The Communist Party-Dominated Governance Model of China: Legitimacy, Accountability, and Meritocracy

Lance L. P. Gore, National University of Singapore

As the single ruling party, the Communist Party plays an essential role in public administration and policy making in China. Under general secretary Xi Jinping's program of "modernizing the governance system and governing capability" of the party since November 2013, administrative power is migrating from the government to the party. The party bureaucracy is interlaced with the state bureaucracy to produce a rare model of governance, which in turn has created many conceptual and theoretical issues for the study of good governance. This article analyzes China's party-dominated governance model. Key issues of legitimacy, accountability, and meritocracy are discussed in an effort to delineate the advantages and problems of this model, analyze how it helps to shape the Chinese polity, and shed some light on good governance in general.

Keywords: China model, good governance, Chinese communist party, accountability, legitimacy, meritocracy

The Chinese Challenge to Good Governance

Since the World Bank's 1989 study on why sub-Saharan Africa had lagged in economic development, good governance has been regarded as a key factor in successful development.[1] "Good governance," according to the Bank, is defined as "a pub-

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1. World Bank, *From Crisis to Sustainable Growth—Sub-Saharan Africa: A Long-Term Perspective Study* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1989), xii.

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lic service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to its public."[2] Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan summarized good governance as ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthening democracy, and promoting transparency and capacity in public administration.[3] In short, capable public administration, democratic accountability, and the rule of law are the three key ingredients of good governance.

Chinese economic development in the past four decades has been nothing short of spectacular: at nearly double-digit annual rates for almost four decades, China's is one of the longest growth spurts recorded in history for a major economy. It has propelled China to become the largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity in 2014, and it is projected to be the largest in nominal terms around 2025.[4] Economic growth also has lifted seven hundred million people out of poverty in the past three decades,[5] accounting for the bulk of poverty reduction in the world in this period. China increasingly is regarded as a superpower capable of challenging the United States in important areas around the globe. Also, in contrast to the economic and political upheavals elsewhere in the world, China has been remarkably stable since 1989.

However, few in the West admire the Chinese political system, much less hold it as a model of good governance. Francis Fukuyama, for one, argues that the Chinese political system has developed a super-powerful executive while missing the other two components of healthy political development—the rule of law and democratic accountability.[6] In his words, "China alone created a modern state in the terms defined by Max Weber"—that is, "a centralized, uniform system of bureaucratic administration based on impersonal, merit-based bureaucratic recruitment, capable of governing a huge population and territory under uniform set of rules"—in the third century B.C.E., some 1,800 years ahead of Europe.[7] The West

2. Barber B. Conable, "Foreword" to World Bank, *From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, xii; Conable was then the World Bank president (see previous note).

3. Cited in Thomas G. Weiss, "Governance, Good Governance, and Global Governance: Conceptual and Actual Challenges," *Third World Quarterly* 21 (2000): 795–814, at 797.

4. See IMF, "World Economic Outlook database 2014," at http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/02/weodata/index.aspx. There have been many projections of the growth trajectories of China and the United States, but most point to 2025 as the approximate date for China to overtake the United States.

5. World Bank, "Understanding China's Poverty Reduction Success to Benefit the Global South," at http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/05/17/understanding-chinas-poverty-reduction-success-to-benefit-the-global-south.

6. As Francis Fukuyama puts it bluntly, "China had a strong state, but without law and accountability"; see his *The Origins of Political Order: From Pre-Human Times to the French Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2011), 22.

7. Ibid., 21

evolved the rule of law and democratic accountability from the heritage of ancient Greece and Rome. Their absence in China is considered a serious deficiency because "a modern state without rule of law or accountability is capable of enormous despotism."[8] It also lacks legitimacy, which for Fukuyama could only derive from liberal democracy in modern times.

The idea that China is deficient in governance also gets some support from the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators for the 1996–2016 period (Table 1), which measure multiple dimensions of governance in 209 countries and territories. On the "voice and accountability" index, China is far below average; its estimated score and percentile ranking in 2016 were −1.62 (6th percentile), similar to those of some commonly recognized failed states—barely above war-torn Syria and lower than both Pakistan and Afghanistan.[9] The abysmal score on "voice and accountability" and generally low scores on other indexes are counter-intuitive given China's economic performance and political stability in the past four decades.

Indeed, as might be suggested by China's economic performance, in a number of ways China has developed strong political institutions. Public administration in China has become more rule-based since the turn of this century, building on the country's long tradition of the bureaucratic state and, contrary to what is perceived by Fukuyama and the experts polled in constructing World Bank's governance indexes, the Chinese government has enjoyed relatively high legitimacy.[10] Of course, the term "democratic accountability" is not appropriate here since China is not an electoral democracy, but that does not prevent the state from being held accountable to the populace by other means. In fact, surveys of the Chinese population by both domestic Chinese researchers and reputable international polling organizations consistently have indicated high popular support for the regime.[11] For

8. Ibid., 19.

9. The values were −1.92 (2nd percentile) for Syria; −1.12 (18th percentile) for Afghanistan; and −0.72 (27th percentile) for Pakistan. Data set available at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home.

