

Theorizing the Developmental Rwandan Path and Its Relationship with China

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Abstract

When the industrialized countries stepped into modernization, similar ideas were voiced in the South. Drawn to the emerging Asian economies and modernized 'South' precedents, Rwanda began to explore a fitted way of rehabilitating and recovering from the continuing crisis under its decolonization circumstance. During this volte-face period, China, as a rising power, engaged in Rwandan practices on economic development and transition. This paper poses the related hypotheses about Chinese transformative models' transferability and the two countries moving towards within the globalization dialogue. Methodologically, this paper reveals the causal links between Rwanda's pattern of modernization and China's involvement through the perspective of developmental modernization theory and the semi-qualitative method of studies. Based on the statistical analyses and theoretical research, the intrinsic distinction between these two economies is noted. Furthermore, the thesis also elaborates on the importance of a better-balanced development of North, South, and East, which could have beneficial consequences as a whole.

Keywords: regionalism, globalization, modernization theory, Sino-Rwanda relationship, international relations

1. Introduction

As regional economic cooperation is mushrooming in nearly every corner of the world, China's around a half-century of interactions with African states has provided a characterized study of this geopolitical-related and joint interests-gathered economic cooperation in this age of globalization. Although regionalism has spread quickly along with the development of globalization around the world, the process in Africa was relatively weak before the middle of the 1990s. Moreover, only after the beginning of the twenty-first century, because of instabilities within each

African country, establishing and strengthening area cooperation have been pursued by every suffered.

The tide of African engagement with China completely shifted after China's admission to the United Nations in 1971. Since then, China has gradually gained a majority of the recognition of the whole continent in 40 years. The current Chinese relations with the continent of African continent need to date back to the 1960s, and only after the "reform and opening" led by Deng in the 1980s and following "global factory" status in the 1990s that Sino-Africa connectivity began to reach new heights and

became more engaged, bilaterally, and openly. Within these staged connections, economic bonds have been at the forefront of Sino-Africa relationships, which have changed along with China's economic capabilities and Africa's stage-changed diversified development needs, and the forms of China's economic engagement in Africa have radically shifted.

Based on this economic connection, Rwanda, as a quintessential trading partner with China, which also has rehabilitated its economy from the ashes of genocide in short 20 years, seems could be a representative to be researched and discussed as a case study in the subsequent part.

Through the jigsaw of China's financial engagement in aid and trade in Rwanda, the Sino-Africa cooperation can be more clearly studied as a regionalized global activity in this multipolar world. In addition, the study of these regional blocs might help scholars to be certain of the meaning and necessity of regional collaborations and overcome the absolute contradiction between regionalism and globalism since regional cooperation could be used to push forward domestic reforms in the meantime to fulfill liberalization step by step in the future.

2. Literature Review

Based on the prevalence and skepticism of regional (East-South) cooperation and China's rising engagements with Africa, scholars have actively studied the reasons and mechanisms behind it. At present, discussions and perceptions of Sino-Africa economic cooperation are diversified. Some reckon that China's overall economic engagements with Africa are state-led, realism-oriented, and recolonization-based practices; others argue that the burgeoning relationship with China is the main reason for Africa's unanticipated "renaissance" (Shaw, 2021) and bright prospects at the turn of the 21st century (Hanson, Kararach, & Shaw, 2012).

Academically, the China-Africa partnership within current works of literature is mainly analyzed through three theories: neo-Marxism, Liberalism, and Modernism, with a focus on different points of the relations.

Targeted at China's motivated aid and investment in Africa, neo-Marxists consider these series of engagement and practices as interests-focused, capitalistic structures-decided, and irreversible, at last, could lead to substantive implications in the future East-South

inequality. For example, Agbebi and Virtanen (2017) have stated in their paper that despite China's claim to pursue socialism with Chinese characteristics, it is a market-oriented country, which must be situated in the core, or at least the semi-periphery in the dependency system. And to fuel its industries and open manufacturing markets, China keeps its eye on its neo-colonized partner's raw materials and rich resources (Bbaala, 2015) and establishes a new mechanism to stabilize the colonial relationship through investment and aid.

