New Maps for Africa? Contextualising the 'Chinese Model' within Ethiopian and Kenyan Paradigms of Development

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Background to the study
Research Questions

a) To what extent is the development experience of China viewed as a model by Ethiopian and Kenyan elites?

b) If it is indeed seen as a model, what lessons do elites draw from China and how does this phenomenon inform broader Ethiopian and Kenyan development paradigms?
Terminology:

Model: “a simplified version of an existing or historical development policy (or set of policies) that is viewed by others as an example for emulation” (own definition)

Paradigm: the interpretive “framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only the goals of policy and the kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing” (Hall 1993: 279)
Theoretical Framework:

- Chinese Model / 'Beijing Consensus' (Advocates, Critics and Sceptics)

- Lesson-drawing (Rose, Bennett, Dolowitz and March) and cross-societal emulation (Westney)

- Development paradigms in the 'era' of development, esp. Modernization Theory (Rostow, Lipset, Inglehart and Welzel, Levy, Gilman) and the 'East Asian Model' (Amsden, Johnson, Kuznets)
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Research Design

- Constructivist Ontology - Hermeneutic Epistemology
- Cases selected both for intrinsic value and 'analytical generalisability'
- Sources of data: 91 interviews, key official documents for triangulation
- Purposive sampling of interview subjects: 'all occupants of senior positions in those organisations or institutions contributing to the formulation of development policy and discourse in Ethiopia and Kenya.'
- Coded and analysed using CAQDAS (Nvivo)
Ethiopia's Emulation of China/South Korea

Ethiopia’s history of modernisation

Emulating China, but as part of a broader regional grouping

Top-down effort, consensus forged by Meles

Attitudes of opposition and civil society
“I must admit that I was skeptical at the beginning—I was a journalist. But I had to read [the party literature] and I had to go through it very critically, and eventually I got interested by its fascinating ideas, and I saw direct parallels in nations such as South Korea, Taiwan's development, and even the theory of China itself, to some extent...The success stories of these nations, and the Southeast Asian countries, has helped me to solidify my belief and my support for the revolutionary democracy ideology of the EPRDF. Eventually, I joined the party”

– Senior EPRDF Member
Kenya's Emulation of Malaysia/Singapore

Kenya's history of modernisation

Emulating Malaysia and Singapore rather than China

Role of Vision 2030 and NESC

Attitudes of civil society and politicians
‘In my head, I've got practically everything mapped out – if you give me ten years, I will give you South Korea'

- (former) Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communications
The Process and Nature of Development

1. Development as endogenous and sequential

![Rostow's Model of Development](image)

Figure 1: Rostow’s Model of Development.
2. Development as structural transformation underpinned by agriculture / rural development
3. The importance of “catch-up” growth

Front-runner
Africa’s ten fastest-growing non-oil economies
Annual average GDP growth 2006-2011, %

- Ethiopia
- Malawi
- Rwanda
- Uganda
- Mozambique
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Cape Verde
- Liberia
- The Gambia

Sources: IMF; The Economist
4. Technological optimism
5. The Return of Physical Infrastructure
6. The Need for Cultural Transformation
The Function and Form of the State

- Role of the state: ‘developmental state’ / economic nationalism
- Role of democratic governance:
  - In Ethiopia:
    - Performance legitimacy
    - Incrementalism
    - Nation-building through one-party dominance
  - In Kenya: leadership must be visionary, forceful and technocratic
Paradigms of Development

- Modernization theory (1950s, 1960s)
- Dependency and neo-Marxist approaches (1970s, 1980s)
- The (Augmented) Washington Consensus (1990s, 2000s)
Conclusion:

Coincide with much of the literature on the East Asian Model/developmental state. Illustrates importance of contextualising the Chinese Model within broader regional dynamics.

BUT... need for even the EAM to be situated within the broader paradigms that have marked development discourses and practices in Africa. Models are inextricably linked to a specific time and place of origin. The lessons referred to above, however, are sufficiently abstract and foundational as to alter those sets of beliefs that constitute elites’ developmental worldviews; as such, they alter paradigms.

ULTIMATELY, “Elites’ adherence to the notion that East Asia’s development acts as a more easily-observable and achievable but essentially similar counterpart to earlier development of the West similarly suggests that the East Asian Model is, here, a tool serving a larger purpose than itself.”
Implications:

Theoretical:
- Advocates, sceptics and opponents understand certain dynamics of process, but miss others.
- Emulation a powerful influence on development paradigms.
- Importance of historical and social-psychological factors.
- Modernisation theory is returning, particularly to Africa.

Empirical:
- Extent of emulation will depend on relative influence of emulators in both Ethiopia and Kenya.
- Despite obstacles, evidence of broader African and even global shifts in this direction.