

The March Is Not Linear: Big Party Politics and the Decline of Democracy Worldwide

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Alternative models of governance have gained credibility in recent years, as the expectations set by post-Cold War democracy promotion programs initiated following the collapse of the Soviet Union were not met. In particular, China has increasingly become a source of inspiration for a number of developing countries seeking to replicate the country's remarkable economic growth. As a part of this process of examination and emulation, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is increasingly seen as instrumental to China's national development and the party's centrality is now considered a long-term feature of their political economy, rather than being a transient phase. This revelation confronts the assumption of modernization theory, that economic growth prompts democratization; instead of fading into the background amid the growth of multiparty democracy, the CCP seems capable of maintaining hegemony within China—in fact, in a number of ways, the growth that was supposed to undermine the party seems to have strengthened its claims to legitimacy. The means by which the CCP has woven itself into a secure position within China's political economy has not gone unnoticed by other political parties globally.

Perhaps no place is the emulation of the Chinese development model more evident than in Ethiopia and Rwanda under their respective ruling parties, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Both the EPRDF and RPF have adopted a form of governance, dubbed “developmental authoritarianism,” that seems to be an isomorphic mimicry of China's model of state growth that reinforces party dominance.¹ The attempt by these parties to imitate the CCP, lacking the bureaucratic capacity that China enjoys, has given rise to a specific, anti-democratic form of governance that relies on heavy-handed repression of dissent. The rise of powerful political parties worldwide, capable of subsuming and displacing the state, represents a serious challenge to post-Cold War liberal democratic norms.

The CCP model, a political economy centered on a hegemonic ruling party that subsumes the state through the manipulation of investment, suppression of dissent, and delivery of impressive economic growth records, has both endogenous appeal to leaders attempting to retain power in their respective countries, and exogenous momentum, as China gains international clout and becomes an increasingly important source of aid and investment.

Undoubtedly, the CCP, the EPRDF, and the RPF have overseen robust economic growth by intervening in the economy and guiding investment towards certain “high priority” sectors. In China, this was done through a variety of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs); whereas in Ethiopia and Rwanda, this has been accomplished through party-owned investment companies (party-statalts).² It is estimated that 40 percent of China’s nonagricultural gross domestic product (GDP) is state-owned or controlled. If urban collectives and township and village enterprises (TVEs) are included, the estimate rises to 50 percent.³ In Ethiopia and Rwanda, the party-led investment companies have been a way to expand and cement patronage networks, fortifying their political positions while promoting growth. While it is difficult to estimate what share of the economy they control, it is clear that the seemingly robust private sectors in Ethiopia and Rwanda are dominated by party-held investments and companies that act as party appendages. A rising tide may lift all ships, however, as the EPRDF and RPF have ensured that their countries’ growth is directed by, and confers benefits to, the ruling party. This is a marked difference from the use of SOEs in other contexts which, while conferring political benefits and generating rents, also bolstered state capacity.

Across all three examples, the parties’ strength has also been bolstered by limitations on civil rights and political freedoms, enforced through an impressive surveillance apparatus and politicized security sector. This surveillance capacity has kept pace with technological change. The so-called “Great Firewall of China” has been imitated by the EPRDF and the RPF through their vast internet and telecom surveillance programs, made all the more potent by the parties’ central roles in the expansion of such services within their respective countries. China’s legal restrictions on free speech have also been mimicked by Ethiopia and Rwanda, both of which have passed draconian legislation curtailing the freedom of speech and association under the guise of national security concerns.

Low-tech methods have been continuously updated by these parties, as well. The CCP has used “neighborhood committees” for a variety of purposes, not the least of which was “snooping on ordinary citizens.”⁴ In Ethiopia, the *kebele* system of community organization has been used to expand party rolls, and in Rwanda, special training camps (*ingando*) have been used to encourage the RPF’s message. In all three countries, the military is politicized, acting as a party appendage rather than a government body. As Richard McGregor notes, “Unlike in the West, where controversies often arise about the potential politicization of the military, in China the party is on constant guard for the opposite phenomenon, the *depoliticization* of the military;” the military’s legacy, reputation, and political affiliation play a similarly critical role in quelling dissent and furthering the party’s agenda.⁵

In short, the CCP and its emulators worldwide have embarked on a process of “party development” in the name of “national development.” However, emulation is an imperfect process; the imperfect implementation of the China model and the lack of bureaucratic accountability, turnover, and capacity in these countries has created vulnerabilities within the regimes that could catalyze domestic resistance. While the role of ideas and perceptions is important in motivating the adoption of this model, the undeniable differences in the

social profiles and bureaucratic capacities of East Asian and African countries have stark implications for the potential effects of mimicking such a development strategy. As Phil Williams writes in his contribution to this book, the shortcoming of the international state system stems from the weakness of its components. A proliferation of states emulating the China model, lacking bureaucratic capacity, will further erode the stability of the global system.

The sources of legitimacy that the CCP has cultivated for itself, in particular through the imposition of term limits for bureaucrats and credible anticorruption efforts, are absent from those mimicking the CCP's success. While Ethiopia managed a smooth transition of executive power to another party member following Meles Zenawi's death, no such transition seems possible in Rwanda, as constitutional reform has been undertaken to validate Paul Kagame's ambitions for a third term. Further, the accountability mechanisms that have been adopted in these countries, including the *kebele* system and *imihigo* (both of which will be addressed below) have been criticized as oppressive expansions of party influence. The narrow base of support enjoyed by ruling parties in Ethiopia and Rwanda prompts these regimes to rely even more heavily on crudely repressive measures and their military credentials to retain power.

This chapter will address the growth record of autocratic and democratic regimes in sub-Saharan Africa, the global democratic recession, and existing Western and Chinese aid paradigms. The success of Ethiopian and Rwandan developmental authoritarianism under the EPRDF and the RPF will then be explored, paying particular attention to the mechanisms of party dominance within the economic, social, and political apparatuses, in order to construct an image of the emerging alternatives to liberal democracy. This discussion will highlight the role of party-owned investment companies, attempts at bureaucratic institutionalization, and the robust surveillance regimes of these two countries. The Ethiopian and Rwandan model will then be compared to governance patterns in China, in order to examine areas of commonality and difference between the regimes. Whether or not the model is being promoted by China or emulated by developing states will also be discussed. Finally, the implication of the spread of alternative governance models will be discussed; if "emulation can also be understood as norm diffusion," the rise of these alternative models inspired by Chinese development represents a challenge to the norms that underpin the international community and to global stability and security.⁶

Throughout this chapter, we hope to demonstrate that the rise of this model presents three threats to the liberal democratic system of norms and interstate relations: the first is the legitimization of undemocratic rule by virtue of economic performance; the second threat is the normalization of the repressive measures employed by the parties when the legitimacy garnered from economic growth wanes; and the third threat is to the system of interstate relations. In these regimes, the removal of the party (through force or credible elections) would involve the removal of the most critical aspects of the state's economic sector and leave the political sphere lacking institutions. The international system of order is dependent upon the stability of states; the longevity of developmental authoritarian

regimes is subject to speculation. Thus, the implications and characteristics of the spread of this model must be considered.

While the CCP model may not represent a wholesale challenge to the liberal democratic paradigm in the short term, it has contributed to an international political *zeitgeist* that prioritizes economic results over human rights and governmental accountability, and may facilitate the continuation of the global democratic recession. The ending of the Cold War seemed to represent the ascendancy of the liberal democratic model the United States represented; however, the march towards the end of history is not linear and the rise of alternative governance models is certainly a stumbling block in the process of global democratization. As one of the authors has written elsewhere, the durability of the Chinese economic model in the long run is completely irrelevant to the challenges American foreign policy faces today—one of which is certainly the rise and emulation of the CCP in developing countries.⁷

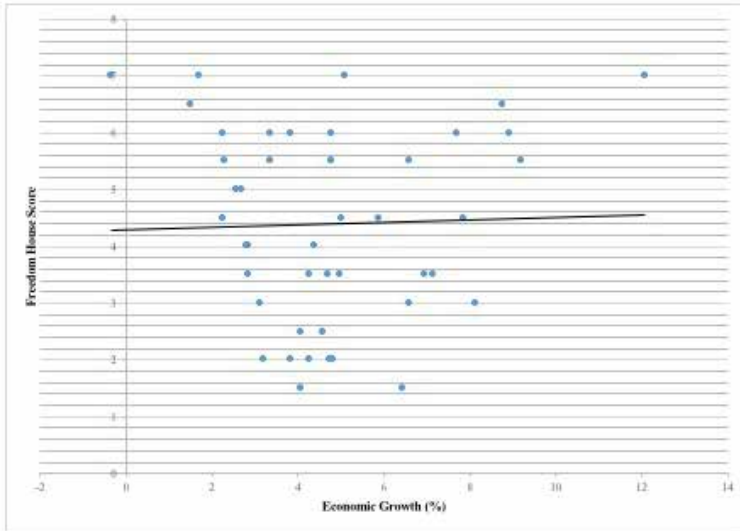
Even in the absence of Asian efforts to promote such governance or even the recognition of their role as an inspiration to developing countries, if political leaders in developing countries adopt authoritarian, party-elevating policies “based on their understanding of the Chinese model, then it [really] does exist.”⁸ The result of this model, if left unchecked, will be a more violent, unstable world in which the promotion of democracy will be challenged by the institutionalization of unaccountable governance regimes.

