (i) historical perspectives and contemporary views; (ii) reconciliation of dominant schools of thought and paradigms surrounding Sino-African relations and (iii) practical and contemporary implications. Reconciled schools of thought are engaged in four main categories: optimists versus (vs.) pessimists; preferences in rights (human vs. national, idiosyncratic vs. sovereign and political vs. economic) and the Beijing model vs. the Washington Consensus.

JEL Classification: F19; F21; O10; O19; O55

Keywords: Economic relations; China; Africa

1. Introduction

This chapter is presented as an argument to address two types of readership: policy makers who can easily grasp the arguments without the cumbersome exercise of references and scholars in the academic community without prior knowledge of underlying concepts who may need substantive references.

Three main schools of thought dominate Sino-African relations: the Pessimistic, Optimistic and Accommodation schools. Pessimists view the nexus as asymmetric in favour of China. Optimists contend that China is offering Africa an opportunity of charting its own development course without Western policy prescriptions. The third school is founded on the premise that the relationship is an ineluctable process that can be mutually beneficial if African countries adopt a common ‘China strategy’ based on rational economic arguments in order to balance the asymmetric relationship (Asongu & Aminkeng, 2013). Pessimists are advocates of the Washington Consensus (WC) for the most part, optimists are sympathetic to the Beijing Model (BM), whereas proponents of the Accommodation school view Sino-African relations in the light of a paradigm shift or/and the contemporary African Consensus that incorporates both the BM and the WC (Asongu & Aminkeng, 2013).

The WC can be defined as ‘*liberal democracy, private capitalism and priority in political rights*’, while the BM is most understood as ‘*deemphasised democracy, state capitalism and priority in economic rights*’. (Asongu, 2016a). The current African consensus or New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) champions (i) the promotion of strong institutions, good governance, democracy and human rights and (ii) ‘African sovereignty’. The first is consistent with the BM whereas the second is in accordance with the WC for the most part. Whereas the WC promotes human rights and democracy that are advocated by the NEPAD, the non-interference policy of the BM is also in accordance with the NEPAD’s core value of African ownership. The NEPAD therefore incorporates both the WC and the BM. Furthermore, the NEPAD reconciles both the first and second schools siding respectively with the WC and BM.

In this chapter, we articulate the highlighted reconciliation into more perspectives, notably: optimists vs pessimists, preferences in rights (national vs human, sovereign vs idiosyncratic) and economic vs political rights. The Accommodation school posits that the Optimistic or Balance-development school can build on the criticisms levelled by the Pessimistic or Neo-colonial school to improve on development issues surrounding the Sino-African nexus. According to the narrative, China is simply playing by globalisation standards

that are cherished by the Pessimistic school. Globalisation is now an unavoidable process whose challenges cannot be neglected without jeopardising the prosperity of nation states. Hence, given the growing relevance of China in an increasingly globalised world, Sino-African relations can be viewed as a historic process that is steadily evolving towards a mutually beneficial development if the right policies are put in place.

Concerns about preferences in rights motivating the Pessimistic and Optimistic schools merit emphasis. The WC vs BM, or first school vs second school, are respectively consistent with the following analogies: human vs national rights; idiosyncratic vs sovereign rights and political vs economic rights. First, on the debate over human vs. national rights, China's non-interference policy is based on the preference of national over human rights. There is a long standing suspicion by African countries of Western bias when it comes to the conception and definition of human rights. Recently, gay rights have become a fundamental human right and are considered to stand before national rights (legislative, judiciary and executive). An example is the humiliating suspension of loans and grants to Uganda because a bill voted by the legislative power is signed into law by the executive authority. Furthermore, the West has been overtly hypocritical in the criticisms she has been levelling on Sino-African relations, especially with regard to China's policy of non-interference. Two facts merit emphasis here. Historically, France's policy towards Africa has not been greased by her cherished values of 'liberty, fraternity and equality'. China's 'resource diplomacy' in Africa is consistent with the USA's oil diplomacy in Saudi Arabia.

Second, idiosyncratic or specific-individual rights are as important as sovereign rights. Hence, one should not take precedence over the other according to Chinese foreign policy. African countries are waking-up to the realisation that foreign policy should be friendly and void of hegemony. More so, international law should not be skewed towards enabling some sovereign nations to criticise and punish other sovereign nations on issues that are legitimate and sanctioned by domestic principles of democracy and law. The underlying suspicion extends to the selective application of law by the International Criminal Court.