10. "Legitimacy" here is used interchangeably with "regime support," which survey researchers usually measure by the level of confidence in key public institutions of the country.

11. See, for example, the Asian Barometer Survey (conducted in 2002, 2008, 2011, and 2015) and the World Values Survey (1990, 1997, 2001, 2007, and 2012). For a literature review, see Wenfang Tang, *Populist Authoritarianism: Chinese Political Culture and Regime Sustainability* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), ch. 2. See also Jie Chen, *Popular Political Support in Contemporary China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004); Tianjian Shi, *Political Participation in Beijing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997); Qing Yang and Wenfang Tang, "Exploring the Sources of Institutional Trust in China: Culture, Mobilization, or Performance?" *Asian Politics & Policy* 2 (2010): 415–36; and Liangjiang Li, "The Magnitude and Resilience of Trust in the Center: Evidence from Interviews with Petitioners in Beijing and a Local Survey in Rural China," *Modern China* 39 (2013): 3–36.

Table 1. Chinese Quality of Governance, as Measured in the World Bank Governance Index

Year	1996		1998		2000		2002		2004		2006	
	Score	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**
Voice and Accountability	−1.29	12.02	−1.36	10.58	−1.29	11.54	−1.57	6.25	−1.46	7.69	−1.68	6.25
Political Stability & Absence Of Violence/Terrorism	−0.17	41.35	−0.44	30.29	−0.27	35.10	−0.36	32.21	−0.36	32.21	−0.54	28.37
Government Effectiveness	−0.25	46.83	−0.10	53.17	−0.09	53.66	−0.05	55.12	0.00	59.02	0.08	57.07
Regulatory Quality	−0.14	47.55	−0.26	37.25	−0.33	36.27	−0.53	33.33	−0.28	44.61	−0.18	48.53
Rule of Law	−0.43	36.36	−0.35	38.76	−0.48	35.89	−0.41	39.23	−0.43	38.76	−0.55	37.32
Control of Corruption	−0.25	43.90	−0.25	45.85	−0.24	50.73	−0.65	33.66	−0.56	34.63	−0.51	37.07
Year	2006		2010		2012		2014		2015		2016	
	Score	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**
Voice and Accountability	−1.64	5.77	−1.63	5.21	−1.59	4.74	−1.54	5.42	−1.66	4.93	−1.62	6.90
Political Stability & Absence Of Violence/Terrorism	−0.48	29.67	−0.66	25.00	−0.55	28.44	−0.46	29.61	−0.55	26.19	−0.52	27.14
Government Effectiveness	0.15	59.22	0.10	57.89	0.01	55.98	0.34	66.35	0.41	68.27	0.36	67.79
Regulatory Quality	−0.13	51.46	−0.22	44.50	−0.25	43.54	−0.27	45.19	−0.29	44.23	−0.26	44.23
Rule of Law	−0.34	45.19	−0.33	45.50	−0.49	38.86	−0.33	42.79	−0.41	39.90	−0.22	46.15
Control of Corruption	−0.54	35.44	−0.60	32.38	−0.48	38.76	−0.33	47.12	−0.28	48.56	−0.25	49.04

Notes: Rank is given in percentiles. Estimated scores range from approximately −2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong) for governance performance. The table entries are based on the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). The WGI compiles and summarizes information from over 30 existing data sources that report the views and experiences of citizens, entrepreneurs, and experts in the public, private, and NGO sectors from around the world, on the quality of various aspects of governance. For details of the methodology, follow the hyperlink below. See also Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, "The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5430, September 2010.

Source: World Bank, *Aggregate Governance Indicators, 1996–2017*, at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home.

example, the fifth wave of the World Value Survey (2005–08) measured support for seven major political institutions (the military, police, legal system, central government, ruling party, national legislature, and civil service) in 69 countries. The ranking of the average combined factor index of political support for these seven institutions put China at the top (0.60), followed by India (0.54), Malaysia and Turkey (0.49), Finland and South Africa (0.46), Switzerland (0.44), Sweden (0.43), Indonesia (0.42), Japan (0.40), and Australia, the United States, and Spain (0.39).[12] As one researcher put it, "By now scholars familiar with the field have virtually arrived at a consensus: The degree of legitimacy of the Chinese political system is rather high."[13]

Of course, the communist regime has a large apparatus for controlling information and shaping public opinion to its advantage. Nevertheless, given the multiple sources of information available to the Chinese population, including the Internet, social media, and overseas travels, the Chinese people do have a degree of autonomy in exercising judgment.[14] Survey researchers have tried to determine the degree of free will in Chinese respondents. For example, Tang's 2008 survey adopted a question from the 2003 Identity Survey II of the International Social Survey Program: "Do you support the government even if you know that it is in the wrong?" It turned out that only 46% of the Chinese respondents answered in the affirmative, less than in 19 other countries (out of 36) surveyed, including Denmark (48%), the United States (50%), Spain (51%), Switzerland (58%), South Korea (62%), and Israel (64%).[15] It appears that the Chinese people are not blindly supporting their government.