Democratization and Development

More than 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, global democratization efforts appear to have stalled, confounding those who assumed that the end of the Cold War would usher in an era of liberal democratic governance. According to a count by Larry Diamond in 2011, one in five of the democracies that existed during the “third wave” of democracy has subsequently experienced a democratic reversal.⁹ In addition to a declining “head count” of democracies, “the level of freedom in the world, as measured annually by Freedom House, is now in decline—for several consecutive years.”¹⁰

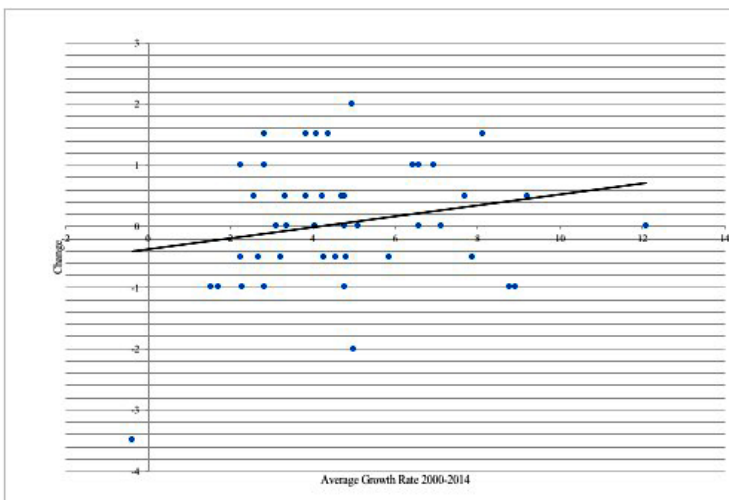
The failure of democratization to proceed as predicted, as well as the narrative surrounding the rise of the autocratic East Asian Tigers, notably China, has dampened global enthusiasm for democracy. In sub-Saharan Africa, freedom across the continent has declined as measured by annual Freedom House reports over the past decade.¹¹ At the same time, economic growth across the continent hovered just below five percent. However, overall there is little relationship between governance and growth in sub-Saharan Africa. Figure 4.1 shows a scatterplot demonstrating the relationship between Freedom House’s 2015 rankings and average growth rate since 2000. Clearly, there is little relationship between current levels of freedom and economic growth for the past 15 years.

Figure 4.1. Freedom House Score (2015) and Economic Growth



The relationship between changes in governance and economic growth is slightly more comforting to democracy advocates. Figure 4.2 illustrates the relationship between changes in Freedom House scores between 2001 and 2015 and economic growth since 2000. The slight positive trend line would suggest that growth and good governance have, at least, a weak correlation in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the highest-performing economies (including Equatorial Guinea, Chad, and Angola) are categorized as “Unfree” by Freedom House.

Figure 4.2. Difference in Freedom House Scores Between 2001 and 2015 (positive = democratization; negative = closing of political space)



Though the relationship between governance and growth across the continent is muddled and unclear, Rwandan and Ethiopian growth is exceptional. Once diamond-, gold-, and oil-exporting countries are removed from the top 10 fastest-growing economies, Ethiopia and Rwanda are the top 2 performers, boasting average growth rates of 10 percent and 8 percent respectively since 2005. Since assuming power in the mid-1990s, both of these parties have pursued and delivered economic growth and human development. Between 1990 and 2012, Rwandan GDP per capita nearly doubled, from \$353 to \$620 and its Human Development Index (HDI) score rose from 0.238 to 0.506 between 1990 and 2013. Ethiopia boasted similarly impressive growth; over the same time periods, Ethiopia's GDP per capita rose from \$251 to \$470 and its HDI score rose from 0.284 to 0.435. These gains in human development scores come not just from their economic growth, but also from the investments in education and public health that both countries have prioritized. Based on forecasts from the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects, *Business Insider* projected that Ethiopia would be the fastest-growing economy and Rwanda the 12th fastest between 2014 and 2017.¹² The question of how these countries achieved growth rates nearly double the continental average requires an understanding of their tightly controlled political economies and their ruling parties.

The strong economic performances of these countries are not incidental to their models of governance; both countries have undertaken massive and well-publicized developmental agendas since coming to power in the 1990s, with clear targets for domestic production in a handful of sectors that are tightly controlled by the parties, and relatively robust provisions of state services. While data concerning the revenues of their party-owned investment vehicles is difficult to come by, estimates suggest that these two parties are among the wealthiest on the continent—despite the lack of mineral resources and petroleum within their borders. These parties have promoted growth, and lined party coffers, through investments in export-oriented industries (such as coffee in Rwanda and cut flowers in Ethiopia), as well as through domestically-oriented investments (notably cement in both countries). These countries' ability to maintain high growth rates in the absence of political liberalization suggests that the worldwide threat to liberal democracy stems not just from autocracy in East Asia and China, but also from emulation and adaptation of such models in the Global South.

The failure of democratization and the fading enthusiasm for the model worldwide stems, in part, from the inability of states to keep pace with citizens' expectations—for both economic development and political accountability. Though the empirical relationship between governance and democracy in sub-Saharan Africa is inconclusive, a handful of autocratic success stories may spur emulation. Further, the model of democracy promoted by the United States and other traditional donor countries rests upon certain assumptions concerning state capacity that are not universal.¹³ Democracy promotion efforts and their advocates, particularly those from the United States, have overlooked that only a handful of countries have historically institutionalized bureaucratic traditions, and have demanded, at times, an unreasonable level of capacity. Frustration with the “Western model” and expectations adds to the allure of alternative governance paradigms.

In contrast, Chinese involvement with African economies has taken a “hands-off” approach to governance issues. While recent studies have demonstrated that Chinese companies are no more likely to invest in natural resources than other countries and are just as likely as other companies to submit transparency reports, a review by Dreher et al. found that Chinese aid has been disproportionately allocated to the home district of the incumbent executive.¹⁴ Further, China and the CCP have facilitated the purchase of surveillance technology for a number of African countries, enabling these governments to crack down on dissent and restrict the freedom of association.¹⁵ Unsurprisingly, “Africans who rank human rights as high in importance were more likely to have an unfavorable opinion” of Chinese activities within their countries.¹⁶ Unlike the political leaders and government officials that have seemed receptive to Chinese aid, “civil society, trade unions, and some sectors of local business have been more wary.”¹⁷ Local capacity to raise concerns about the impacts of Chinese partnership on labor practices and the domestic political economy, however, is stymied by oppressive political atmospheres and low organizational capacity.

Both Ethiopia and Rwanda have made use of the CCP’s example, and increasingly, Chinese assistance and investment, in order to bolster the power of their respective parties; however, both of these parties lack the bureaucratic capacity and institutional accountability of their Chinese counterpart, required to be stable in the long run. The spread of big-party rule, seeking to emulate East Asian and specific instances of African economic success, threatens to light the long fuse of resistance to unaccountable governments. The nuances of party rule in Ethiopia and Rwanda have made these countries “African success stories,” but have also created regime vulnerabilities that will provoke violent resistance and court instability.

The CCP Model

The Chinese Communist Party has presided over impressive economic growth, while maintaining tight social and political control over its citizens. The country is among the least free in the world. Freedom House rated the country 6.5 in 2015, on a scale where 7 means the most autocratic; this is the same score that it received in 1998.¹⁸ While levels of freedom have been stagnant, growth rates in China have regularly been in the double digits in recent decades, and human development in the country (as measured by the Human Development Index) has skyrocketed from 0.389 in 1975 to 0.718 in 2010. Across the three countries discussed in this paper, these parties’ ability to promote economic growth has granted them a measure of legitimacy and public support; when that is insufficient to legitimize their rule, they resort to explicitly repressive policies. In China, as in Ethiopia and Rwanda, this is facilitated through a vast surveillance network and finely-tuned oppression tactics centered on curbing the freedoms of speech, information, and association.

The oppressive tactics adopted in China to foster self-censorship (including “a number of restrictive regulations issued since 2005...requiring publishers not to reprint politically sensitive books, restricting popular access to foreign films and television programs,” and blocking certain websites the CCP considers “politically threatening”), and the vast

surveillance network (which includes the monitoring of “personal communications, including cellular telephone text-messaging”), are not wildly different from other authoritarian governments.¹⁹ The centrality of the ruling parties and the subversion of the state to the party in all three of these countries are their distinctive features.