Third, with regard to priorities between 'the right to vote' and 'the right to food' advocated by the WC and BM respectively, it is no longer a moderate consensus that political rights are more endogenous than economic rights. It is very likely that a person with an empty stomach will sell his/her 'right to vote' in exchange for daily bread. The BM has delivered a burgeoning middle class within a breathtaking spell of time. Once this middle class has been established, liberal democracy will be credible and sustainable because it is

very likely to prefer the ‘right to vote’ independently of the ‘right to food’. It follows that the WC is a long-term development strategy. This is not surprising because it took some Western champions of liberal democracy more than 150 years to provide equal rights to their citizens. In the sections that follow, we substantiate the points highlighted above in greater detail.

The rest of the chapter is organised as follows. Section 2 engages historical and contemporary perspectives while the dominant schools of thought are presented and reconciled in Section 3. Section 4 discusses their practical and contemporary relevance whereas Section 5 concludes with a summary of the arguments.

2. Historical and contemporary perspectives

This section is discussed in five main strands: a brief summary of the literature on possible causes of Africa’s underdevelopment; foremost development models; contemporary development proposals; recent trends in African poverty in the light of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) poverty targets and the most recent perspectives on solutions to the continent’s underdevelopment.

Consistent with Asongu and Kodila-Tedika (2015), Africa’s development tragedy can be discussed in fifteen main streams, namely: (1) loss of traditional institutions (Lewis, 1955; Amavilah, 2006, 2014) and/or African deinstitutionalization (Nunn, 2008, 2009; Nunn & Puga, 2012); (2) the neglect of art as an expression of technological know-how (Amavilah, 2014); (3) juxtaposition between ‘private property rights’ and ‘private use rights’ (Amavilah, 2015); (4) idleness of natural resources (Dorfman, 1939; Lewis, 1955; Amavilah, 2014); (5) overvaluation of foreign knowledge and devaluation of local knowledge (Asongu et al., 2014; Amavilah et al., 2014; Tchamyou, 2015; Lwoga et al., 2010; Raseroka, 2008; Brush & Stabinsky, 1996); (6) the inability to acknowledge scarcity (Dorfman, 1939; Lucas, 1993; Drine, 2013; Fosu, 2013; America, 2013; Asongu, 2014ab; Looney, 2013); (7) excessive consumption of luxurious goods by the rich elite a (Efobi et al., 2013; Adewole & Osabuohien, 2007); (8) the false economics of pre-conditions (Monga, 2014) and the lost decades with the Washington Consensus (Lin, 2015); (9) issues surrounding colonialism, neo-colonialism and Western imperialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013); (10) over reliance on Western policies (Fofack, 2014) and development assistance (Asongu, 2014c; Obeng-Odoom, 2013; Moyo, 2009); (11) failure to integrate qualitative development measurements in development paradigms (Obeng-Odoom, 2013) and the ‘Africa rising’ narrative (Obeng-Odoom, 2015); (12) the need for a paradigm shift from strong economics (or structural

adjustment policies) to soft economics (or human capability) development (Kuada, 2015); (13) low-depth of regional integration (Kayizzi-Mugerwa, et al., 2014); (14) fragile institutions, absence of conducive local conditions and ineffective negotiation of the terms of foreign aid (Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2001) and less stringent property rights essential for reverse engineering and imitation of foreign technology (Asongu, 2014d) and (15) corruption in international trade (Musila & Sigué, 2010).

The argument for a reconciliation between the WC and the BM deviates from mainstream literature on African development models. These consist of, among others: the Lagos Plan of Action for Economic Development (LPA, 1980-2000); Africa's Priority for Economic Recovery (APPER, 1986-1990); the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socioeconomic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP, 1989); the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development (1990); the 2001 NEPAD (OAU, 1980, 2001; Bujra, 2004; Adedeji, 2002); self-reliance as a sustainable path to African development (Fofack, 2014, p. 13) and development strategies from developing countries based on a lessons from both the WC and BM (Fosu, 2013).