One of the most commonly advanced explanations for the surprising popular support of some authoritarian regimes is "performance legitimacy." That is, they

12. These were followed by western Germany and Thailand (0.38), Italy (0.37), South Korea (0.36), Brazil, Poland, and Chile (0.34), eastern Germany (0.33), Mexico (0.31), Slovenia (0.30), Taiwan and Serbia (0.29), and Argentina (0.25); data from Tang, *Populist Authoritarianism*, 26 (see previous note).

13. Yun-han Chu, "Sources of Regime Legitimacy and the Debate over the Chinese Model," *The China Review* 13 (2013): 4.

14. China's internet user population reached 772 million, or 56% of the population, by December 2017; see China Internet Development Statistic Report No. 41, summary available at http://www.cnnic.net.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwxzbg/hlwtjbg/201803/t20180305_70249.htm. Virtual private networks and other technologies have rendered China's "Great Fire Wall" porous. In addition, 122 million Chinese travelled abroad in 2016. One study shows that exposure to foreign media actually improved Chinese citizens' confidence in China; see Haifeng Huang and Yao-Yuan Yeh, "Information from Abroad: Foreign Media, Selective Exposure and Political Support in China," *British Journal of Political Science*, at doi 10.1017, April 2017, 1–26.

15. Tang, *Populist Authoritarianism*, 18 (see note 11 above).

have delivered tangible benefits that meet the expectations of the population.[16] However, performance legitimacy is regarded as unstable, not only because it carries concrete promises that may not be met due to uncontrollable circumstances, but also because it lacks moral underpinning. In addition, economic growth increasingly benefits the top 1% in China, as it does in some other capitalist countries, and eventually growth may become less relevant to the masses. China has high economic performance and the Chinese government has high popular support but falls far short of Western standards of good governance, a puzzle that performance legitimacy may not fully explain. This article seeks to address this problem from a governance perspective. It draws on the two existing lines of inquiry—cultural and institutional—in search of deeper explanations for the China puzzle.

Two Lines of Inquiry

The cultural line of inquiry argues that the current regime's legitimacy is rooted in the historically shaped patterns of expectation evolving around the idea of "benevolent governance" (*renzheng* in Confucianism)—that the government should be caring, sensitive, and responsive to the needs and wants of the ruled, taking care of them much as parents look after their children.[17] As long as the state at least approximately fulfills its moral responsibilities, it will have the consent of the ruled. Another element of traditional legitimacy is meritocracy, of which China has a tradition dating back millennia. In this tradition, the state is expected to select, recruit, and groom talented, Confucian-educated, and civic-minded people, as exemplified by the traditional scholar-officials (the literati), to take up the responsibility of governing. This government of virtue and merit earns its right to rule ("the mandate of heaven"[18]) by fulfilling its moral responsibilities through benevolent and competent

16. See, for example, *Economist*, "Performance Legitimacy: When It Comes to Elections, the PAP Leaves as Little as Possible to Chance," special report, July 16, 2015; Dingxin Zhao, "The Mandate of Heaven and Performance Legitimation in Historical and Contemporary China," *American Behavioral Scientist* 53 (2009): 416–33; Dingxin Zhao and Hongxing Yang, "Performance Legitimacy, State Autonomy and China's Economic Miracle," Center for Democracy, Development and Rule of Law Working paper 132, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., April 2013.

17. Yangqi Tong, "Morality, Benevolence, and Responsibility: Regime Legitimacy in China from Past to the Present," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16 (2011): 141–15; Daniel Bell, *The China Model: Political Limits of Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015).

18. The Chinese word is *tianming*. In Confucianism, the "mandate of heaven" was bestowed upon a ruler if they upheld justice and attended to the livelihood of the people. The idea was first used to support the rule of the Zhou dynasty's kings (1046–256 B.C.E), and legitimize their

governance and by winning people's hearts (rather than their votes).[19] Of course, most if not all imperial courts did not measure up to the Confucian ideal and had to rely to differing degrees on repression to stay in power. However, an unpopular regime is inherently unstable and in danger of losing the mandate of heaven when people revolt, since intrinsic to the mandate of heaven concept is the right of the people to rebel against an unjust ruler. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) often invokes this concept to legitimize its rule and remind itself of the importance of shoring up popular support, while also beefing up the machinery of repression.

Tianjian Shi and Jie Lu have demonstrated with survey data that in China the popular understanding of the concept of democracy is quite different from its definition in the liberal discourse; it is based on "a guardianship discourse"—the widely shared view among ordinary Chinese people that democracy means government for the people rather than by the people, which is consistent with rule by the elite in the Chinese tradition.[20] In the culturalist view, the communist regime has retained popular support so far because it has more or less fulfilled its moral obligations.

