

Consensus. The Beijing Consensus is a term coined in 2004 by Joshua Cooper Ramo, Professor at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China and former Foreign Editor for *Time* magazine. In his famous piece titled *The Beijing Consensus*, Ramo offers an analysis of the Beijing Consensus, which he argues, can be an appealing alternative to the Washington Consensus. The Beijing Consensus is founded on three “axioms”³⁵. First, China focuses on constant innovation while the Washington Consensus abhors drastic change. Second, sustainability, equality, and quality-of-life are as valid indicators of successful economies as per-capita GDP. Lastly, unlike the Washington Consensus, which is thirsty for power and advocates a hegemonic world system dominated by the United States, the Beijing Consensus places full self-determination as the greatest priority and value. In practice, self-determination has been translated by increasing multilateralism *inter alia*. In the case of China's oil policy, China created new bounds with Middle Eastern oil-rich states such as Saudi Arabia and Iran but also reached out to other partners such as North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South America to diversify its oil supply. In Ramo's words, “China's new development approach is driven by a desire to have equitable, peaceful high-quality growth”³⁶.

Unlike the Washington Consensus, the Beijing Consensus has sought to prioritize economics over political and cultural differences especially in energy policy. In other words, China has focused on finding good trading partners regardless of their political and cultural diversity. From China's point of view, China's approach to MENA is mercantilist, thus, motivated by, and targeted solely for,

markets, profits, and securing oil provisions³⁷. On the other hand, the Washington Consensus is famous for using economic relations to influence its partners' political and cultural practices. The Beijing Consensus is rooted in realism and *realpolitik*, while the Washington Consensus is driven by neo-liberal principles. One can easily see that some of Washington's trading partners who struggled to adapt to Washington's standards appreciate the Beijing Consensus. This has regularly frustrated the United States who feared that the appeal of the Beijing Consensus would diminish Washington's chances of exerting political influence by preventing it from spreading its neo-liberal model in exchange for strategic partnerships with developing countries—particularly the Middle East.

In *The Beijing Consensus*, Stefan Halper states that China definitely threatens American interests—economic interests in particular. He recognizes that the Chinese model strongly appeals to developing countries, the latter preferring “market authoritarianism and its high growth” rather than “market democracy and its freedoms”³⁸. Recent military interventions in the Middle East, such as the United States initiating war in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively, have left painful memories of foreign mediators in the region. China's lack of demand for political reform in exchange for aid or investment was received as a welcome new opportunity for oil-rich Middle Eastern countries who saw an opportunity to govern and conduct politics in their own manner without external questioning. A similar

³⁷ Feng, Z. “Oil Nexus vs. Diplomatic Crux: China's Energy Demands, Maritime Security and the Middle East Aspirations.” In *China's Growing Role in the Middle East: Implications for the Region and Beyond*. Eds. A. Sager and G. Kemp. Washington, DC: The Nixon Center. Pp. 31-42. (2010)

³⁸ Halper Stefan. *The Beijing Consensus: How China's Authoritarian Model Will Dominate the Twenty-First Century*, 2010, pp. iii.

³⁵ Ramo, J. *The Beijing Consensus*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre. (2004), Pp.8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Pp. 6.