A strand of post-WC development models also close to the argument entails the New Structural Economics (NSE) and Liberal Institutional Pluralism (LIP). The NSE posits, without necessarily tailoring a unified economic theory, that, some convergence between ideologies of structuralism and liberalism are needed. The approach which recognises both state and market failures (see Fofack, 2014, p. 14) is advanced by *inter alia*: Chang (2002); Lin and Monga (2011); Norman and Stiglitz (2012); Stiglitz et al. (2013ab) and Stiglitz and Lin (2013). The second or LIP school is oriented towards, among others, institutions for effective delivery of public services; institutional conditions for successful growth and institutional diversity (see North, 1990; Acemoglu et al., 2005; Brett, 2009).

An April 2015 World Bank report on MDGs has shown that extreme poverty has been decreasing in all regions of the world with the exception of Africa (World Bank, 2015; Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2016a) notwithstanding more than two decades of resurgence in growth that began in the mid 1990s (Fosu, 2015a, p. 44). This is despite narratives of: Africa rising (Leautier, 2012); Africa being on time for the MDG poverty target (Pinkivskiy & Sala-i-Martin, 2014) and an African growth miracle (Young, 2012). Obeng-Odoom (2013, 2015) has documented that such narratives may be more concerned with extolling the neoliberal ideology and capital accumulation than fundamental ethical concerns like inequality, ecological crisis and sustainable jobs.

A more recent stream of the literature has been devoted to proposing measures towards understanding and solving Africa's poverty tragedy. The concern about exclusive growth on the continent has motivated a recent book by Kuada (2015) which proposes a new paradigm of 'soft economics' as a mechanism by which to understand Africa's development trends. Fosu (2015bc) has responded with a book devoted to: elucidating myths behind Africa's recent growth resurgence and the role of institutions in it. According to Kuada (2015), it is important to deviate from strong economics (neoliberal economics and structural adjustment debates) and focus on soft economics (or human capability development) in order to understand, *inter alia*: immiserizing growth, increasing poverty and low employment levels. The paradigm shift of Kuada (2015) is broadly in accordance with a recent stream of African development literature which is tailored towards reinventing foreign aid for inclusive and sustainable development (Simpasa et al., 2015; Page & Shimeles, 2015; Jones et al., 2015; Asongu, 2015a; Jones & Tarp, 2015; Page & Söderbom, 2015; Asongu & Jellal, 2016; Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2016b).

In the light of the above, reconciling the domination schools on Sino-African relations for an African development model is important for two reasons. On the one hand in the post-independence era, Africa and China were in the same economic muddy waters. Whereas China opted to chart its own development course, most African countries took to prescriptions of the WC. On the other hand, contemporary differences in development are self evident because China has progressed at a spectacular pace and is now providing development aid to Africa.

3. Reconciling dominant schools of thought

There are three main schools of thought in the Sino-African literature, namely: optimists, pessimists and accommodators (Asongu & Aminkeng, 2013; Asongu, 2016a). The first group (or Optimistic school) are China optimists who argue that cooperation with China provides Africa with the opportunity of charting its own development course without much Western interference and policy prescriptions. This group is sympathetic to the "Beijing model" of governance, which focuses on state control and national sovereignty. The second group (or Pessimistic school) consists of China pessimists who are wary of the fact that the Sino-African relationship is skewed in favour of China. This category instead prefers the democracy-oriented approach of the West which articulates the WC belief that champions political rights underpinned by free market competition. The third group (or Accommodation

school) consists of ‘China accommodators’ who combine both the pessimists’ wariness and optimists’ goals. They argue for the need for a common development strategy towards China that minimizes asymmetries in the relationship as much as possible. The values promoted by this group are consistent with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) which emphasizes both African sovereignty/ownership and the process of liberal democracy as a solid foundation for development.

We reconcile the three groups in four principal categories: pessimists versus (vs) optimists; right preferences (human vs national, idiosyncratic vs sovereign and political vs economic); the Beijing Model vs the Washington Consensus and an African development model that integrates both the WC and the BM (Asongu, 2016a).