While recent reforms in China have slightly altered the balance in favor of the state, it is not out of the question to suggest that the CCP exercises social, political, and economic control throughout the country. The CCP’s political dominance is obvious from its position as the only political party in the country; however, according to Xiao Ma, the party’s dominance has leaked into the social sphere such that “the influence of the CCP is so encompassing to the extent that there is little to no independent political space beyond the Party itself...being a member of the Party is the only way to powerful positions.”²⁰

This growth has been achieved in the context of the Party adopting a multipronged strategy, in which the party “substitutes itself” for the state in the economic, social, and military spheres.²¹ Throughout this process, “the organization line between the Party and government blurred, and the delegation relationship disappeared almost entirely.”²²

Economically, the CCP has taken an active role in organizing and owning the commanding heights of the economy. As previously discussed, it is estimated that the CCP controls roughly half of the Chinese nonagricultural economy, largely through SOEs staffed by Party members. Despite the process of gradually liberalizing the economy, the Party has designated “a number of industries that are important to China’s economic and national security and indicated that these strategic industries will remain wholly or largely under the government’s control. In other important so-called pillar industries, the state will remain a major player, with significant, though not majority, ownership.”²³ The country’s success with the “national champion” model of development, in which certain sectors and companies are given preferential treatment, is reflected in its inclusion in subsequent five-year development plans.

This strategy has not only led to economic growth; it has facilitated the sophistication of the Party structure and control. Zhao Ziyang stated in 1987 that Party involvement with factory management acted as a “yardstick for supporting or opposing party leadership.... Every time we undertook a campaign, this setup was strengthened, to the extent that the Party committees monopolized many administrative matters.”²⁴

With the sophistication of the Party structure came the ability to penetrate more deeply into Chinese society. The CCP “dictates all senior personnel appointments in ministries and companies, universities, and the media, through a shadowy and little known [sic] body called the Organization Department.”²⁵ The result is that the CCP has the final say in who fills “just about every significant position in every field in the country.”²⁶ Party membership is thus a necessity for those wishing to take part in, and benefit from, the country’s upward trajectory. Maria Edin describes the “cadre responsibility system,” which manages this patronage network, as such:

Political rewards are linked to the result of the annual evaluation and the subsequent ranking of leaders. Top-ranking township leading cadres will be awarded with the political title of advanced leader (*xianjin lingdao*) or declared to be a model leader. As shown above, if a township has failed to attain the priority targets with veto power, it disqualifies the township government from becoming an advanced unit and the responsible cadre from becoming an advanced leader. In one county, leading cadres of the first three ranked townships in the annual evaluation were entitled advanced leaders in accordance with local regulations. The results are officially announced, thereby putting pressure on those involved, during a large meeting to mark the end of the year and the beginning of the next working year. In the county above, the top 15 percent and bottom 5 percent of cadres on the list were respectively praised and disgraced at this meeting. In another county, a list of the first 100 cadres was both published in the local media and circulated as a government document to all relevant government department.²⁷

The accountability mechanisms that the Party has adopted, in order to increase transparency and efficiency, have thus strengthened the Party's control over subnational political units.

In addition to this control over China's political and economic institutions, the CCP has undertaken robust efforts to censor the internet and the country's press. China has a robust legal framework supporting such suppression; nearly all media in the country are subject to "an extensive and burdensome licensing scheme over all media that bars those without money and political connections from establishing publishing enterprises."²⁸ The internet, promised to be an equalizing and democratizing force, has been tightly monitored and regulated by the Chinese government. Not only must users cope with the "Great Firewall of China," "anyone wishing to operate a commercial website must acquire a Telecommunications Business Operating License and an Internet Content Provider License;" even noncommercial sites must obtain a license and all internet publishers must receive government authorization to publish content.²⁹

Content itself is heavily regulated. Article 105 of the Criminal Law prohibits "rumor mongering [sic]" or "defamation" to "incite subversion," without defining any of these terms.³⁰ Human Rights Watch (HRW) notes that Article 19 of the Criminal Law prohibits content:

1. violating the basic principles as they are confirmed in the Constitution;
2. jeopardizing the security of the nation, divulging state secrets, subverting of the national regime or jeopardizing the integrity of the nation's unity;
3. harming the honor or the interests of the nation;
4. inciting hatred against peoples, racism against peoples, or disrupting the solidarity of peoples;
5. disrupting national policies on religion, propagating evil cults and feudal superstitions;
6. spreading rumors, disturbing social order, or disrupting social stability;
7. spreading obscenity, pornography, gambling, violence, terror, or abetting the commission of a crime;
8. insulting or defaming third parties [sic], infringing on the legal rights and interests of third parties [sic];

9. inciting illegal assemblies, associations, marches, demonstrations, or gatherings that disturb social order;
10. conducting activities in the name of an illegal civil organization; and
11. any other content prohibited by law or rules.

HRW also commented that these regulations have been applied liberally, extending “well beyond the narrow band of information that might truly incite hatred or disturb social order,” to include “information that the government deems too embarrassing, or is too candid in its discussion of particularly entrenched social problems.”³¹

One of the means by which the CCP has been able to carry out such measures has been through its control over the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Put simply: “the PLA is the party’s military, not the country’s.”³² As such, the CCP seeks to preserve the politicization of the armed forces, even within the context of increasing accountability and bureaucratic institutionalization in other aspects of the country. The Army crackdown on protestors challenging the CCP’s reign in 1989 was a critical juncture in the nation’s history; the CCP’s leaders recall both the importance of the military in quelling dissent and their vulnerability when one general refused to clear protesting students from Tiananmen Square. Even more directly, the politicization of the PLA reduces the likelihood of a challenge to CCP power from the military.

As a result of the party’s historical memory, CCP elites have “worked hard to keep the generals on their side, should they be needed to put down protests again.”³³ According to David Shambaugh, “one way this is done is to co-opt the military elite into the party elite;” the creation of an “interlocking directorate,” where the upper echelons of the party’s organs are staffed by senior military officers or those that have previously served in the armed forces.³⁴

Further, China and its African counterparts have appealed to national security concerns in order to legitimate their positions. According to Dan Slater, “authoritarianism is at its strongest when it is widely perceived as a necessary stabilizer.”³⁵ While the argument for party-induced stability is easier to make for the EPRDF and the RPF who led their countries through civil conflicts in the 1990s, the CCP has also implicitly and explicitly tied the survival and stability of China to its tenure.

Additionally, among the three countries, and over time, there has been a measure of adaptation and learning. For example, Singaporean opposition leaders were able to use the internet to challenge claims made by the People’s Action Party and the party-controlled press; no such recourse is available in Ethiopia or Rwanda and China is strictly limited by “the Great Firewall of China.”³⁶ The specifics of this model will vary from country to country; however, there is an undeniable rise in the logic of dominant-party politics, in which national strength is funneled into the ruling party to promote stability. While these projects have been described as “state-building,” given their economic dividends, they are perhaps more accurately described as “party-building.”

Economic Growth, Accountability Mechanisms, and Party Development: Where the Differences Lie

Perhaps the most prominent distinction between the party politics of East Asia and their African counterparts are the differences in bureaucratic capabilities and their nominal adoption of multiparty democracy; however, these two characteristics are not unrelated. The lack of bureaucratic capacity in states seeking to emulate the CCP will have serious ramifications for stability globally.

Critical to Chinese development has been the “successive administrative reforms...to create a slimmer and more efficient state,” which have entailed rigorous efforts to improve state efficiency, not merely to reduce state involvement in the economy.³⁷ Chinese SOEs, while staffed by Party members and subject to special treatment from the government (not unlike the party-statal in Rwanda and Ethiopia), are ultimately arms of the states and are regulated by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC). Though this regulation is weak, it still represents a sort of institutionalized oversight lacking in Ethiopia and Rwanda. Further, the appointment of Party members to positions of authority within these SOEs is managed according to the *nomenklatura* system. According to Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard, “the *nomenklatura* system prevents business leaders from successfully challenging Party rule and helps to ensure that the achievements and the continued growth of the business sector will benefit the Party and contribute to regime stability.”³⁸ Using the *nomenklatura* system was a specific policy choice, as staffing the SOEs with people outside of the system might have “preserved” the separation between the Party and the government.³⁹

Not only has China endeavored to create a leaner state; it has instituted a robust bureaucratic system to promote the circulation of Party members and institute regularity into the one-party system. The refinement and institutionalization of bureaucratic accountability mechanisms began under Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. Under these reforms, the Party Congress was reinstitutionalized and both term and age limits for elite government cadres were introduced. According to Zhengxu Wang and Anastas Vangeli, these reforms were tested at the 12th Party Congress held in 1982; within 20 years, “a number of implicit and explicit rules seemed to have been established,” regulating the behavior of Party members.⁴⁰ Most notably, a two-term limit for major political posts was instituted in the 1982 Party Constitution and has been abided by since. As Ma notes, “term limit[s] that effectively [bind] top leaders however [are] rarely seen among dictatorships.” The Chinese model of constraining and regulating power within the Party is, thus, a significant development and an innovative governing characteristic.⁴¹

