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The Chinese Communist Party as Bedrock for Technological Breakthrough: Lessons for Political Parties in Nigeria

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Abstract- The Chinese Communist Party as Bedrock for Technological breakthrough: lessons for political parties in Nigeria attempt to analyze the communist party central role in Chinese technological advancement and economic development over the years. The objective was to present the learning points for Nigeria political parties as the Chinese communist Party entrench authoritarian capitalist development model that aids their technological breakthrough in science and technology. The paper found out that the communist party was a leading force in Chinese post civil war development, the party have also been performing adjucating role between their centralized state and the market. The research conclude that the party has made China an enduring development model that will withstand the test of time and recommends among other things that research in science and technology should be given premium attention by political parties and government of Nigeria. Political party's hierarchy should be well grounded in leadership and development politics through establishment of party academy.

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I. Introduction

The journey of china in the development of technological innovation was a long but enduring one. Before the emergency of People Republic of China in 1949, it was known as a poorly and severely underdeveloped country devoid of modern technology to drive their economy.

There was no difference between the Chinese Communist Party and the government of China. It is the party structure that develops or restructures their political and economic plan. The communist party was involved in China's science and technology policy over the years. Their first efforts were in 1959, when technology policy was drafted towards creation of heavy duty industries. In 1976 saw an attempt to internalize domination of indigenous technological project as parts of their national life.

The party and the government had another technology driven reform launched under Deng Xia Oping and was consolidated by Jiang Zenin in 2001 towards building an independent research base that is market oriented and product driven (Joel, 2013). Between 2002 and now, Chinese policy of has favored technological breakthrough by support of the party, proper legislation and state centric financing. The communist party did not only build the Chinese empire through technological innovation but they also put concerted effort in creating ideological platform for their citizen and party members. The CPC as the communist party is fondly called is a single party without dissent or opposition which made the government and the party so powerful.

The party has network of schools at both central and pronvincial level with devotion of significant time in indoctrination of most senior cadre to imbibe the Chinese cultural and the ideological ground work of government. The communist party therefore continues to commit resources in maintaining the network of party school in the production of their think tanks and political elites (Kerry, 2012). The Chinese policy makers constantly promote technological driven economy as a result of the above.

The Nigeria political parties were focused on control of power and distribution and allocation of resources without identifiable policy for technological breakthrough as bedrock for national development. (Omodia, 2010) corroborated on the above postulations that the Nigeria state and her democratic process has been stagnated by poor party politics on the account of absence of internal democracy in the party structure, ethnic affiliation within the party system, poor political leadership, party indiscipline and lack of party ideology unlike the Chinese communist party.

Conceptual Framework

II. The Chnese Communist Party and Technological Innovation: from Acient to Modern

The Chinese government through ministry of science and technology has been the key organ empowered to coordinate and fund technological development in china. Patterns of their planning was result based compared to what was obtainable in Nigeria.

The ministry coordinates not less than five (5) important technology development programs. They are:

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i. Key technologies research and development program with specific attention to industrial technology.
ii. Development of 863 technological driven program focuses on basic and applied research that is market oriented for production of marketable technologies.
iii. The torch program as a nationwide campaign to aid commercialization of high tech products.
iv. 973 program was designed on cutting edge technology for multidisciplinary project.
v. The spark program aimed at promoting the developmental and use of technology in rural areas (Joel, 2013).

According to James (2014), the Chinese drive for indigenous innovation of technology was a result of political and economic campaign that all hands must be on deck for Chinese collective action to catch up and surpass the west in terms of science and technology. They focused on their fast growing domestic market and powerful regulating regime to firstly decrease their reliance on foreign technology and thus relied on indigenous technologies that will be able to cater for their infrastructure, environmental and social challenges. It will surprise many that Chinese long years of technological innovation was officially unveil in 2006 as evidence of 1978 reform blueprint for indigenous technology.

In 2006, they had a plan of becoming a technological power house by 2020 and a global leader by 2050. The blue print encourages Chinese enterprise to establish research and development centers overseas. The blueprint equally set agenda for collaboration research with foreign universities. It does define indigenous innovation as "enhancing original innovation through co-innovation and re-innovation based on the assimilation of imported technology". The above has been the driving force of Chinese technological breakthrough as the west sees this as a grand style technology theft by the Chinese government (James, 2014).

(Bark, 2007: 338) sees China stride in technological breakthrough and painted the picture as:

> *emerging institutional fabric governing innovation in Chinese society represents an evolving synthesis of values and routines that have been formed over centuries on the one hand, and new principles introduced as parts of ongoing political and economic change on the other hand.*

Bark position was that the communist party has central political influence on the value and line of action of Chinese citizen and thus have significant control over the markets despite the introduction of open or free market with level of state control. Their government centric economy had actually helps in their technological breakthrough.