First, from a recent survey of the literature (see Asongu, 2016a; Asongu & Ssozi, 2016), authors are most sympathetic to the Accommodation school because there are strong reasons to be both optimistic and pessimistic about Sino-African relations. On the one hand, in the light of Tull (2006) and Asongu et al. (2014), the West has been hypocritical when criticizing the foreign policy of China in Sino-African relations. This is essentially based on the fact that the foreign policy of the United States of America towards Saudi Arabia is not sanctioned by the USA’s ideals of liberal democracy and human rights. Accordingly, like China, the USA’s foreign policy is guided by the same terms of resource/oil diplomacy. Moreover, notable developed countries or former colonial powers are no exceptions to the yard stick of ‘resource diplomacy’. The moral compass of French foreign policy towards her colonies were not historically guided by her much cherished ideals of ‘liberty, fraternity and equality’. On the other hand, the Sino-African nexus, like most historical processes, is bound to evolve steadily and sustainably because China is growingly asserting her footprint in an increasingly globalised world. Accordingly, globalisation has come to stay: it has become an inescapable phenomenon process whose challenges cannot be overlooked without jeopardising the prosperity of nation states (Tchamyu, 2015). In the light of these facts, the Accommodation school argues that the Optimistic school can leverage on criticisms from the Pessimistic school in order balance the asymmetry in contemporary Sino-African relations. The reconciliatory arguments are consolidated by the fact that China is playing by the same globalisation standards that are so much cherished by the Pessimistic school.

Second, fundamental concerns about rights’ preference which animate the first and second schools require some clarification, namely: human vs national (see Taylor, 2006); idiosyncratic vs sovereign rights (Asongu et al., 2014) and political vs economic rights

(Lalountas et al., 2011; Moyo, 2013; Asongu, 2014c, 2015). It is important to note that the second-set of rights (national, sovereign and economic) are consistent with the Optimistic school whereas the first-set (human, idiosyncratic and political) are in accordance the Pessimistic school.

Three points merit critical emphasis here.

(1) The foreign policy of China that articulates non-interference is partially based on the need to give priority to national rights over human rights. Africa has been very suspicious of bias from Western nations when it comes to the manner in which human rights are conceived and defined. As a case in point, gay rights which are being increasingly acknowledged as a fundamental human right in preference to national rights (executive, legislative and judiciary)¹. It follows that African countries that are passing and enforcing anti-gay laws are doing so at the price of hurting the Washington Consensus and limiting their eligibility for some categories of development assistance. For instance, very recently the World Bank and some Western donors have suspended foreign aid to Uganda because of an anti-gay legislation bill that was signed into law by the president of the republic (Asongu, 2015b).

(2) Consistent with Taylor (2006), China's foreign policy is guided by the principle that sovereign rights should not be preceded by specific individual or idiosyncratic rights. Hence, given that African countries are constantly decrying neo-colonial and hegemonic influences in their domestic policies, it is reasonable for China to articulate her position that under international law, sovereign nations should not be critical of other sovereign nations on domestic issues that are sanctioned by principles of democracy and law. If the Pessimistic school were to acknowledge this point, she would be joining the Accommodation school which is more in tune with constructive criticisms.

(3) Distinguishing between the 'the right to food' and 'the right to vote' has been the subject of intense debate in recent Sino-African development literature (see Moyo, 2013; Asongu & Ssozi, 2016; Asongu, 2016). There is also an evolving stream of literature documenting that economic rights (economic prosperity and productive structures) are more exogenous to political rights (see Anyanwu & Erhijakpor, 2014). In this light, the Pessimistic school could acknowledge that developing nations are more in need of economic rights than

¹ It is also relevant to note that the selective application of law by the International Criminal Court is also an eloquent example of African suspicion towards Western bias on the human rights concept.

political rights. Most of their criticisms on the Sino-African relationship would be set out in more constructive terms, hence joining the ranks of the Accommodation school.

Third, on the debate over whether economic rights should precede political rights, there is some consensus in the literature that the Beijing model should be prioritised as a short- term development model whereas the Washington consensus should be the long term development goal (Moyo, 2013; Asongu, 2016a; Asongu & Ssozi, 2016). This is essentially based on the (i) reality that the BM has delivered a burgeoning middle class to China within a spectacularly short spell of time and (ii) the hypothesis that the WC is a more sustainable and inclusive model. Hence, the Accommodation School also posits that both the Pessimistic and Optimistic schools make cases for priorities in the long term and short run respectively.