Although, in a certain proportion of cases, Chinese economic engagement in Africa is state-led, government-controlled, and SOEs-based (Xu, 2012), its private economic involvement in Africa is promising and advancing substantially (Xing, L., & Farah, A. O., 2016). With a similar historical background and developing economic mightiness, China and Africa's partnership is like-minded and common-valued, which provides a sound base for further trade and economic cooperation at the liberal level. However, the single scope of theorization in studying international relations has been criticized due to realistic reasons. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that Africa's fast economic rehabilitation in the first 20 years of the 21st century directly results from the recognition of the tenets of economic neoliberalism (Jean-Germain Gro & Fung, 2019).

Being called "the developmental states" in the post-neoliberal time by the Export Credit Agencies (ECA), many African countries prioritize their economic development as the top policies and enact effective and interferential instruments to promote such goals within this globalization environment and the trade-oriented relationship with China. From the aspect of Modernization theories, after the cold war, the nascent states within the war-torn African continent were desperately in search of a model of development to promote their economy and enhance their political independence. (Chiot, D, 1993) Meanwhile, after the market's opening and economic transformation, China has precisely shown itself as the exemplification of Africa. In this way, the Sino-Rwanda two-way trade flows and the Rwandan unanticipated "renaissance" were not caused by external dependency but by the deep-seated reformative impetus toward modernization.

3. Methodology

As illustrated in the above-mentioned academic discourses on China's robust involvement in African states, the tones towards these relationships range from pessimistic to optimistic. Among the discussions, one of the most debated questions is whether Africa is passively exploited (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2011). Alternatively, as Firoze and Marks (2007) pointed out that an undistinguished "Chinese neo-colonization" is replacing the previous "Western imperialism." What is the meaning of this regional cooperation under the context of globalization and the post-colonization era is still the question that needs to be answered.

As a critical methodological approach in social science and international relations, the Marxism school of thought and its offshoot are usually used as a model to study the mechanisms inside countries' relations. Similarly, in Sino-Africa studies, the Marxism scope of viewing shows the unlikeness between these two partners well. But the absolute generalization, conceptualization, and lack of complementary opinions are still the points to go forward. Under this circumstance, a close-up and comparative study is needed to overcome the theoretical challenges that such layered complexity poses to researchers. In this way, the Modernization theory from the area of development research, with its emphasis on the internal drive for country evolution and maturity, new leadership, and country's greater openness, could deliver a new perspective on interpreting African developmental transformation under the context of regional cooperation and globalization's influences.

In terms of variables, to characterize the China-Africa relations and validate the working hypothesis along with the research, three main factors will be measured, which are Rwanda's demographic data, macroeconomic and structural policy settings, and its external global partnerships (mainly economic cooperation with China), meanwhile, this relations' influence on the global multilateralism structure.

Nowadays, the direction of global development policies has transformed these days. For example, the SDG's two underlying premises of

"leave no one behind" (LNOB) and "endeavor to reach the furthest behind first" represent a significant normative progression toward more holistic and inclusive development, which also means the appearance of a more averaged and balanced modernized world soon. Accordingly, along with these tendencies and objectives, the emphases and efforts are turning on the less developed and marginalized states, simultaneously, how could the process of improving and eliminating extreme conditions be advanced and proceed in these areas.

On the other hand, before the plan of LNOB in recent years, the rooted ethnic distinction, post-colonized background, and war-tore body have already made Rwanda resides at the top of the list of sub-Saharan African countries which need support countries to put efforts into. Subsequently, along with the aid and interactions with international donors, the idea of 'stepping into the modernized' was gradually embedded and implemented within the country through the progress of actualizing urbanization and industrialization.

3.1 Developmental States in the Post-Neoliberal Era

Discernible economic progress in Rwanda and other South countries are impressive due to the multiplying increase in GDP (e.g., Figure 1), national income, and capital accumulation, which have been achieved under the state-led development, industrial-related policies enacting, and the building of the extractive industries in the early of the 21st century. Back in the 1950s, within the paradigm of economic modernization, only a few countries realized sustainability and productivity through effective state structural transformation. Till the post-20th century, as a result of disillusionment of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and its insisted Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), the depression period was characterized by developing countries turning to explore and search for alternative strategies and options, moreover, emulating, even replicating, the development strategies from East Asia to maintain economic development and industrialization in the context of global market integration.