Accompanying the term limits are mechanisms for promoting Party members with some measure of transparency and accountability. The Alternative Central Committee (ACC), for example, is seen to be a sort of antechamber to the powerful Central Committee (CC), which oversees the *nomenklatura* system. The predictability and stability introduced by this visible cadre of potential future leaders reduces uncertainty in political contracts and facilitates continuity. Further, the ACC has acted as a representative pressure gauge

for aggrieved minorities. A study conducted by Ma, regarding which members of the ACC eventually are promoted to the CC, found that “[w]omen and ethnic minorities are appointed as ACC members to showcase the Party’s commitment in promoting equality along the gender and ethnicity lines. Yet once it comes to the competition into more powerful positions like CC, these members are hugely disadvantaged or are even not considered for promotion at all.”⁴² Ethiopia and Rwanda lack such a mechanism for channeling identity politics and grievances through their parties. Indeed, Rwanda under Paul Kagame has emerged as a Tutsi dictatorship, where Hutus are largely excluded from positions of power. As minority groups have frequently organized in opposition political parties to advocate for change, the result has been harsh political oppression from the state and mounting risk of political violence.

While China and East Asian countries have adopted provisions for political turnover within the party bureaucracy and increased accountability, it is unclear how African developmental authoritarian states will manage succession. In Rwanda and Ethiopia, *imihigo* and *kebele* programs introduce measures of political accountability and a broad base of party members (if not deep party support); however, the parties remain clientelistic and opaque. Following Zenawi’s death in 2012, the EPRDF was able to maintain its hegemonic position within the country’s political sphere, suggesting the durability of the model; however, Kagame’s intention to run for a third term as president of Rwanda suggests that the RPF may not have similar plans in place for succession.

Additionally, and perhaps obviously, Rwanda and Ethiopia also differ from China by holding regular elections, however manipulated they may be. Nevertheless, the adoption of multiparty democracy by these countries may be a reflection of their dependence upon the international community for foreign aid. Further, these reforms were adopted in an era of unquestioned American hegemony in the international system; the China model was not yet a competitor to Western liberal democracy promotion. Timing and the aid dependence of these two countries can partially explain their adoption of multiparty elections.

Developmental Authoritarianism in Ethiopia and Rwanda

While Ethiopia and Rwanda lack the long history of bureaucratization of East Asian countries, in both of these countries, the ruling parties have been able to leverage traumatic events in their national histories to consolidate their power and engage in sweeping economic and political reforms. Both EPRDF and the RPF began as militias and transitioned to political parties as part of the resolution of dramatic civil conflicts. The EPRDF assumed power in 1991, when the coalition of four ethnic militias overthrew the oppressive, communist Derg and vaulted Zenawi to the country’s top political post, where he remained until his death in 2012. Similarly, the RPF invaded Rwanda in 1990 and came to power in 1994, after a civil war and the horrors of the Rwandan Genocide; since then, Kagame has been the dominant political figure within Rwanda.

While overall levels of development in these countries remain significantly below China’s, their growth rates, coupled with tangible improvements in health and education

indicators, make them veritable “African miracles” in many circles. These improvements were not made through *laissez-faire* economic liberalization; Ethiopian and Rwandan growth is the result of concerted party efforts. A 2012 paper, written by Ethiopia’s Zenawi, outlines his party’s philosophy—demonstrably shared by the RPF—regarding the role of the state at both the “ideological” and the “structural” level:

At the ideological level, accelerated development is the mission, its source of legitimacy. Moreover, the development project is a hegemonic project in the Gramscian sense—the key actors voluntarily adhere to its objectives and principles. Structurally it has the capacity to implement policy effectively, which is the result of various political, institutional, and technical factors, which in turn are based on the autonomy of the state. This autonomy enables the state to pursue its development project without succumbing to myopic interests.⁴³

At the inaugural Meles Zenawi Foundation Symposium on Development, held in August 2015, Rwandan President Paul Kagame highlighted the continued relevance of the conference’s namesake in championing of guided national development. In his opening remarks, Kagame asserted that “every developed economy, without exception, is the fruit of a free market, and a strong developmental state, working in tandem. The orthodoxy of shrinking the state to the bare minimum, and replacing it with externally-funded nonstate actors (here you can say NGOs), left Africa with no viable path out of poverty.”⁴⁴

Recalling the continent’s disastrous experiences with “one-size-fits-all” political and economic prescriptions under Structural Adjustment Programs, he portrayed Ethiopia and Rwanda as vanguards of a new governance model, stating “ours is the true democracy of citizens, not the false one of institutionalized corruption and division (or “rent-seeking,” as Comrade Meles usually said). We cannot be bullied into accepting policies that misrepresent us and do us harm in the end, as we have seen over many years,” he said.⁴⁵

While Kagame’s characterization of the two countries as “democratic” is, at best, euphemistic, he is certainly accurate in portraying Ethiopia and Rwanda as innovators in governance models. Jones et al. identify an “emerging mode of illiberal state building [sic],” of which, Ethiopia and Rwanda are at the forefront. In addition to achieving growth through domestic intervention using party-statal, these countries have demonstrated how foreign aid can “bolster, rather than undermine undemocratic leaders.”⁴⁶ While Zenawi and Kagame frequently reference the importance of a strong state, their policies generally bolstered the capacity of their parties. State power and capacity in these two countries are entirely dependent upon their respective ruling party, both of which have embarked on endeavors to incorporate all citizens into their parties and to permeate the economic and social spheres through their political positions.

Developmental Authoritarianism and Party-Statal

In attempting to accelerate and manage their economies, ruling parties in Ethiopia and Rwanda have relied heavily upon party-owned investment vehicles, described as “party-

statal” by a number of observers drawing comparisons between such investments and parastatals. The use of party-statals is not unlike the CCP’s use of SOEs in China to prioritize certain sectors and reward party members; the most critical difference is that party-statal investment in Rwanda and Ethiopia is recorded as being “private sector” activity. In Rwanda, Tri-Star/Crystal Ventures Limited (CVL), controlled by the RPF, has invested in critical sectors such as building materials, road construction, and mobile communications technology. Academics David Booth and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi assert that the “willingness of Tri-Star/CVL to use its financial clout to fund investments with high expected social benefits and/or positive economic externalities, including those associated with venture capitalism, is a significant aspect of Rwandan political economy.”⁴⁷ The company has monopolized production in a number of the sectors it has invested in, in large part because of its role as an extension of the RPF.

In Ethiopia, the government-investment vehicles of choice are endowment-funded companies; most notably, the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT). EFFORT is managed by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, a crucial ethnic political organization in the EPRDF alliance. EFFORT’s investments in critical sectors like logistics and construction, and the “high degree of vertical and horizontal integration of its companies” has allowed it to develop a formidable presence as a patron, linking the private sector, the government, ethnic advocacy groups, and citizens writ large.⁴⁸ There is not sufficient space to discuss all of the party-statals owned by the RPF and the EPRDF, so our discussion will be limited to CVL and EFFORT, despite both parties owning additional investment vehicles.

Table 4.1. Selected Party-Statals and Their Subsidiaries

CVL’s Subsidiaries	EFFORT’s Subsidiaries
Crystal Telecom	Beruh Tesfa (Manufacturing)
Inyage Industries (Beverages)	Almeda Textiles
NOD-COTRACO (Civil Engineering and Construction)	Addis Pharmaceutical Factory
Mutara Enterprises (Furniture and Office Furnishings)	Messebo Building Material Production
Bourbon Coffee	Mesfin Industrial Engineering
Intersec Security	Bruh Tesfa Irrigation and Water Technology
Ruliba Clays	Sheba Leather Industry
Real Contractors Limited	Guna Trading House
East African Granite Industries	Ezana Mining Development PLC
	Hiwot Agricultural Mechanization PLC
	Saba Dimension Stones PLC
	SUR Construction
	Enterprise Ethiopia Travel
	Express Transit Service PLC
	TransEthiopia (Transportation)

These investment vehicles do more than promote economic growth; they are significant sources of economic clout for the owning parties and their profits are funneled into party coffers, rather than into the state. Unlike SOEs, which previously were important features of developing countries' economies—including Ethiopia and Rwanda under different ruling parties—the party-owned companies register as private investment in national accounting. Thus, they do not create an accountable bureaucratic class. Instead, these companies are entirely party-owned and operated by party-appointed heads “in the guise of the new business elite.”⁴⁹