The institutional line of inquiry focuses on the mechanisms of adaptive institution building, especially the ways in which the state shapes as well as responds to popular demands in the context of a larger nationalist project. Andrew Nathan has identified four aspects of post-Mao institutional development that have enhanced the communist regime's resilience: the increasingly norm-bound nature of its succession politics; the increase in meritocratic as opposed to factional considerations in the promotion of political elites; functional differentiation and specialization of institutions within the regime; and expanded political participation under the careful control of the regime.[21] The regime does not simply respond to popular demands as given; it also actively attempts to shape such demands, since it is equipped with the institutional capacity to foster consensus on national priorities.[22] Institutions introduced to expand political participation and popular accountability include

overthrow of the earlier Shang dynasty (1600–1069 B.C.E), and then conventionally as an explanation of the dynastic cycles throughout imperial China.

19. Xin Gu, "Who Was Mr. Democracy? The May Fourth Discourse of Populist Democracy and the Radicalization of Chinese Intellectuals (1915–1922)," *Modern Asian Studies* 35 (2001): 589–621. See also Lucian Pye, *Asian Power and Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

20. Tianjian Shi and Jie Lu, "The Shadow of Confucianism," *Journal of Democracy* 21 (2010): 123–30.

21. Andrew Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy* 14 (2003): 6–13.

22. Heike Holbig and Bruce Gilley, "In Search of Legitimacy in Post-Revolutionary China: Bringing Ideology and Governance Back In," German Institute of Global and Area Studies Working Papers, No. 127 (March 2010).

grassroots elections, deliberative democracy, the incorporation of emerging stakeholders via corporatist arrangements and consultative mechanisms, policy feedback mechanisms, and a limited degree of intraparty pluralism.[23]

Thus, China poses a significant challenge for the study of good governance. Neither the cultural nor institutional underpinnings of its governance model conform to the Western ideal outlined at the beginning of this article. Nevertheless, the Chinese model has accomplished similar objectives, which in turn creates many conceptual, theoretical, and measurement issues for the study of good governance. I posit that the conventional understanding of good governance is inherently biased by liberal democratic ideology and that its three components come directly from the U.S. ideal of the separation of power and checks and balances among the three branches of government. This article aims to demonstrate that good governance can be achieved with alternative cultural assumptions and institutional arrangements. The main task of the remainder of the article is to delineate the governance model of China based on these alternative assumptions and arrangements, and to try to understand why it has been relatively successful by drawing on the insights yielded by these two lines of inquiry. In particular, it will evaluate the role of the CCP in advancing the objectives of good governance despite the inherent limitations of China's governance model.

Since the objective here is to understand why the Chinese model has delivered decent results, the article will necessarily concentrate on delineating its strengths instead of rehearsing its weaknesses, which have become cliché in the Western discourse. It does so not because the weaknesses are trivial (they are not), but because we potentially gain more by challenging the conventional wisdom about China's governance system.

The Party-Dominated Governance Structure

Deng Xiaoping's original vision of reforming the party-state system in the 1980s emphasized the separation of the party from the government so that the latter could become more professional and efficient.[24] The 1989 bloody crackdown on

23. Baogang He, "An Empirical Theory of Hybrid Legitimacy System in China," in *Reviving Legitimacy: Lessons for and from China*, ed. Deng Zhenglai and Sujian Guo (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2011); and C. S. Bryan Ho, "Re-Conceptualizing 'Legitimacy' for Studying Electoral Politics in Rural China," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16 (2011): 207–27.

24. Deng spelled out the rationale for this reform in the article "On Reforming the Political System," in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3 (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1994): 176–80. The reform measures for the separation are outlined in the political report to the 13th Party Congress delivered by the party's general secretary, Zhao Ziyang, on October 25,

the Tiananmen pro-democracy movement and the ensuing collapse of the communist states in Eastern Europe brought the CCP to the realization of the dangers that such separation posed to the party: the government, once free from the grip of the party, could evolve into a competing power center.[25] After taking over the reins of power in late 2012, Xi Jinping unveiled a political vision exactly opposite to Deng's original one. Instead of taking the party *out* of state administration, he wants it to be infused *in* it, indeed to become the core of the governance structure of China. Deng transformed Mao's revolutionary party into a ruling party, and now Xi wants it to be further transformed into a governance party. He wants to consolidate the CCP's ruling position by not only making it the embodiment of the "China Dream,"[26] but also by putting it in charge of the daily affairs of public administration. The result is a party-centered governance structure characteristically different from the liberal democratic model.

Therefore, at first glance, what catches the eye about the governance structure of China is the prominent role of the ruling communist party.[27] Despite vast socioeconomic changes in the past four decades, the CCP remains a Leninist vanguard party in both its organization structure and in its way of exercising power; it also remains mission-oriented—toward the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The formal structure of the Chinese polity consists of four sets of organs of power—the party, the government, the People's Congress (PC), and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). They are customarily referred to in China as "the four teams" (*sitao banzi*) that constitute the formal power structure at all five levels of the public administration—the central, provincial, prefectural, county, and township. Of the four teams, the party is the most powerful, even though the

1987. The full text in Chinese is available at http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64566/65447/4526368.html.

25. For a summary of the lessons the CCP learned from the collapse of the Soviet Union, see David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) and (from a Chinese perspective) Huang Weiding, *Sugong wangdang ershinian ji* [In Memory of the 20th Anniversary of the Demise of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union] (Jiangxi Higher Education Press, 2013).