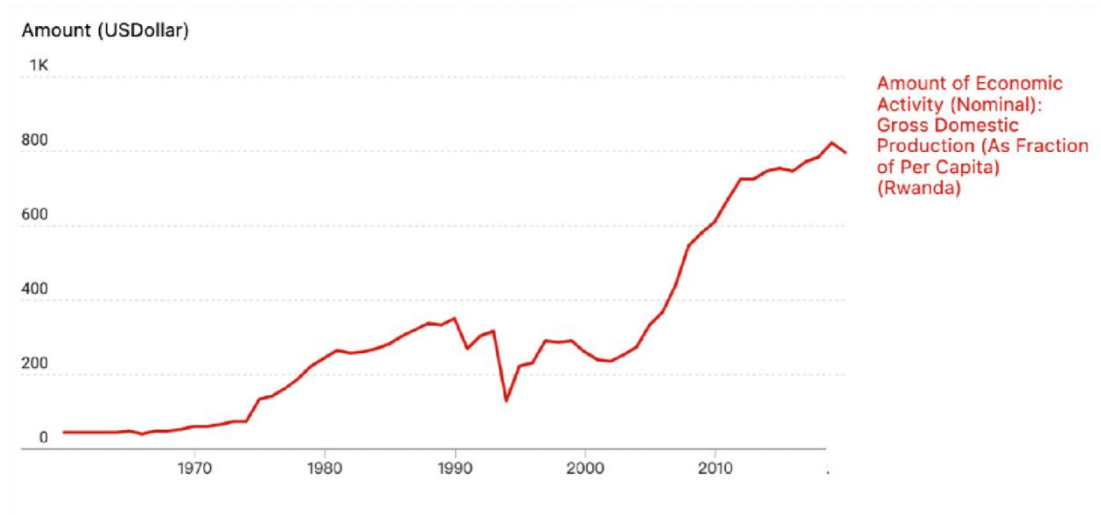


Figure 1. Gross domestic product per capita in Rwanda

Notes: Gross domestic product per capita in Rwanda. From World Bank, 2022.

(https://datacommons.org/tools/timeline#&place=country/RWA&statsVar=Amount_EconomicActivity_GrossDomesticProduction_Nominal_PerCapita).

As Albert Hirschman (1981) said in his article that “development is essentially a record of how one thing leads to another”. For a state, like Rwanda which is marked with weak capacities, inequalities, and oppression under colonial rules, achieving rehabilitation and restructuring within the existing structures seems to be an elusive objective. In this way, the key determinant of further development and success is to find a model and an alternative way of crafting development strategies that can be adapted by Rwanda for creating and sustaining new sources of growth within the new order of globalization and modernization.

3.2 Evolution Within the Theory of Modernization

As “development” has been deemed as the guiding principle of modern times, the countries of the global South have searched for ways of transitioning from a subsistence “traditional” to an advanced “modern.” And it was exactly the time of the development studies and the birth of classical modernization theory, which has swept sociological academia since the late 1950s. It starts from Weber’s (1958) differentiation between *Gemeinschaft* (the community) and *Gesellschaft* (the society) as a way of studying distinguishable ways of human integration and interaction (Nisbet, 1969). Based on the illustrations of Weber, societies are exemplified by European societies, as their internal interactions and integration could foster economic development, technological

advancement, and cultural evolution (Nisbet, 1969). Accordingly, scholars gradually formed the concept that modernity and its attributes of developed societies served as a source for the rapid development of societies in the 19th century (Smith, 1982).

Linearly speaking, Modernization is the process of systematic transformation of developing societies towards the developed models that have reached evolution in Western Europe or Northern America and later spread to South America, Asia, and the continent of Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries (Eisenstadt, 1966). Correspondingly, modernization theory is the behavioral study of this process of social transformation and evolution and the development of societies themselves. In terms of macro-cosmic studies of modernization, the theorists focus on the behavioral trajectories and distinct processes of modernizing nations and their societies, economies, and politics. From the microcosmic standpoint, scholars are more emphasize the componential elements of modern social entities. For instance, the shared similarities across modernizing nations, the emergent economic structures, and the level of urbanization and industrialization. These two distinctively focused approaches of analyses are often combined when doing the research, as the ingredients of mechanization or industrialization are embedded in the process of economic growth, and different climacteric

changes and modernization processes are based on effects to identify.