In the light of the above, the two schools of thought are reconciled in the perspective that a sustainable middle class is necessary before political rights can be genuinely demanded because in average terms, a sustainable middle class would be less likely to trade its vote for basic needs like food and shelter. The relevance of income levels in the demand for political rights has been established in both developing (Lalountas et al., 2011) and African (Asongu, 2014e) countries.

Fourth, a reconciliation of the two schools of thought is consistent with the rules guiding the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Hence, both the WC and the BM are accounted for in the NEPAD essentially because the NEPAD recognises both African ownership/sovereignty and the need for democratic processes in sustainable development. Hence, priorities of the WC (or democratic and human rights) and BM (or sovereign and economic rights) are both incorporated in the NEPAD and Accommodation School. The NEPAD, which is the current African consensus, has been espoused by African nations that are serious about advancing the continent. It is worthwhile noting that the NEPAD is a consensus for the development of Africa that articulates a number of principles on its charter that are sympathetic to both BM and WC, namely: good governance, human rights, democracy, sustainable development, non-interference and sovereignty.

4. Practical and contemporary implications

The 2011 Arab Spring experiment is an eloquent testimony of the need for multi-polar development strategies on the African continent that incorporate both the BM and WC. In Egypt, the overthrow of President Morsi was qualified by the United States Secretary of State

John Kerry as not a coup d'état, but a restoration of democracy. A few days later, Senator John McCain qualified it as a coup d'état that overthrew a legitimate government. A few months later, we were informed by Abdel Fattah that it might take 25 years for Egypt to experience Western-style liberal democracy. In Tunisia, the current president is a product of the regime that was overthrown in 2011. There is growing consensus that post-Gaddafi Libya is a failed state, with many rebel factions and conflicting governments attempting without success to dictate the law of the land.

The fact that we are referring to the Arab Spring example means that sovereign rights are as important as individual rights. Hence, consensus-building for political breakthroughs is better than resorting to military strength in conflict resolution. For instance, the Western slogan of 'Assad must go' before any negotiation has consolidated the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL). Today, at least three facts are difficult to refute: (i) Libya is substantially worse-off than it was before 2011 because her citizens still do not have the politico-economic rights they demanded; (ii) the citizens of Iraq are also worse-off than they were, prior to US invasion in 2003 and (iii) the 'Assad must go first' policy has strengthened ISIL. This narrative should not be construed as condoning the policies of Bashar al-Assad, Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi. What we seek to show is that, had the West reconciled her priority for political rights with ideals of the Beijing model, Libya, Syria and Iraq may not be the failed states today.

Growing South-South relations and challenges to Bretton Wood institutions with new establishments (e.g. the New Development Bank, Contingency Reserve Arrangements and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank) are due to increasing dissatisfaction by developing countries with the WC (Desai & Vreeland 2014; Asongu, 2016b). Accordingly, the architecture of power on which on which Bretton Woods institutions were founded is no longer legitimate: from geo-demographic and politico-economic perspectives (see Cooper and Farooq 2015; Dixon 2015). With more than 45 percent of African countries failing to achieve the Millennium Development Goal extreme poverty target, there is a growing realisation that it would require a paradigm shift in the post-2015 development agenda. A new model that reconciles, *inter alia*: (i) human rights with national rights; (ii) idiosyncratic rights with sovereign rights and (iii) political rights with economic rights.

5. Concluding remarks

There are two opposing camps when it comes to Sino-African relations. In this chapter, we have argued that an approach that will bring the most progress is a “middle passage”: one that greases contradictions and offers an accommodative, balanced, and pragmatic vision upon which Africans can unite.

There are three main schools of thought in the Sino-African literature, namely: optimists, pessimists and accommodators (Asongu & Aminkeng, 2013; Asongu, 2016ac). The first group (or Optimistic school) are China optimists who argue that cooperation with China will provide Africa with the opportunity of charting its own development course without much Western interference and policy prescription. This group is sympathetic to the “Beijing model” of governance, which focuses on state control and national sovereignty. The second group (or Pessimistic school) consists of China pessimists who are wary that the Sino-African relationship is skewed in favour of China. This category instead prefers the democracy-oriented approach of the West which pronounces the WC attitude that champions political right, underpinned by free market competition. The third group (or Accommodation school) consists of ‘China accommodators’ who combine both the pessimists’ wariness and the optimists’ goals. They argue that there is a need for a common development strategy toward China that minimizes asymmetries in the relationship as much as possible. The values promoted by this group are consistent with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development which emphasizes both African sovereignty/ownership and processes of liberal democracy as solid foundations for development.