When Rwanda was pressured to sell off its state-owned companies by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), many of the SOEs were replaced by these party-statals.⁵⁰ While Booth et al. have praised Rwandan party-statals for their developmental dividends, others have noted that these institutions have “become extractive economic institutions, concentrating power and opportunity in the hands of only a few.”⁵¹

The RPF's party-owned investment holdings have a range of investments, detailed in Table 4.1. An estimate of their worth suggests that, in addition to controlling the country's most critical sectors, these companies have the highest combined worth in terms of “fixed assets, total assets, turnover, and more importantly, the largest share in gross output.”⁵² Despite their overwhelming domination within the economy, the Rwandan party-statals have benefited from a variety of tax exemptions, reducing the impact of their revenue generation on the state's capacity. In Ethiopia, the relationship between the government and its party-statals differs in characteristics, but not in overall effect. The differences between the RPF and EPRDF's holding companies likely stem from the fact that:

The EPRDF government has achieved a high degree of centralization of rent management and allocation, retaining control of a large proportion of available sources of rents and economic levers. These include the large state-owned enterprise sector, endowment-owned businesses, and substational regional development organizations; as well as tight regulation of financial institutions, including for micro-credit, and expansion of the tax base.... For instance, whilst party-associated companies in Rwanda seem to form a central key to long-horizon rent centralization, Ethiopia's Endowment owned businesses constitute only one strand of the government's strategy.⁵³

Though Ethiopia maintains its reliance upon explicitly state-owned entities, just as in Rwanda, Ethiopian party-statals have acted as powerful catalysts for economic growth and have invested in a wide variety of sectors in the economy. EFFORT owns 16 enterprises, the “most important being Mesebo Cement, Guna Trading House, Almeda Textiles and Garmentine, TransEthiopia Transport & Logistics, and Mesfin Industrial Engineering, along with Sur Construction and Addis Pharmaceuticals.”⁵⁴ Unlike in Rwanda, the EPRDF's party-statals contribute to the tax base and “are by far the largest regional tax-payer to the government, currently providing 60 percent of its regionally-generated revenues.”⁵⁵ Given the ethno-federalist nature of the Ethiopian government, this creates “a situation that both promotes stability and mitigates political competition in the region,” bolstering the

importance of regions supportive of the EPRDF. This has the same effect as the absence of party-statal taxation in Rwanda, of putting such companies in politically important positions within the country's economy.⁵⁶ Further, the party has used these companies to reward loyal party members and induce broad-based membership; Azeb Mesfin, Meles Zenawi's widow, was appointed to the leadership of EFFORT and party members filled the endowment's ranks. One activist lamented that:

Appointments within EFFORT are made based on politics. If you are a member of the ruling party, you can get a job no matter what your qualifications are. I can be a high school drop-out [sic], an elementary school drop-out [sic], but if I am connected to anybody who has a top leadership position within the ruling party, I will get into EFFORT with no questions asked.... It is politically charged, politically owned and... there is no transparency.⁵⁷

Not only have party-led investments targeted the most promising sectors within each country, benefiting from the rapid gains to be made in underdeveloped economies, they have also benefited from the use of state power to fortify party investments. In both countries, legislation has been adopted to insulate these party-owned organizations from competition. In Rwanda, for example, publicly funded school programs have been instructed to purchase exclusively from the party-owned Inyange Industries.⁵⁸ In Ethiopia, the infamous Civil Society Ordinance of 2008/2009 recognized only four types of charities, charitable endowments (such as EFFORT), charitable institutions, charitable trusts, and charitable societies.⁵⁹ While private sector growth has been identified as a strength of these countries, it is clear that the parties have controlled (and have been strengthened by) the investment within their borders. Party-statals have contributed to the hegemonic domination of the political economies of Ethiopia and Rwanda by their ruling parties.

Developmental Authoritarianism, Repression, and Party Penetration

The legitimacy gleaned from the state's commitment to "accelerated development" and human development, channeled through government investment vehicles, should be considered a "carrot" in the state's coercive arsenal. More problematic and more visible are the "sticks" wielded by the countries' ruling parties, the EPRDF and the RPF. While Ethiopia and Rwanda both have adopted the veneer of democracy, including elections, such overtures should not be confused with viable opportunities for political contestation. These regimes have adopted strategies to contain domestic dissent through the limitation of the sorts of "coordination goods" necessary to organize successful opposition campaigns and to penetrate their respective societies.

These two countries seem to be star pupils in adapting to the authoritarian "learning curve," identifying which sorts of repressive policies are the most effective while attracting the least amount of international resistance or response. In Ethiopia and Rwanda, legislated limitations on free speech are accompanied by the suppression of the press and robust state initiatives to monitor society and to instill within the populace an official political narrative.

The limiting of “coordination goods” and the imposition of self-censorship bolsters the stability of these regimes in the short term by limiting opposition’s ability to organize.

Much has been made of the “genocidal ideology” and “sectarianism” legislation in Rwanda that prohibits discussion of the 1994 genocide that falls outside of the RPF’s official narrative and which has been used to jail political opponents and prevent Rwandans from using the terms “Hutu” and “Tutsi.”⁶⁰ However, there is a broader framework of suppression at play in the country. Tellingly, when citizens were polled regarding the possibility of a third term for President Kagame, Rwandan lawmakers reported that “only 10 were against the idea,” after consultations with “millions of Rwandans” about the constitutional changes necessary to legalize a third term.⁶¹ In general, “the media is largely compliant, the opposition toothless, and the critical NGOs expelled,” providing incentives to support the regime and encouraging self-censorship.⁶²

Similar forces are at play in Ethiopia, both socially and legally; the country’s Anti-Terrorism Bill, which was passed in 2009, has been used to persecute political opposition and to curtail journalists. The plight of the Zone 9 Bloggers, who were detained in 2014 under the law for their blog criticizing the government’s treatment of certain regions, ethnic groups, and political opponents, illustrates how the EPRDF has leveraged the rhetoric of antiterrorism endeavors to stifle criticism. Though the Zone 9 Bloggers were released after more than a year in detention and an international effort to release them, the 34 other Ethiopians—including 15 journalists and political opponents—that were arrested under the law in the first three years of the law’s implementation have enjoyed no such support.

While China may be the largest jailer of journalists globally in 2014, imprisoning 44 journalists, Ethiopia ranked fourth globally, with 17 imprisoned.⁶³ While there were no journalists jailed in Rwanda in 2014, since 1992 the Committee to Protect Journalists reports that 17 journalists have been killed in the country. Fifteen of those murders were committed with impunity.⁶⁴ Like all undemocratic regimes, these states have an interest in limiting the ability of citizens to organize freely and express dissent. More unique to these countries is their respective parties’ ability to deeply penetrate their societies.

Implementation of these restrictions on free speech requires intensive state monitoring and an atmosphere of self-censorship. In Ethiopia, HRW has concluded that the government “has the technical capacity to access virtually every single phone call and SMS message in Ethiopia,” including “mobile phones, landlines, and VSAT communications, and...all local phone calls made within the country and long-distance calls to and from local phones.” Similarly, Ethio Telecom “controls access to the internet backbone that connects Ethiopia to the international internet,” through service provision and regulation of internet cafés.⁶⁵ Activists, journalists, and politicians in Ethiopia are cognizant of being monitored; meetings are arranged through third-parties located outside of the country and many have a deep-seated suspicion of internet cafés and even their own mobile phones. Similarly, in Rwanda, there have been reports that the widespread monitoring of e-mail and internet chatrooms had led to detention and interrogation by Rwandan security forces.⁶⁶ Some websites, which published content critical of the ruling party, have been banned in the country.⁶⁷

In conjunction with the limiting of freedom of speech and association both formally and through informal self-policing mechanisms, both Ethiopia and Rwanda have expanded their party presence. One means of expanding party presence has been through bolstering formal party membership. In Ethiopia, a party membership is referred to as a “green card,” because it is the only way to get a job. Following the 2005 elections, the EPRDF undertook a mixture of cooperative and coercive efforts to expand party membership, resulting in an explosion in party ranks from 760,000 in 2005 to 4 million in 2008.⁶⁸ Similarly, in Rwanda, one civil servant interviewed stated plainly, “You cannot become an employee of [the] government if you are not a party member.”⁶⁹ These efforts allude to an effort to bring all citizens into the party fold.