Although, as a framework and an approach for studying and analyzing the transitions in political regimes, the theory itself has been criticized for its unsatisfactory due to ordering the current study states into simplified classifications and providing a Social Darwinism in its original logic, Modernization theory is still the major perspective in the state's development and social evolution studies since the 1950s. Besides, the beauty of the Modernization theory, its dynamic perspective on social evolutionary development, has supplied and complemented its pre-categorization and polarized classifications.

Moreover, nowadays, with the amount of sociopolitical and socioeconomic transitions over the preceding 30 years, scholars' and social scientists' attention have been refocused on the process of development. From the 90s Germany reunification, the widening of the EU, the BRIC countries, and the Belt and Road Initiative, this global tendency of development reminded the necessity and renewed the interest for a better understanding of not only the transition facts itself but also the links between countries and different parts of the world.

3.3 'Decolonized' Modernization Theory on Rwanda's Transformation

The root causes for these transformations and evolution are embedded inside the fabric of each country, which in many cases, are unique and complicated. As for Rwanda, from Ruanda-Urundi to now an independent state, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) has under-girded and materialized modernism through visionary leadership and a set of efficient modernization strategies emphasizing transforming the state structure both economically and politically.

As a part of the African continent, Rwanda contained cultural attributes such as staged economic growth and 'underdevelopment' (Rostow, 1960; Lewis, 1954). Its economy has experienced a long way from the genocide in 1990, which ripped apart not only the apartheid citizens but also its economic fabric, till now, the nominal GDP has surpassed USD 10 billion in 2021. However, further situations and evidence from similar conditioned countries prove the assertion that certain economic growth does not equate to the development of the society itself

(Frank, 1987). With the example of Nigeria and Angola, which countries have earned from resources exports, but more than 80% of the population still surviving under extreme poverty life conditions (Carmody, 2011). This situation verified the view that economic growth doesn't translate into social development, even though it's necessary for evolution and development. Furthermore, an all-encompassing and all segments including sustainable development it's the one suit for Rwanda, and the African continent (Chilcote, 1984; Frank, 1987).

This means that, on the one hand, Rwanda anticipates navigating the developing trajectory of the developed world, for example, European societies and North American countries, to rehabilitate from the recession (Rostow, 1960). And on the other hand, considering its ex-colonial and apartheid identity, undergoing independent movements, inner decolonial resistance to imperial, colonialism and related knowledge, as well as the wishes to decrease dependence on western foreign aid, Rwandans and the government refuse to expose the Western or Eurocentric models and epistemologies on the African continent. Instead, they choose to turn to countries out of the West. Besides, in the meantime, the negative impacts of the financial crisis in 2007 and the disappointing resilience of European economies prompt a significant reflection on whether there is an alternative model to develop in the world.

Theoretically speaking, based on Sandbrook's (1986) and Friedman's (2006) studies, the major objective of de-coloniality is to respect the sociocultural milieu of the African continent and states that the developmental structures would build upon. Similarly, Thandika Mkandawire (2011) also demonstrates that to 'catch up' in more efficacious and morally acceptable ways of changing the life chances of millions of African people with the connection on 'initial conditions' of wars, slave labor, and colonialism.

Moreover, another part of the world answers and provides the evidence with the rise of Asian tigers and China, which would fit into Rwanda's socioeconomic milieu more with similar cultural and historical narratives. Just like President Kagame has stated that "we look at those Asian economies like Singapore or China as inspirational development models due to the rapid pace at which the governments successfully transformed the countries."

Following these fitted templates, Rwanda rapidly recovered in the context of political consolidation; unlike other post-conflict societies which spiral into endemic instability and crime, Rwanda is hailed by the United Nations as a 'model modern city of the 2000s'. Yet, the prospects are still uncertain, and challenges and criticisms remain along with the progress in development. Accompanied by President Kagame and the RPF leadership bringing the undeveloped lake region into a stable regime, many scholars in the field of African development have assumed that the process would personalize the state resources by those in power, which would continue to act as a hinder to further economic growth and development in Africa (Hyden, 1983; Sandbrook 1985). Young (1988), Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2012), Pritchard (2013), Ansoms and Cioffo (2016), and Hasselskog (2017) also confirmed their concerns that the vision of Rwandan implemented modernization theory and introduced policies could help to consolidate personal rule and state weakness in Africa, as the structure may build on the personal interests rather than the states. Rwanda's dependence on the leadership of Paul Kagame put the future into greater uncertainty, the country's relations with neighboring regions remain a potentially destabilizing factor, and a managed transition to a greater modernized society remains a priority over the long-term development process (Jee-A van der Linde, 2021). The question 'What is both past and not over? (Stoler 2016)' is still the challenge for modernizing and transforming Rwanda to search, struggle, and tackle.