26. "China Dream" (or Chinese Dream) is a slogan proposed by general secretary Xi Jinping in his inaugural speech on November 15, 2012. It is a rallying cry of the Xi administration, expressing the twin objectives of national rejuvenation and substantially raising the standard of living of the population, through a modernization drive, by the middle of this century.

27. For fuller descriptions of the Chinese political system, see Lance Gore, *Chinese Politics Illustrated: The Cultural, Social, and Historical Context* (Hackensack, N.J.: World Scientific, 2014), chs. 3–4. For other depictions, albeit from somewhat different perspectives, see Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), chs. 5–6; and James C. F. Wang, *Contemporary Chinese Politics: An Introduction*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002), ch. 4.

Chinese Constitution designates the National People's Congress (NPC) as "the highest organ of state power."[28] The People's Congress is in practice generally regarded as a rubber stamp that endorses whatever the party decides, while the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is often mocked as the cheerleader for the CCP regime.[29] The government primarily implements the party's policies and decisions. Of the relationships among the four bodies of political power, the most important is the nexus between the party and the government. The term "party-state" is primarily derived from this nexus. Like Imperial China, the People's Republic of China has a strong executive branch that overshadows the other branches. The main difference is the presence of the CCP.

Therefore, in a simplified version, the Chinese party-state can be regarded as consisting of two parallel hierarchies—the party and the state—that are structured into five levels. Figure 1 depicts the two parallel hierarchies of the party and the state. On the left is the government hierarchy with the State Council (i.e., the central government) at the pinnacle, followed by the provincial, prefectural, and county and township-level governments (including municipalities at the county level and above). On the right side of the figure is the party hierarchy that corresponds to the state hierarchy, with the CCP's central committee at the top, followed by the provincial, prefectural, and county and township-level party committees.

At each level, the party is in the driver's seat, making key policy and personnel decisions in both the party and the government. For example, the Politburo and its standing committee make decisions on all provincial/ministerial level leadership positions under the advice of the Central Organization Department (COD), which is the human resources department, so to speak, of the CCP's central committee (see Figure 2 and also the section on party committees below). Personnel control is a powerful leverage that Beijing has over the provinces that it uses to keep centrifugal forces in check. To make sure that the governments follow the party line and implement party policies, the CCP has also implanted party groups (*dangzu*) within government bureaucracies. Thus, as shown on the left side of Figure 1, the CCP has 64 party groups inside the State Council's ministerial-level agencies and

28. Article 57 of The Constitution of the People's Republic of China. See the appendix to James Wang, *Contemporary Chinese Politics* (see previous note).

29. The real situation is of course more complicated. The People's Congress (including the National People's Congress and local people's congresses) sometimes can be vocal on policy and even personnel issues, while the People's Political Consultative Conference is officially defined as an advisory body that routinely makes policy recommendations at the annual sessions to which the government is obligated to respond. Communist party members head both bodies and form the majority of the deputies serving on both.

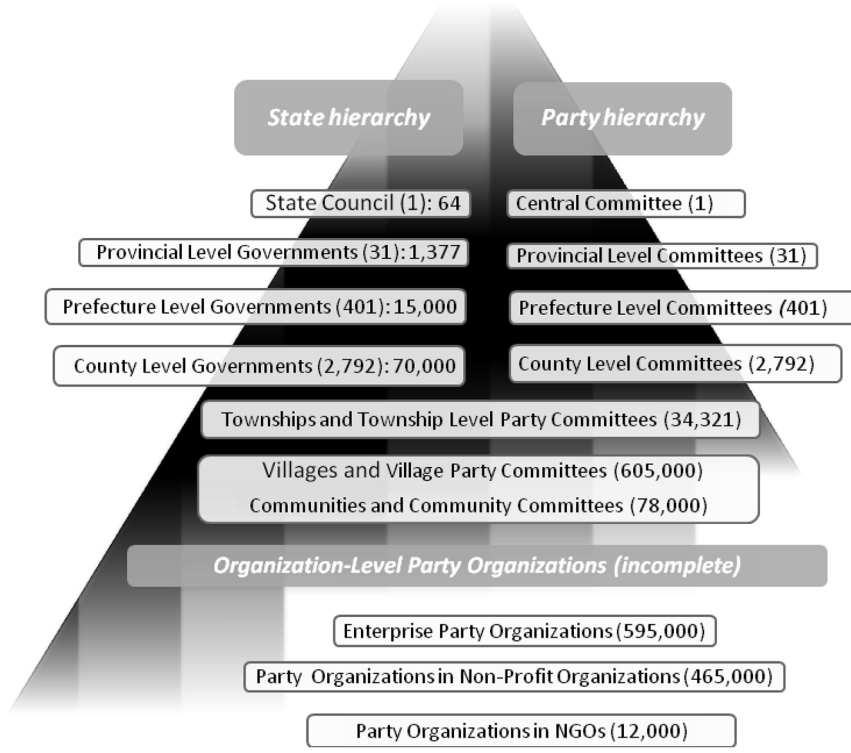

Figure 1. The Dual Party-State Hierarchy of China

Notes: Numbers in parentheses on the left side of the figure refer to the number of governments at each level, and those to the right of the colons refer to the number of party groups embedded in state bureaucracies at that level (excluding those in PC and CPPCC). Numbers in parentheses on the right side of the figure refer to the numbers of party committees at each level. PC = People's Congress; CPPCC = Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. These two bodies accompany the party-state hierarchy from the national to the township level, but are not shown in this chart. Chinese municipalities are not marked here, but they exist at the provincial, profectural, and county levels. Party groups generally are not used in government bureaucracies below the county level.
Sources: Press release by Wang Qinfeng, deputy director of Central Department of Organization, June 24, 2011, at http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/74838/137931/225181/index.html, and a CCP internal document.