Other expansions have been couched in the language of improving bureaucratic accountability. In Rwanda, the RPF has made *imihigo* ceremonies a central part of its governance strategy. *Imihigo* is an attempt by the government to institute a measure of accountability; it “relates most closely to a performance contract. The concept developed as an idea of a public commitment from prominent military leaders...to achieve a specific object, such as the conquest of an enemy or region.”⁷⁰ According to a review of the effects of these performance contracts, which are made in public ceremonies, by the European University Institute, “all respondents said that these issues have in fact been better addressed since the launch of the initiative, and that *imihigo* did indeed contribute directly to this progress.”⁷¹ However, such praise must be taken with a grain of salt, given the extent of self-censorship in Rwanda; other reviews have found that the system has “led to deeper permeation of society by the state; and represents openings for increased coercion.”⁷² This study also found that “more than half of the respondents confirmed some form of compulsion had been used to achieve the *imihigo* targets.”⁷³

In Rwanda in particular, the military (effectively the military wing of the RPF) is hegemonic and has facilitated the penetration of the RPF into Rwandan society. Jones et al. note that, “military involvement means the involvement of a top-down hierarchy answerable to the presidency and overseen by insiders;” thus, the military serves as the muscle behind the political decrees and plays a valuable role in surveilling its citizens.⁷⁴ The RPF has undertaken significant efforts to incorporate Rwandan citizens into the military, even if they are not soldiers; as a part of the government’s ambitious Vision 2020 program, a minister in Kigali explained that the country hopes to have every citizen attend an *ingando* camp. *Ingando* camps, modeled after the RPF’s military camps in Uganda pre-1994, are mandatory today for students attending university who are receiving government support.⁷⁵ At modern *ingando* camps, participants are expected to listen to lectures by RPF members regarding civic duty and Rwandan history and to participate in military training exercises. Opponents of the camps have likened it to indoctrination and have highlighted the dangers of promoting such a militaristic culture.⁷⁶

A similar model of community monitoring and flawed accountability mechanisms can be found in Ethiopia. Though a relic of the communist Derg, the *kebele* system of local government organization, in which administrators are responsible for the oversight of a

handful of households and report activities and developments up their “political chain of command,” has been adopted and expanded by the EPRDF.⁷⁷ The development community, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has found that the EPRDF’s “five-to-one program,” in which every set of five participants is monitored by one, in a cascading series of groupings, facilitates the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects. Unarticulated by development partners, but deeply felt by Ethiopian citizens, is the ability of these “cascading networks” to transmit information about political activity and loyalty to the ruling party.⁷⁸

Partially through the bolstering of the party ranks, both governments have ensured that their political hegemony will be unchallenged. The regularly-held elections in both Rwanda and Ethiopia are essentially political Kabuki theatre, a highly stylized and often surreal song and dance that is, ultimately, only a dramatic performance. *The Economist* noted wryly in 2013, “many things were in doubt when Rwanda held parliamentary elections...but not the outcome.”⁷⁹ The RPF’s absolute domination is reflected in electoral returns, in which the RPF received roughly 90 percent; such popular support is facilitated by the effective banning of opposition parties through legislative sleights of hand and outright repression. In 2010, two of the main opposition parties were prevented from registering and opposition politician Victoria Ingabire was arrested under the “genocidal ideology” laws, and even accused of funneling money to rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁸⁰ Following the 2005 elections in Ethiopia, in which the opposition was able to win an unprecedented handful of seats in the national parliament, the EPRDF doubled down on its efforts to maintain control. District level elections, scheduled for 2005, were delayed until 2008. In the intervening years, the party changed the structure of the *kebele* councils, so parties had to field roughly 3.6 million candidates if they intended to run in all constituencies.⁸¹ In the 2015 general elections, the EPRDF won all of the parliamentary seats. In response, the international community hardly raised an eyebrow.

This brief review of governance in Ethiopia and in Rwanda suggests that the EPRDF and RPF have crafted an alternative form of governance—inspired by the example of the CCP in China, but constrained by their own capacities and histories—that allows them to maintain their position as “donor darlings” of the West by promoting “private sector” growth through party-controlled vehicles, while maintaining coercive hegemony within the domestic political landscape. This model has been inspired, and in some small ways, enabled by the model of Chinese and East Asian development, though there are important implementational differences, as the next section will highlight.

Promotion or Emulation?

China has not actively promoted its purported model of development; however, its success has inspired emulation. Additionally, China’s growing international presence has likely facilitated this ideational spread as well. Further, as China continues to rise within the international system, taking a more active role in international affairs, imitation of Chinese policies may become a means by which developing countries court China as

a donor. Despite China's reticence to embrace the rhetoric of a "China Model," Joseph Nye notes that its pattern of governance "has become more popular than the previously dominant 'Washington Consensus' of market economics with democratic government."⁸² Nye concludes that, "although China is far from America's equal in soft power, it would be foolish to ignore the gains it is making."⁸³ It would also be folly to ignore the various missteps of the West that have facilitated the popularity of the China model.

Presently, China is more comfortable discussing its role as a "partner" to developing countries, as opposed to proselytizing a particular set of policies. "In diplomatic terms, Beijing seems to have very little interest in exporting its political model," S.J. Cooper Knock notes, observing that, "Chinese foreign policy in Africa is rarely prescriptive, and is built on bilateral economic relationships with states." Ultimately, Knock observes that China's "concern with protecting sovereignty at home makes [it] reluctant to interfere with the internal politics of sovereign states abroad."⁸⁴ Though China does not present it as such, such policies do constitute an alternative model from Western engagement patterns.

China's emergence as the "leader of the [G]lobal South and champion of a progressive 'new international political and economic order featuring justice, rationality, equality and mutual benefit' and 'safeguarding legitimate rights and interests of developing countries,'" as stated in China's 2006 *African Policy*, has facilitated a number of partnerships with countries frustrated by the policies of the IFIs.⁸⁵ Undoubtedly, the Bretton Woods system's model of lending and its underrepresentation of developing countries' preferences needs revamping. As Soares de Oliveira et al. note, "Africa's dwindling interest in borrowing from the World Bank and European Investment Bank, which initially caused both institutions to decry Chinese lending practices as well as questioning their own relevance is seemingly another indicator of the West's putative marginalization on the continent."⁸⁶

Bilateral relationships as well, have been an increasingly important aspect of Chinese foreign policy in the developing world. In 2014, Chinese aid was estimated to be nearly \$5 billion, making China the world's 10th largest source of funding (or, in Chinese parlance "South-South cooperation provider") through interest-free loans, concessional loans, and grants.⁸⁷

Chinese engagement is said to differ from traditional Western aid by focusing more heavily on infrastructure development and less on political conditionalities; de Oliveira et al. note that "the Chinese focus on turnkey infrastructure projects is far simpler and does not overstretch the weak capacity of many African governments faced with multiple meetings, quarterly reports, workshops, and so on."⁸⁸ Interestingly, recent years have seen an uptick in the training programs that China has provided to bureaucrats from the developing world; an estimated 50,000 bureaucrats have been trained, with a particularly sharp uptick since 2010.⁸⁹ The value of such training in norm diffusion remains to be seen, though it has the potential to be significant.

While there has been a great deal of unfounded fearmongering regarding the danger posed by so-called "no-strings-attached" lending by China, empirical reviews are finding that there are, in fact, differences between traditional sources of aid and investment from

China. Indeed, analysis of the characteristics of Chinese aid suggests that Chinese Overseas Direct Investment (ODI) has a slightly negative correlation with the World Bank's Rule of Law index; confirming anecdotes of Chinese willingness to invest in poorly governed and undemocratic states.⁹⁰ Other reports have found that Chinese aid is more likely than other assistance to be funneled to political leaders' birthplaces; Dreher et al. observe that, "Chinese official financing to a leader's birth region nearly triples after that individual comes to power."⁹¹ China's emergence as a major source of aid and investment, thus, has ramifications for the architecture of international assistance and partnership as a whole. Deborah Brautigam, a noted scholar of Sino-African relations notes that, "the Chinese do not see themselves primarily as 'donors,' preferring the language of 'cooperation' and 'partnership,'" facilitating diplomatic bilateral relationships.⁹² China's "going out" policy has galvanized companies to seek opportunities abroad and has fostered a self-image of China as an international investor, rather than a provider of assistance. However, the effects of these partnerships may be the erosion of conditionalities attached to assistance related to respect for human rights or the rule of law by the availability of alternative, and undiscerning flows.

Chinese rhetoric, multilateral efforts, bilateral efforts, and the mere existence of China as an economic success story contributes to an alternative development model that de-emphasizes political accountability in favor of delivering economic performance. The limiting of civil and political liberties by a dominant party, as well as the sort of "coordination goods" that could challenge the hegemony of the ruling party, are characteristics of this model; the model is also characterized by extensive intervention in the national political economy to benefit the ruling party.

Conclusion

Ethiopia and Rwanda are seen as emulating the "China model" insofar as they are authoritarian states that have private sectors and remain integrated into the global economy. However, a more precise definition of the China model and what has allowed it to preside over more than three decades of economic growth indicates that these African countries are very far from replicating Chinese success.