Morkyr,(1990) believed that the cradle of Chinese technological advancement could be traced not only to the communist party but the pre-communist party erah when they had improvement in Agriculture technological for rice cultivation through wet field techniques and hydraulic engineering. They therefore had a breakthrough in early irrigation system and other important innovation such as weeding racks, iron plow, deep-tooth harrow and seed drives. Morkyr further stated that what accounted for Chinese technological breakthrough was their gift of benevolent leaders in the course of their development. He further postulated that their gift of extreme talented leader was a game changer for their development. He aptly posited that "the absence of political competition did not mean that technological progress cannot take place, but it did mean one decision maker can deal with it a master blow (Mokyr, 1990:231). In view of the above, the Chinese government from 1978 sees research and development as strategic sector of the economy. The party continue to promote the Chinese modernity view and modernization became a new direction of Communist Party ideology. The party document defines the role of the state and the party as the party most play adjucating role between the market and the state. (Kerry, 2002).

According to Wyne, (2015) the Chinese development mode is a state led that had been attractive to Sub-Sahara Africa Such as Nigeria. He further stated that with Chinese experience, state led development can be extra ordinary favorable under good political environment. The rapid industrial development was seen as outcome technological advancement, huge foreign investment that invariably led to increase in production. Qian, (2002) was of view that the aforementioned development makes the elimination of people commune as a basic principle of communalism and thus paves way for township – collective house hold system of production. Larchy (2006) stated that the tax sharing reform initiated by the party gave incentive to local administration to promote capital and technological intensive industries. The tax reform that concentrate revenue at the central pose financial pressure on the local government which made them to explore innovative means of raising revenue.

The Chinese Communist Party was so powerful because it was the party of modern Chinese history. The party fought and won the Civil war of 1949. They have played significant roles in building the Chinese market economy. Gregory et' al (2006) asserted that the Chinese reform in term of technological innovation and economy was gradually local and sectoral experimentation. Their economy was therefore organized regionally which pave way for un-uniform institutional change and economic development.

The introduction of private investment in Chinese economic was not only to ignite investment in technological advancement but also lower

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unemployment and avert protest that could be a threat to their political survival. Private enterprise began to emerge in China from September 1997, the party Fifteenth Congress made pronouncement that private ownership in an important component of China economy while state ownership is the pillar after privatization of state owned enterprise between the 1995 and 1996 where 11.5 million workers were down sized (Qian, 2002).

The Chinese Academic of Science is the China most prestigious institutions initiate knowledge innovation program to mobilize resource towards establishing not less than 30 internationally recognized research institute by 2010 with ultimate goal of having five out of them as leading global leaders in research and innovation. In order to achieve this, the Chinese academic research institutes were cut down to 89 from 120 as a reform for better service delivery.

China has become one of the global technology leaders today because of consistence policy reform by the Chinese Communist Party. According to Can and Nambahar (2015) they argued that over the last century, global technology leadership was taken over from Britain by the United State of America. And China having positioned herself through technological breakthrough will assume global leadership of technology in the nearest future. They studied further that China has not only become economic super power over the years but also technological super power with their market and products becoming relevant to Europe and the United State of America.

According to Thomas (2011), China was ranked second in the global research output which is measured by number of papers published in research journals. Not only this, China was closely behind the United State and Japan in patent fillings on the Treaty for Patent Cooperation monitored by World Intellectual Property Office as two Chinese large telecommunications equipment manufacturer ZTE and Hauwei technologies submitted 2,309 and 2,094 patent respectively (WIPO, 2014).

Between November 9th to November 12th 2013, the Chinese Communist Party 18th party congress held harp on new wide range of economic reform with a 60 points document to serve as a guide for the anticipated reform. The reform among other things is for the market to play a decisive role in the economy in order to boost market competitiveness and economic efficiency (Wyne, 2015).

Joshua, (2013) discuss extensively on Chinese stride in economic development through technological innovation. He began his analysis from the premise of Chinese reform in the 70's on how they have fared from poor and mostly agrarian society such as Nigeria to the second largest economy after the United State of America in 2010 with a globally renowned city like Shanghai and Beijing. He stated further that the Chinese technological breakthrough or development model was made possible through streamline and rapid decision making of Chinese leadership devoid of convoluted legislature and judiciary like the western democracy.