3.4 Poverty to Partnership: Rwanda's Quest for Renaissance and China's Engagement

For Kigali, the apartheid condition adds to a list of troubles that this country is facing in the last century, from the basic infrastructure to the bureaucratic state capacity have all been torn into pieces, therefore, the path to peace and development was 'foggier' for the landlocked ex-colonized region.

When the frame tilts toward its uncrystallized partner, China was also through the struggling time of policy shifting and revolution to rebuild its downhill economy and society that were heavily affected by the Cultural Revolution since 1968. Until the decisive vote on restoring the legal rights and admission of the communist delegated China in the U.N. Days later of the milestone time, on November 12, the two

countries decided to align their developmental strategies of 'renaissance' and take advantage of each other's complementarity under the framework of cooperation and joint development.

3.5 Difference Between the Two Modernized Models

In the preceding section, a hypothesis based on China and Rwanda's similar status as developing countries on the global stage was raised. The contentious question is whether the Chinese characterized mode of modernization would be transferable and mirrored by Rwanda in their way of progress. At first glance, it might be easy to draw a conclusion that with the basic conditions of a dense population, the upheaval of grassroots, agricultural-oriented economies, and poverty reduction motivations, Rwanda would become the next 'China' by a 'copy-paste' way of reforms, but instead, the situations might be far complicated when talking these direct imitations into account.

Turning gaze to the differences between these two countries, the first is the size of the territory. In case of Rwanda, it is a geographically small state with the highest population density in sub-Saharan Africa. On the contrary, China covers a colossal land area, which at the same time leads to its substantial problem of a wide gap between different regions and areas, from coastal to inland cities, from urban to rural areas, and from industrialized cities to border areas. As for current Rwanda, the geographically related inequality is still the result of racial segregation and redistribution policies on income and wealth in the post-genocide era.

The second is the historical and political foundation part, Rwanda used to share a long monarchical ruled time with Burundi and experienced ethnic strife between the Hutu crop planters and the Tutsi cattle herders until the Hutu people—the grassroots, led the country again after the upheaval. For the initial stage, the problem lies in front of Rwanda is still the functionality and reliability of the current ruling party and its law institutions; the RPF should still concentrate efforts on being accepted by the public and reconciling the racial groups in the decisive time. On the other hand, China has not been involved in a war since 1979, which provides a relatively stable environment for the government and ruling communist party to pursue the staged agricultural and economic reform goals.

The third is the demographic structures of the two countries and corresponding development strategies. According to the census and sociological studies of Rwanda's demographic composition, around 80% of Rwandans live in rural areas, and the farming populations account for more than 70% of the total inhabitants. Accordingly, accompanied by its Home-grown Solutions, reconciliation-driven 'Ubudehe' practice and other poverty reduction policies, Rwanda's emphasis on solving chronic poverty solutions is positioned under a planned economy system with a certain level of power devolved to the subordinate branches. Unlike what happened in Rwanda these days, China, although it also has huge numbers of farmers, it was faced with another couple of choices. To be privatization or keeping nationalization? Planned economy or market-driven economy? Extending government controls or loosening the ties between markets and enterprises? Rather than emphasizing whole attention on agriculture reforms, China eventually decided to choose the road of opening up in 1980. Furthermore, the conditions that damaged industries and basic infrastructure were in urgent need to be repaired and rebuilt also accelerated the policies of employment after the Great Leap Forward and the cultural revolution. In this way, although China and Rwanda are both under the circumstance of targeted poverty alleviation strategies, the differences between approaches and focuses are obvious.

In this way, sharing a similar development model with the precedent, Rwanda has inherited and practiced its culture-based way of transformation, because China's characterized path to its development was based on its realities, historical values, and traditions. Similarly, the Rwandan strategies should also focus on, and keep focusing on grounding its situations and internal conditions while preserving the uniqueness of culture, maintaining state sovereignty, and drawing experience from the examples of the others.