The China model is dependent first and foremost on the existence of a large, disciplined, and highly institutionalized Communist party. Over the years, this party has integrated itself into the Chinese government that it oversees, and constitutes a substantial portion of China's state capacity. Up through a provincial level, recruitment and promotion of cadres proceeds by strict rules and tends to be relatively meritocratic. The party has imposed term limits on itself and is not dependent on individual leaders for its continued functioning. The system is capable of exerting a huge amount of discipline on lower-level cadres. There have been several examples of this in recent years: the tax reform of the early 1990s, which stripped local governments of many of their resources; forcing the PLA to give up many of its economic privileges in the late 1990s; and most recently Xi Jinping's anticorruption campaign, which has seen the arrest of thousands of party officials, including a former minister of the interior, Zhou Youkang.

Ethiopia and Rwanda lack this bureaucratic tradition and rigor. Both are run by ruling parties organized on Leninist lines, but neither organization is institutionalized to nearly the degree of the CCP. Recruitment is less meritocratic and more patronage-based. Both parties are rooted in specific minority ethnic groups, and both are dependent on the qualities of individual leaders. While the EPRDF in Ethiopia survived the death of Zenawi, the latter was critical in establishing the developmental policies of the past two decades. Kagame has created a personal dictatorship; like other African autocrats, he has amended the constitution to permit himself to remain in office for a third term. While China has renewed its leadership three times since 1978 at regular 10-year intervals, there is no mechanism for leadership succession in Rwanda. It is very doubtful that the “Rwandan miracle” will survive Kagame’s passing. In his absence, even the basic stability of the country is called into question, as he has made himself the axis of the country’s political economy.

The way in which one-party rule is institutionalized will be critical for both African countries. China can draw on a tradition going back 2,500 years of public-spirited bureaucratic government. Ethiopia and Rwanda were lucky to have two charismatic leaders, in the forms of Meles Zenawi and Paul Kagame, who had a developmental vision and did not put personal gain first and foremost as objectives. However, neither country has China’s deep cultural traditions, nor is there a deep cultural tradition of impersonal public service in either country.

In terms of U.S. policy, the challenge posed by the China model in Africa requires two different types of response. The first has to do with democracy promotion. Since at least the time of Woodrow Wilson, the United States has made the promotion of democracy outside the country an objective of U.S. foreign policy. Unfortunately, the 2003 Iraq War created an association of military invasion with “democracy promotion,” but, in fact, the most important initiatives in this endeavor have been political and social in nature. The United States has tried to level the playing field in authoritarian countries by backing civil society organizations—labor unions, women’s organizations, human rights monitors, anticorruption campaigners, and the like—through agencies like USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy. These kinds of activities, as well as rhetorical support for democracy and human rights, have played important roles in constraining arbitrary behavior on the part of authoritarian governments.

Global civil society is today under threat from governments around the world, including places like Ethiopia and Rwanda. Civil society promotion does not contradict the goals of development; indeed, it strengthens development in the long run by legitimizing governments and making them more accountable. There is no necessary tradeoff between developmental goals and democratic ones. The United States needs to push back against this trend, and stand as a principled supporter of the right of citizens to organize and to participate in the political life of their countries.

The norms of governance and international cooperation that the United States and its democratic allies have fostered are being undermined or manipulated by the rise of developmental authoritarianism; consider that before 1962, “international election

observation” as we know it did not exist. Today, roughly 80 percent of elections have international observers, “but puzzlingly, many leaders invite foreign observers and orchestrate electoral fraud in front of them.”⁹³ The United States and its allies must demonstrate a renewed commitment to the spread and institutionalization of democracy worldwide; complacency with the state of global democracy and American fatigue regarding international engagement—particularly after the failed attempts to install democracy in Iraq—threaten to allow the rollback of hard-fought gains made by democracy activists worldwide.

The question of whether the United States should condition aid on human rights and democracy performance is more complicated. Democracy promotion is an important goal of U.S. policy, but it is not the only one. Security, energy access, the need for diplomatic leverage, humanitarian relief, and other goals have often displaced democracy. While this often leads to charges of hypocrisy, it is unrealistic to think that democracy promotion will always be America’s single priority. In the case of Ethiopia and Rwanda, the United States has been tempted to turn a blind eye to political abuses; in the first case because of Addis’ support for American counterterrorism objectives, and in the latter because of its stellar postconflict economic performance and stability.

These may have been reasonable tradeoffs, but it is important to remember that support for friendly dictatorships often bears a hidden cost. Such countries are vulnerable to violent overthrow in coming years. The EPRDF and RPF’s propensity to respond to criticism through violent repression only raises the likelihood of opposition being expressed cataclysmically. An emerging and rapidly growing field dedicated to the study of which factors facilitate political violence suggests that “violent repression” of political opposition, like that engaged in by the EPRDF and the RPF, “is likely to lead to escalation effects and defections.”⁹⁴ Further, it is possible that the economic growth and human development these parties have cultivated will be insufficient to legitimize their rule in the long term. Examining political violence in Corsica, Xavier Crettiez finds that the grievances were a “rejection of a closed political system,” that precluded peaceful reform.⁹⁵ Research also suggests that intercommunal divisions—characterized by “a feeling of fear vis-à-vis the ‘other’”—facilitate political violence. This is a particular threat for countries like Ethiopia and Rwanda, which experience interethnic tensions, divisions, and inequality.⁹⁶ Difficult as it may be to identify causal linkages between violent political protest and civil discord, it seems clear that the respective ruling parties have created conditions in Ethiopia and Rwanda that are conducive to such disruptions over the long term. One World Bank report assessing Rwandan stability opines that, “regime capacity (the ability of the regime to control its population) is a different cause of internal order to regime legitimacy (the accepted right of the regime to govern a people),” and suggests that the Rwandan system of oppression was ultimately unstable; the report reminds readers that:

While political liberalization then may seem perilous to the regime, in the longer-term the alternative may not be better.... In the absence of a change in political culture,

continued political exclusion may force the steam of ethnic or indeed other ‘grievances’ to simply continue to accumulate inside the pressure cooker.... It is this note of caution which must be sounded when assessing Rwanda’s exit from violence, and it is a note reinforced by a reading of Rwanda’s history. All three of Rwanda’s previous regimes were regimes in which power was held by one ethnic group to the exclusion of the other and all three of these regimes came to an end through extra-constitutional and violent means.⁹⁷

There is, however, a second lesson for U.S. policy to be drawn from the China model, which has to do with the type of development assistance being offered. China has, in effect, been exporting an approach to economic growth that has worked well for itself over the past three decades. This approach puts state spending on public goods, and particularly public infrastructure like roads, ports, electricity, water, and the like front and center. The United States and other Western countries did something similar at earlier stages of their economic development, though not on China’s massive scale, when up to 50 percent of GDP was being reinvested.

The United States used to support large infrastructure projects in developing countries in the 1950s and 1960s; many of the dams and roads built with American assistance still exist in countries from Afghanistan to Lebanon. Infrastructure fell out of favor, however, in the 1970s and 1980s due to concerns over environmental consequences, impacts on indigenous communities, and governance problems associated with such large-scale investments. Western aid priorities shifted elsewhere, particularly to public health, where spending could be correlated with measurable results.

Over the past few decades, America and other Western development assistance has centered on issues like public health, women’s empowerment, environmental sustainability, good governance, and the like. All of these are worthy goals, and their importance to development has been empirically documented. Nonetheless, however important they may be as components of overall development, no country ever got rich—that is to say, experienced a rapid increase in per capita GDP—through these kinds of measures alone. On the other hand, massive state-directed investments in public infrastructure have been key components of the “East Asian Miracle”—not just in China, but in Japan and the other East Asian Tigers.

Infrastructure today is one of the key binding constraints in African economic growth.⁹⁸ Inadequate and irregular supply of electricity, for example, has been a large obstacle to growth in countries from Nigeria to Kenya to Ghana. China has been able to spread its influence in Africa, because many countries in the region simply want what the Chinese can offer, more than the sorts of programs offered by the United States and other Western development agencies. In recognition of this, the United States launched a Power Africa initiative in 2013 to help electrify a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It has found, however, that its own capacity to promote such projects is limited. The limitations have to do with inadequate sources of finance, missing capacity at agencies like USAID, and the simple lack of recent practice in managing major infrastructure projects.

The competition between Western and Chinese development models is, thus, not simply over abstractions like democracy, human rights, and free markets, but about the concrete types of assistance being offered to poor countries, with tangible ramifications for American influence abroad, and about the long-term stability of the international system. If the United States is to regain its influence in the region, it needs to restore its former capacity to provide public infrastructure, and listen more carefully to what developing countries themselves say they want.