The Chinese one party autocracy or what is called centralized or rather an autocratic democracy led by reasonably enlightened group of people gave the present day China impetus and great advantage in taking a center stage in global technological innovation leadership and development race. Joshua cited Thomas Friedman (A New York Times Foreign Affairs Columnist as saying that "one party (communist party) can just impose the politically difficult but critically important policies needed to move a society forward". Some new emerging western literatures have begun to admit the existence of Beijing Consensus like the Washington Consensus coined by John Williamson. Beijing consensus is the promotion of China authoritarian capitalist model of economy by Chinese leaders that has become globally attractive to Asian, Sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the world. The proponents of Beijing Consensus believed that western democracy will start copying the Chinese model of development that is predicated upon reasonable lower profits that has made the Chinese products and services cheaper across the world with unimaginable huge return on investment (ROI). The 2008 bail out of financial sector and major leading companies in Europe and United State of America is a manifestation that Beijing's economic intervention model has come to stay as the best development model and at the same time as acceptable alternative to free market economy thereby demystifying the invisible hand of the market.

Joshua concluded that many countries gave preference to Chinese development model to America development model today as they are eager to learn how China modernized her authoritarianism. He admitted that despite the allures of Chinese achievement in technological breakthrough vis-à-vis development model, there have challenges of corruption, foolish leaders and lack of checks and balance on the state power. He aptly asserted in his own word that:

> *for every Deng Xiaping, the politically savvy and foresighted architect of China's economic reforms, one could find ten Mobutu Sese Sekos or Kim Jong ils, dictators who used their power solely for venal purpose (Joshua, 2013:133).*

III. Lessons for Political Parties in Nigeria

Political party suppose to be a fulcrum of ideology and a vehicle that drive viable development through a clear policies on Research and Development as in the case of Chinese' Communist party. Nigerian

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political parties especially the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has travelled to China for more than one occasion to learn about Communist Party and how they harnessed ideas for development.

This led to the establishment of National Democratic Institute (NDI) by Peoples Democratic Party in Nigeria. The Communist Party played central role in their government; therefore, the leaders of the party were also leaders of government. The party makes important legislative agenda for the government. But in Nigeria today, the party is subservient to the leaders they elected into power. In this case, president of the country, a senate or a governor automatically become leaders of their respective party. This scenario eroded the supremacy of party leadership and imposition of undemocratic principle that was anathema to National development (Omodia, 2010).

Another lesson political parties could learn from Chinese communist party is the introduction of proper orientation to party members. All members of the party from ward to National level must have party certification in leadership and development policies. That means the party must have their academy across the regions in Nigeria as in the case of China. Although, funding would be a major challenge, but the development will safe political parties in Nigeria from ideological poverty presently experience in the country political system.

The Chinese communist party development policies are sacrosanct for implementation by their government. Any alteration must go through the party congress for amendment. In Nigeria today, political parties manifesto are mere rhetoric and utopian that is mostly jettison by people elected into power. This development has led to policy summersault in Nigeria.

Research in sciences and technology should be given premium attention by government and political parties in Nigeria. Lips service by parties and politician has been the bane of technological breakthrough in Nigeria. The communist party despite their achievements is still one of the highest financiers of Research and Development (RD) across the world.

The party system in Nigeria needs benevolent autocratic as in the case of communist party. The party was at times the legislature, the executives and the judiciary depending on the socio-economic scenario. Some of the Political Parties in Nigeria had the opportunities to model their party after the Chinese Communist party but ruse the opportunity due personnel aggrandizement, excessive corruption, primordial ethnic affinity and lack of ideology other than to remain in power pertually.

IV. Conclusion

The study concludes that the Chinese communist party became a virile tool for technological breakthrough in China because of their experience in the civil war that led to their emancipation in 1949. The country had characteristics of any other developing countries but what aided their transformation is their unity of purpose despite their diversity through the party leadership.

The Chinese has strong culturally value that bind them together as a nation. They had pride and believe in their inner soul in becoming a greater nation after the civil war. From their National Anthem, social values and all aspects of their national life, there exists unimaginable bond of confraternity that made them stand tall behind a single political party that ushered in technological and economic progression that bewildered the world. Their political and economic system is so dynamic that attenuate itself suite global forces in order to survive. This single feat of dynamism has made China an enduring authoritarian capitalist model that will stand the test of time.

V. Recommendations

From the foregoing discussion, the study recommends the following:

1) Research and Development in Science and Technology should be given premium attention by political parties and government of Nigeria. There must therefore be a concerted effort not only to import technology, but to study and adopt them to suit the country socio-economic reality.
2) Personality heading political parties should as a matter of urgency undergo compulsory leadership training in partnership with a recognize leadership institute across the world. This will undoubtedly impact on challenges of leadership and development by political parties in Nigeria.
3) Multiple party democracies are not good enough for Nigeria political milieu. Three ideological political parties would have been better for the country democracy. The proliferation of political parties beyond 40 parties today can never give room for a genuine ideological foundation that could trigger necessary development in science and technology.
4) The university system in Nigeria should have at least Institute of Chinese Studies to continuously understudy the China evolution and the lessons the nation can learn to accelerate their technological breakthrough. It is far from being benign to continue the same policies on science and technology that does not work for the country over the years.

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