approximately 70,000 party groups (nationwide) within the county-level government bureaucracies.

All organizations of significant size or importance in China are supposed to have CCP organizations nestled in them, and the CCP's policy is to establish full coverage of them all. Table 2 describes the party's organizational penetration of the polity, society, and economy at the base level (the township level and below).

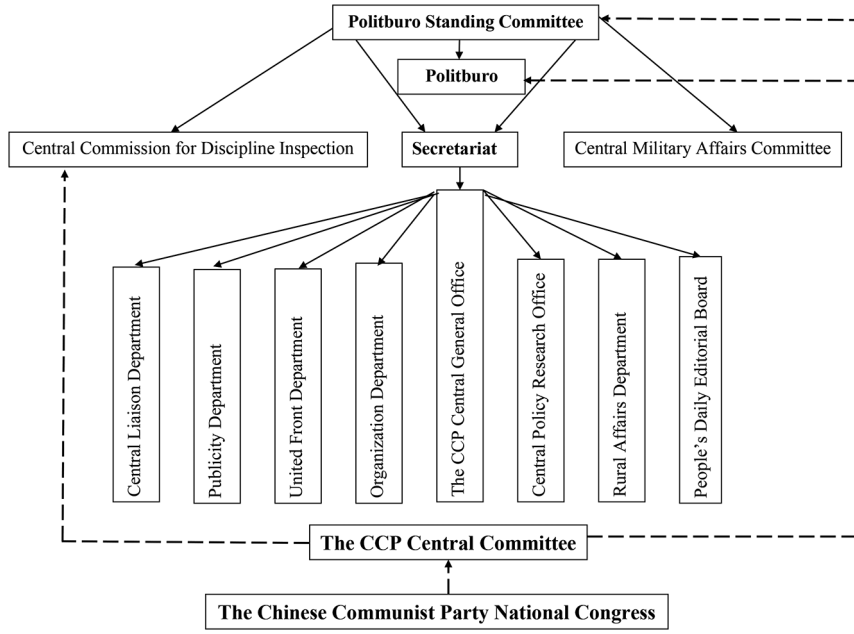

Figure 2. The Central Organs of the Chinese Communist Party (the "Party Center")

Note: Dotted lines indicate formal election; solid lines indicate actual control.
Source: author's compilation.

The last column indicates the penetration rate as the percentage of organizations that have party structures within them. As the table shows, the rate is 90% or above in most sectors, except for a few categories such as private businesses and non-governmental organizations. According to CCP rules, a party cell should be formed wherever there are at least three party members.[30]

The duality of party-state administration in the context of a market-based society represents a peculiar model of governance, which also raises questions about state autonomy. State autonomy in a democracy usually refers to bureaucratic autonomy; the career civil service is supposed to be rational, professional, and relatively insulated from both electoral politics and interest group pressure.[31] A more autonomous state usually means a more powerful bureaucracy, as in the cases of France and Germany. The autonomy of the classic Japanese developmental state

30. See Article 30 of the CCP Constitution, in James Wang, *Contemporary Chinese Politics*, Appendix (see note 27 above).

31. See Peter Evans and James Rauch, "Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of 'Weberian' State Structures on Economic Growth," *American Sociological Review* 64 (1999): 748–65.

Table 2. The Rate of Party Coverage at the Base Level of the Polity, Economy, and Society

	Number of Administrative Units			Number of Party Organizations			Rate of Party Penetration (%)		
	2008	*2013*	*2014*	*2008*	*2013*	*2014*	*2008*	*2013*	*2014*
Townships and Towns	34,324	32,975	32,756	34,321	32,972	32,753	99.99	99.00	99.99
Urban street administrations		7,454	7,567		7,448	7,565		99.92	99.97
Communities (*Shequ*)	79,000	90,799	93,018	78,000	90,443	92,581	98.74	99.61	99.53
Villages	606,000	584,172	577,336	605,000	583,795	577,273	99.83	99.97	99.99
Enterprises	2,634,000			595,000			22.59		
State-owned	*249,000*	*215,000*	*213.000*	*216,000*	*195,000*	*194,000*	*86.75*	*90.8*	*91.0*
Private	*2,385,000*	*278,400*	*297,300*	*380,000*	*162,700*	*157,900*	*15.93*	*58.4*	*53.1*
State Administrative Organs[a]		236,000	237.000		235,000	236.000		99.6	99.6
Public Institutions[b]	578,000	560,000	546,000	464,000	508,000	506,000	80.28	90.7	92.7
Colleges and universities	*7,982*			*1,622*			*100.00*		
Research institutes	*1,622*			*7,765*			*97.28*		
Social Organizations[c]		275,000	439,000		115,000	184,000		41.9	41.9
Non-governmental organizationss[d]	81,000			12,000			14.81		