A reason for the non-interference principle is that China, like many African countries, has long suspected a Western bias when it comes to the definition and conception of ‘fundamental human rights’. For instance, with increasing moves by Western countries to protect the rights of gays, it is expected that recipients of foreign aid should follow suit. This places the demand for such ideals above ‘national/sovereign rights’. To substantiate this position, we have discussed a scenario in 2014 in which development assistance was cut to Uganda because she passed into law a bill on punishing homosexual activities.

Another bias that is apparent is the so called ‘resource diplomacy’ of China by Africa’s pro-Western China pessimists. But China’s approach is similar to America’s long-standing oil-based foreign policy with countries like Saudi Arabia. Moreover the historical

involvement of France in Africa has not been guided by her cherished values of “liberty, fraternity, and equality.”

Within this framework, whereas it is apparent that countries in Africa protect the citizens’ individual rights, foreign perspectives of what should constitute a right should not take precedence over sovereign authority. In the same vein, space should not be created by international law so that some countries punish and criticize other countries on matters that should be settled by domestic democracy and law. This dimension entails the selectivity of the International Criminal Court in its application of law. An important issue being tackled by the NEPAD is precedence between “the right to bread,” or economic rights, which the ‘Beijing model’ camp emphasizes, and “the right to vote,” or political rights, which the pro-Western supporters put first. Here, the key is sequencing.

Based on the fact that a starving person is most likely to give-up his/her vote in exchange for basic economic privileges like the rights to bread and shelter, it can be surmised that a certain level of economic prosperity is required before genuine political rights can be demanded or prioritized. However entrenched pessimists on Sino-African relations are to free market policies, it is difficult to deny that the Beijing model has rapidly created a burgeoning middle class by lifting millions of people out of poverty. In the light of this evidence, African countries too can focus on a similar orientation of prioritizing economic rights instead of overly emphasis on political rights as a precondition for productive structures and economic prosperity.

While pessimists of Sino-African relations may not be comfortable with the fact that the link between China and Africa is growing stronger, China is only leveraging on the principles of globalization which these pessimists so much cherish. Hence, China is also playing by the same rules espoused by advocates of the Washington Consensus. However, a flourishing middle class is needed before a sustainable shift to credible liberal democracy can take place.

The imperative for a development approach that is two-pronged by incorporating elements of both the Washington Consensus and the Beijing Model has been underscored by the outcome of the 2011 Arab Spring revolts. Whereas lack of economic opportunities substantially fuelled pro-democracy uprisings in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and other countries, the dream that ‘the right to vote’ would take precedence over ‘the right to bread’ has become a nightmare.

In essence, in spite of the overthrow of authoritarian regimes, Egypt so far has been unable to build a democratic government that credibly and effectively enforces the rule of law, Libya is considerably worse-off and change in Tunisia remains very unpredictable. Maybe if the rights of sovereignty had been considered, with foreign powers acknowledging the need for building consensus instead of funding rebellions, political breakthrough could have been reached, paving the path towards sustainable economy-boosting policies.

From a more contemporary view, it appears that the West has not learnt her lesson because of her long-standing demand for the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to stand down before any credible peace-building process can be initiated. Whereas Western leaders have softened their stances in recent months, the consequences of this have been very damaging because President Assad has also used the position of the West to create an environment whereby his enemies have become those of the West as well as many members of the Western funded rebellion joining the ranks of the Islamic State and turning against both Assad and the West.

The above narratives are not to condone policies of repression from authoritarian leaders whose regimes have been ousted. The position of this chapter, however, is to emphasize the potential rewards of greater stability-related approaches that build on a consensus between the Western interest in promoting political rights and national/sovereign rights that are espoused by the Beijing model.

The growing involvement of China in Africa is crucial not exclusively for direct economic rewards, but also for alternative development strategies. We have argued in this chapter that African countries can substantially enhance the prospect of development if an African consensus builds on a merger between the Western and Chinese models: a balance that integrates national interest with human rights, sovereign authority with individual rights and economic goals with political rights.

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