3.6 Two Partners' Relationship Moves Towards

While maintaining their macroeconomic and microeconomic stabilities, China and Rwanda have gradually deepened and tightened their mutual engagement during the past decades. China's contemporary economic engagement with Africa is a complicated issue with many facets. On the whole, it's a mutual benefit scenario for both sides. With this diplomatic tie

warming, Rwanda has, for its part set a long-term developmental strategy targeted at transforming the Great Lake Region into an upper-middle-income nation by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050.

Besides, the positive bond between China and Rwanda has been continuously reinforced over the past decades and got cemented with President Xi's visit in July of 2018, at which point 15 bilateral cooperation agreements were signed with Rwandan President Paul Kagame. These agreements have been sealed during the visit with a focus on strengthening mutual investment in areas like geological survey, e-commerce, basic infrastructure, civil air transportation cooperation, law enforcement, visa exemption policy, human resource development, and the Belt and Road Initiative, to give 'fuel' to each other. As a landlocked region, Rwanda is looking forward to cooperating with China to lift the state out of its geographic isolation situation because of the transit system which can smoothly move goods to the shores or ship the items to the other sides of the African continent. Moreover, under the Belt and Road Initiative, development degrees in fields such as agriculture, manufacturing, health care, and education level would also expect to upgrade with the nudging of the agreements and this connected belt road. But with dynamically changed reality unfolding, the ground for the Sino-Rwanda economic relation is shifting towards a new direction.

In terms of China's engagement in Africa stretches back decades, the economic engagement was reinforced only after the 2000s when the modernization model of China became resource-intensive in particular, and its domestic supplies of natural resources, minerals, and energy were dwindling. At this stage, China faced a rapid increase in labor forces which provided the country with a comparative advantage in manufacturing but a limitation in natural resources. By comparison, the continent of Africa was comparatively resource-rich and had a smaller labor force. These complimentary features led the previous relationship into a collaboration with China importing raw materials from Africa, and China's enormous demand for raw materials drove up the world market prices and volumes for raw materials, improving the terms-of-trade of African countries, as the exporters of natural resources (Zafar, 2007).

According to current tendencies, the original trade and investment pattern is likely to steadily shift to coordinate with the dynamic demographics within two countries.

As for China, based on statics the working-age population has peaked and has a high chance of continuous shrinkage over the coming decades, simultaneously, household income and consumption are also rising, which would contribute to a labor market tightening and a wage increase. This circumstance is not well-matched with China's old-growth model, which is now running out of steam with its original emphasis on exports and investment. Compared with the past, China's nowadays dynamic mode of development is less resource-intensive; correspondingly, the needs for energy and raw materials are relatively muted. According to David Dollar's (2016) studies on China's direct investment in Africa and its trade pattern, China is going to be a steady supplier of foreign investment for other countries, and part of the investment will contain moving manufacturing value chains to lower-wage states for adapting to the inner dynamics. Besides, China's appetite for natural resources will stay muted compared to the nascent phase of development.

In the case of Rwanda's demographics, it's moving towards the opposite of China's. Very similar to China's situation at the burgeon of the economic reform 40 years ago, based on the demographic data (see Figure 2), now more than half of Rwandans are below the age of 24, which means the working-age population of Rwanda would increase over the next decades and might keep rising until the late of the century. Therefore, Rwanda's government needs to create around 5-6 million jobs per quarter to balance the expanding workforce. On the one hand, Sino-Rwanda economic structure would not change overnight, and large volumes of Chinese manufacturing and value chains would be more natural to migrate from the local area to nearby locations such as Vietnam and Bangladesh instead of far Rwanda, soon. On the other hand, Rwanda's demographics, and economy, which are set out with an extremely low base of industrialization extent, are presenting a task that still needs to be resolved.

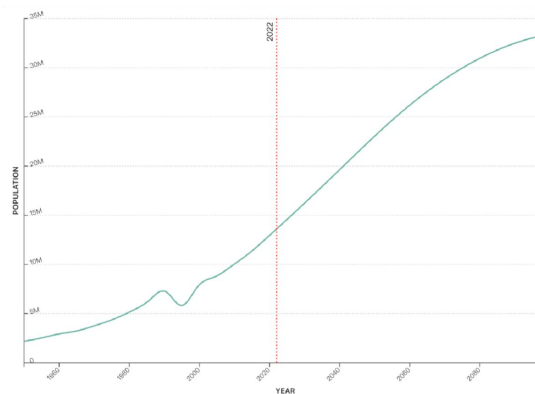


Figure 2. Rwanda Population Projections

Notes: From World Population Prospects, 2022. (<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/rwanda-population>).