Notes: [a]*Jiguan danwei*; [b]*Shiye danwei*; [c]*shehui tuanti*; [d]*minban feiqiye danwei*;

Sources: CCP Central Organization Department: "*Dangnei tongji gongbao*" (Communiqué of Intra-party Statistics), via Xinhua News Agency, July 1, 2009; "*Shouquanfabu: 2013 Dangnei tongji gongbao*" (Authorized release: Communiqué of Intra-party Statistics 2013), via Xinhua News Agency, June 30, 2014, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/lianzheng/2014-06/30/c_1111383508.htm.

manifested also as bureaucratic autonomy, characterized as "politicians reign, bureaucrats rule."[32] In an authoritarian state such as China's, where the distinction between politicians and bureaucrats is less clear, state autonomy is a broader concept that includes both politicians and bureaucrats; the Chinese state bureaucracy is autonomous from society but not from the ruling party.

Career bureaucrats and politicians are both entrenched in the same career ladder.[33] As a bureaucrat rises higher, they become more of a politician. Furthermore, the vast majority of government officials and nearly all top government leaders at each level and locality, as well as most top executives of major organization, are CCP members. Some party members hold primarily party positions while others hold primarily government positions. In the resulting party-state continuum at each level of the administrative hierarchy, the closer one is to the party's end (i.e., holding primarily party positions) the more likely one is a politician. Most, if not all, senior officials on the state side are also on the party side—they are CCP members who also hold party positions. For example, the head of the government (county magistrate, mayor, provincial governor, etc.) is usually the second highest ranking official in the corresponding party committee. The duality creates an incentive structure that causes the party-state to behave in characteristic ways: the party is concerned with the legitimacy of the regime precisely because the party lacks electoral legitimacy, and it is primarily the party that exerts pressure on the state bureaucracy to be responsive to the society and holds the state bureaucrats accountable.

Structurally, the Chinese party-state is more embedded in society than the bureaucratic authoritarian states in Latin America or even the developmental states of East Asia.[34] None of these had the kind of ubiquitous presence of members and organizations of the ruling party throughout the society shown in Table 2.[35] The

32. Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982).

33. See, for example, Bo Zhiyue, *China's Elite Politics: Political Transition and Power Balancing* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2007).

34. Gordon White and Jack Gray, *The Developmental States in East Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Robert Wade, *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990); and Peter Berger and Hsin-huang Hsiao, *In Search of an East Asian Developmental Model* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1988).

35. These are the appropriate cases to compare with contemporary China, since they also operate in market economies, unlike the former Soviet Union and East European states. In a market economy, the party-state cannot control all resources, and hence cannot count on the "organized dependency" of the people; see Andrew Walder, "Organized Dependency and Cultures of Authority in Chinese Industry," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 43 (1983): 51–76. Therefore, the party-state can no longer take its power position for granted.

unelected party officials of China are insulated from electoral politics, yet they must pay close attention to society because a large part of their job assignment is to shore up popular support for the party. Compared with the relationship between elected politicians and career bureaucrats in a democracy, the CCP's control over the state apparatuses is much stronger because it has a highly organized presence in the state bureaucracy and almost all senior bureaucrats are party members. The CCP has also developed sophisticated institutional mechanisms for participating in governance, which is the subject of the next three subsections.

Party Committees

The CCP exercises power primarily through party committees, including the Central Committee, five levels of subnational committees (customarily called "local party committees"), and those inside various organizations in the state, society, and economy. At the national level, the Central Committee exercises leadership over the State Council, the National People's Congress, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The party committee of a geographical locality, such as a province, municipality or county, exercises leadership over the other three political bodies as well as over all the party committees of lower-level localities and most organizations within its jurisdiction.[36]

The term "party center" (*dangzhongyang*) denotes the party establishment at the top, consisting of the National Party Congress, which convenes every five years, the Central Committee, the Central Discipline Inspection Commission, the Central Secretariat and its subordinate party bureaucracies, the Politburo, and the Politburo Standing Committee. However, the term is also customarily used to refer to the party central authorities represented by the Politburo and its standing committee.

The representatives to the National Party Congress are elected by electoral units of the party across the country. The Congress's main duty is to elect the Central Committee and the Central Discipline Inspection Committee. The Central Committee in turn elects the Politburo, the Politburo Standing Committee, the Central Secretariat, and the party's general secretary and chairman of the Central Military Commission (usually the same person), and it reviews the annual work report of the Politburo delivered by the general secretary. The Politburo currently has 25 members and its standing committee has 7. The Politburo Standing Committee is the most powerful decision-making body and the apex of political power

36. For more details see Lance Gore, *Chinese Politics Illustrated*, Unit 3; and James Wang, *Contemporary Chinese Politics*, chs. 4 and 7 (see note 27 above for both sources).

in China. The Central Secretariat is in charge of running party affairs on a daily basis. Central party bureaucracies include the Central General Office, Central Organization Department, Central Publicity Department, Central International Department, and Policy Research Office. Figure 2 is an abbreviated organization chart of the party center.