These issues came to a head over the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a Chinese initiative begun when the U.S. Congress refused to act on IMF reform that would have given China a larger voting share in that organization. The United States tried to persuade its Western allies to boycott the AIIB, an effort that led to a diplomatic debacle when virtually all of them, with the exception of Japan, refused to go along. The United States argued that such an institution would weaken global standards with regard to safeguards in infrastructure projects. This was a very poorly thought-out position; first, the Chinese were doing these projects anyway without American support, and second, since the United States and its allies had a better chance of upgrading standards as founding members of the bank than as outside critics. A deeper, unaddressed question was whether the current global standards are, in fact, the right ones. Part of the reason that the United States finds it so difficult to promote infrastructure has to do with the fact that compliance with existing safeguards is extremely difficult, driving up costs and delaying project completion. Chinese policy in this regard is by no means the proper standard: Chinese companies have been willing to tolerate corruption, poor safety, and environmental harms in their investments. But facing up to the challenge of the China model will require more thought regarding the proper balance between safeguards and the developing world's need for public infrastructure and, beyond that, its need for economic growth.

Authoritarian systems in China, Ethiopia, and Rwanda have gained legitimacy through the provision of economic growth. If the norms of the liberal international system are to survive, the United States must identify and implement partnerships and policies that are both prodemocracy and pro-growth. A globe populated by governments inspired by the CCP may well bring economic progress without liberty and growth, without bureaucratic capacity, and courting instability in the long term. The security achieved today by enabling such governance models is sure to be undone in coming years as growth-related legitimacy wavers and brutal repression is met with ever more fervent protest.

Notes

¹ David Booth asserts that, in light of the growth records and human development improvements recorded in these two countries, the “most relevant distinction among African regimes is between the developmental-patrimonial types and the others.” See David Booth, “Development as a collective action problem: Addressing the real challenges of African governance,” *Africa Power and Politics*, (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2012).

² Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard, “Politics and Business Group Formation in China: The Party in Control?” *The China Quarterly* 211 (September 2012): 624-648.

³ Andrew Szamoszegi and Cole Kyle, *An Analysis of State-owned Enterprises and State Capitalism in China* (Washington, DC: U.S.-China Economic Security Review Commission, 2001).

⁴Richard McGregor, “5 Myths About the Chinese Communist Party,” *Foreign Policy*, January 3, 2011, available at <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/01/03/5-myths-about-the-chinese-communist-party/>>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶Fabrizio Gilardi, “Transnational Diffusions: Norms, Ideas, and Policies,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2012), 436-467.

⁷Francis Fukuyama, “Dealing with China,” Working Group in Foreign Policy and Grand Strategy, *Hoover Institution* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2014), available at <http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/fukuyama_dealingwithchina.pdf>.

⁸Shaun Breslin, “The ‘China Model’ and the global crisis: from Friedrich List to a Chinese mode of governance?” *International Affairs* 87, no. 6 (2011): 1336.

⁹Larry Diamond, “The Democratic Recession,” in *New Ideas on Development After the Financial Crisis*, ed. Nancy Birdsall and Francis Fukuyama (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 240-249.

¹⁰Ibid. Though there have been criticisms of the Freedom House rankings and methodology, it remains one of the more frequently cited rankings of political liberty. Additionally, given that many of the criticisms of the Freedom House rankings stem from their ideological affiliation with the United States government’s conceptualization of democracy, these rankings are well-suited to our discussion of divergence from liberal, Western democracy. See Sara Bush, “The Politics of Rating Freedom: How Freedom House Became an Authority on Global Democracy” (presentation, “AGORA V,” Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation, Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick, October 7, 2014).

¹¹Our study contained only 48 countries, due to lack of data for a handful of nations.

¹²Elena Holodny, “The Thirteen Fastest-Growing Economies in the World,” *Business Insider*, June 12, 2015, available at <<http://www.businessinsider.com/world-bank-fast-growing-global-economies-2015-6>>.

¹³Francis Fukuyama, “Democracy and the Quality of the State,” *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 4 (2013): 5-16, available at <http://cdri.fsi.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/fukuyama_democracy_and_the_quality_of_state.pdf>.

¹⁴Axel Dreher, Andreas Fuchs, Roland Hodler, Bradley C. Parks, Paul A Raschky, and Michael J. Tierney, “Aid on Demand: African Leaders and the Geography of China’s Foreign Assistance,” *CESifo Group Munich*, March 30, 2015, available at <http://www.andreas-fuchs.net/uploads/1/9/8/9/19897453/chinese_aid.pdf>.

¹⁵Human Rights Watch, “They Know Everything We Do,” *Human Rights Watch*, March 25, 2014, available at <<https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/03/25/they-know-everything-we-do/telecom-and-internet-surveillance-ethiopia>>.

¹⁶Deborah Brautigam, “Hearing before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs,” *Testimony on China’s Growing Role in Africa* (Washington, DC: United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, 2011).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸Freedom House, *Freedom in the World* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2015).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰Xiao Ma, “Term Limit and Authoritarian Power Sharing: Theory and Evidence from China,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* (2015).

²¹Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and David M. Lampton, *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).

²² Ibid.

²²Andrew Szamosszegi and Cole Kyle, *An Analysis of State-owned Enterprises and State Capitalism in China* (Washington, DC: U.S.-China Economic Security Review Commission, 2001).

²⁴Lieberthal and Lampton, *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*.

²⁵McGregor, “5 Myths About the Chinese Communist Party.”

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²⁷Maria Edin, “State Capacity and Local Agent Control in China: CCP Cadre Management from a Township,” *The China Quarterly* 173 (2003): 35-52. Though the CCP’s model of providing “state workplaces, health care, and other social services” has waned with its liberalization program, the political domination and hegemony it enjoys remains unchanged. The reduction in state provision of social services should not be considered a sign of a weakening party, but rather that the CCP has refocused its efforts elsewhere. Maria Edin argued such in *The China Quarterly*, writing that the ‘reform era’ actually increased the capacity of the CCP, writing “higher levels of the party-state have improved monitoring and strengthened political control through promoting successful township leaders to hold concurrent positions at higher levels and by rotating them between different administrative levels and geographical areas.”

²⁸Congressional-Executive Commission On China, *Information Control and Self-Censorship in the PRC and the Spread of SARS* (Washington, DC: Congressional-Executive Commission On China, 2003).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Human Rights Watch, “How Censorship Works in China: A Brief Overview,” *Human Rights Watch*, 2006, available at <<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/china0806/3.htm>>.

³² McGregor, “5 Myths About the Chinese Communist Party.”

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ David Shambaugh, “Civil-Military Relations in China,” *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 16 (2002): 10-29. Though this relationship has evolved over the years, such that “senior PLA officers from the Central Military Commission down to Group Army commands are now promoted on meritocratic and professional criteria, while political consciousness and activism count for very little,” the political allegiance of the PLA remains unquestioned.

³⁵ Dan Slater, “Strong-state Democratization in Malaysia and Singapore,” *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2 (2012): 19-33.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Brødsgaard, “Politics and Business Group Formation in China: The Party in Control?”

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Carl E. Walter, and Fraser J.T. Howie, *Red Capitalism: The Fragile Financial Foundations of China's Extraordinary Rise* (Singapore: John Wiley and Sons, 2011).

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⁴¹ Ma, “Term Limit and Authoritarian Power Sharing: Theory and Evidence from China.”

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Meles Zenawi, “States and Markets: Neoliberal Limitations and the Case for a Developmental State,” in *Good Growth and Governance in Africa: Rethinking Development Strategies*, Akbar Noman, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 140-174.

⁴⁴ Emmanuel K. Dogbevi, “Replacing role of the state with externally funded NGOs left Africa in poverty – Kagame,” *Ghana Business News*, August 22, 2015, available at <<https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2015/08/22/replacing-role-of-the-state-with-externally-funded-ngos-left-africa-in-poverty-kagame/>>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Bruce Bueno De Mesquita and George W Downs, “Richer but Not Freer,” *Foreign Affairs*, September 1, 2005, available at <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2005-09-01/development-and-democracy>>.

⁴⁷ David Booth and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, “Developmental Patrimonialism? The Case of Rwanda,” *African Affairs* 111, no. 444 (2012): 379-403.

⁴⁸ Sarah Vaughan and Mesfin Gebremichael, “Rethinking business and politics in Ethiopia: The role of EFFORT, the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray,” *African Power and Politics*, August 2011, available at <<http://www.institutions-africa.org/filestream/20110822-appp-tr02-rethinking-business-politics-in-ethiopia-by-sarah-vaughan-mesfin-gebremichael-august-2011>>.

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⁵¹ Ibid.

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⁵³ Vaughan and Gebremichael, “Rethinking business and politics in Ethiopia.”

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

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⁵⁸ Gokgur, *Rwanda's Ruling Party-Owned Enterprises: Do they Promote or Impede Development?*

⁵⁹ Vaughan and Gebremichael, “Rethinking business and politics in Ethiopia.”

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⁶¹ AFP, “Only 10 Rwandans against Paul Kagame's Third Term, says Lawmakers' Report,” *The Monitor*, August 11, 2015, available at <<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Paul-Kagame-third-term-bid-MPs-report/-/1066/2827968/-/e9v9m2z/-/index.html>>.

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⁷² Purdekova, "'Even if I am not here there are so many eyes.'"

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