Although, along with the China-Africa Summit and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), this strategic partnership would mean setting more development funds and investments, opening up more markets, and double assistance to Rwanda in the following time, subtle changes might lead to a huge impact on Rwandan economy. It's rational for governments to have a long-term plan for the current economic relationship that began very much centered on energy, and minerals are shifting towards a greater emphasis on human resources in the coming part of this relationship.

4. Conclusion

Drawn to the precedents set by the developing and emerging economies of Asia, such as China, Singapore, and Malaysia, which all achieved phenomenal economic transformation under modernizing governments, many African leaders including Rwanda have expressed their admiration for this modernized mode of governance. Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia to Paul Kagame of Rwanda are all advocates of the new economic-driven transformation models rather than the previous. However, it's debatable how transferable and applicable these precedent models with their early success are for Rwanda and other African states. Furthermore, with the more and more intertwined relationship between China and Rwanda under the post-colonial and globalization era, what is the next step of this partnership?

As qualitatively researched and elaborated in this paper, the hypothesis about the 'suitability' of the Chinese characterized model towards

other developing countries still exists problems according to the intrinsic differences within countries. In terms of Rwanda's economic development issues, one should be careful when generalizing and categorizing the 'South' states, as there is no one 'formula' that fits all in the case of a state's economic transition and transformation. With differences on geography, demographic structures, and stability of the political environment make the 'copy-paste' way of reforms un-realizable for Rwandan realities.

Besides, from a long-term and hard perspective on Sino-Rwanda future relationship, China's growth has slowed down, and the economy is transitioning to a new pattern of consumption; meanwhile, the Rwandan economy and commodity cycle, which used to be supported by high commodity prices and export boom during the past period, are likely to be replaced in the foreseeable future. From the perspective of bilateralism, the possibility of a future asymmetrical relationship between China and Rwanda should still be recognized and faced.

Therefore, to correspond with changing demographic structures inside and keep up with the shifting labor market and environment outside, it's important for Rwanda's government to extend readable services and manufacturing sectors and become more feasible in the long run. As for the oil-dependent states like Angola, Nigeria, and Ghana, these economies are now strategizing on diversifying their economies to cushion against external changes. It would be a task for Rwanda to keep balancing the aid and investment relationship with foreign actors, not only China but also other potential partners.

Although, under current conditions, the Chinese relationship with Africa, as a precedent of South-South cooperation, has been defined as a 'manifestation of solidarity among peoples and states of the South' by the UN in 2020. However, the key, according to Madison Condo (2012), is that all players realize that, ultimately, the African continent should take control, leverage their advantage of resources and energies, and decide what form they prefer this relationship to take. In the long run, for all the actors on the continent, a mightier African partner would provide a healthier soil for partners' aid and investments and deal with the problems that might emerge more sustainably and satisfactorily than a weaker comrade.

This thesis works to theorize Rwanda's

modernization and study the Sino-Rwanda relation in chronological order and contextualize the inner changes of Rwanda under the context of discernable historical and economic trends during the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, which provides a reference for historians in relevant fields to understand why these shifts occurred at certain times. In addition, this work highlights the problem of oversimplifying the development model of the South and other developing countries through a comparative study that identifies the latent differences between China and Rwanda and simultaneously supplements the modernization theory-related research. Moreover, as a globalization study, this thesis outlines a whole-picture outlook of the changing international relations, enabling the leaders or policymakers to comprehend Africa's role in global relations and the issues that must be addressed during the transformation process and development.

However, as a starting point for Sino-Africa relations, bilateral relations also include dissonant elements, transnational issues, and inclusivity-related weaknesses. From creating new norms and standards to establishing external frameworks, current regional-oriented relations still need to be explored to a sufficient extent on its scale and level. Besides, on the regional level, cooperation and organizations require more elaborative research to reveal the reasons behind and dynamics beyond and enact more tailored and effective policies for a shared harmonized future in and out of Africa.

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