A main mechanism through which the CCP exercises power over the other bodies of the state is interlocking appointment. The members of the Politburo Standing Committee, for example, serve concurrently as the chairman of the National People's Congress, the president of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and the premier of the State Council. The general secretary of the CCP is by convention also the state president and chairman of the Central Military Commission.[37] All the major decisions, policies, or laws made or adopted by these bodies must be deliberated and approved by the Politburo Standing Committee or the Politburo first. This power structure and political processes at the national level are duplicated at the local levels, all the way down to the township.

At local levels, according to the CCP Constitution, the power of the party organs in the localities should proceed from local party congress to local party committee to local party standing committee to local party secretary. But in reality the power chain proceeds in exactly the opposite direction. The local party standing committee—the local equivalent of the Politburo Standing Committee—is the highest decision-making body in a locality, and its members serve in key offices such as the mayor or governor, the head of the local people's congress, and the local people's political consultative conference. Therefore, the local party standing committee constitutes the leadership team of the local governance. The party chief (party secretary) sits at the pinnacle of the local power structure. They usually hold a number of other important positions, such as head of the local people's congress, of some party working committees (*danggongwei*), or of various leading small groups (LSGs), which are discussed below. The local party chief is most responsible for the smooth running and effective functioning of the local party-state apparatuses. They play a double institutional role as both the highest personified authority in the locality and the chief agent of the party authorities above.[38]

As such, the party secretary resembles the chair of the board, while the head of the government is like the chief executive of the local administration. The party

37. The CMC is a party organ. The Chinese military is officially not a national institution but a part of the CCP, which exercises control over it via the Central Military Commission.

38. Wang Zhengxu and Dragan Pavlićević, "Party Chiefs and Formal and Informal Rules and Institutions," in ch. 4 of *Consolidating Party Rule: Chinese Communist Party in Action*, ed. Yongnian Zheng and Lance Gore, forthcoming, Routledge.

secretary must take note of, submit to, and promote the party center's policy directives, but at the same time also enjoys significant discretion to devise local policies on local issues. Besides demonstrating sufficient loyalty to superiors, a local party chief must deliver expected job performance, which can include many separate objectives relating to economic development, social management, and other goals. The massive effort of some local party chiefs to attract foreign capital or state funding, for example, reflects the key importance of local economic development for party chiefs, especially prior to the 2010s. More recently, prevention of mass protests and environmental disasters also feature among the key objectives and targets of local party chiefs.[39] They must also ensure a smooth functioning of the local party-state organs, and the unity and harmony of the leadership team, which are prerequisites for the local party-state to pursue its governance and development agenda. Achieving these objectives requires a large amount of political skill and careful utilization of the resources at the party chief's disposal. It can involve much negotiation, persuasion, manipulation, and coercion.[40]

Formally, the party standing committee meeting is the most important decision-making venue at the local level. However, real decisions (especially personnel decisions) are usually made prior to the formal meeting via informal consultations or horse trading among standing committee members. The party chief can utilize informal meetings such as party secretary work meetings (*shuji bangonghui*), standing committee briefings (*changwei pengtouhui*), or simply one-on-one consultations and arm-twisting to push for their agenda. These consultative mechanisms were originally meant to support policy making between formal standing committee meetings, but in practice they often serve as key venues for decision making.[41] The formal meeting only endorses what has already been decided.

Besides party committees, the CCP has historically created a number of other organizational forms to facilitate public administration. This article next examines the two most common ones: the party group and the leading small group.

Party Groups

The numbers of party groups are shown on the left side of Figure 1 (to the right of the colons); these are an integral part of the government hierarchy (although

39. See Hui Li and Lance L. P. Gore, "Merit-Based Patronage: Career Incentives of Local Leading Cadres of Contemporary China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 27 (2018): 85–102, at doi 10.1080/10670564.2017.1363021.

40. Wang and Pavlićević, "Party Chiefs and Formal and Informal Rules and Institutions" (see note 38 above).

41. It is easy to see that these may become channels through which corruption flows.

they normally are not used at the township level due to the small size of the party-state establishment there). These are party bodies embedded in government bureaucracies and other non-CCP organizations (such as state-owned corporations, public institutions such as universities and research institutes, the People's Congress, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) to play a controlling role on behalf of the party. The membership of party groups usually consists of the party chief and the heads of the key subdivisions of the bureaucracy or organization in which the party group is created. Party groups are set up by the central or local party committees as part of the CCP's policy enforcement mechanisms. The new "Guidelines of CCP Party Group Work (trial)," adopted at the Politburo meeting on May 29, 2015, significantly expanded the types of non-party organizations to be covered by party groups to include non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and other social organizations traditionally outside the CCP's organizational grip.[42] It is a major step in extending the party's reach into society.

The 2015 guidelines stipulate that party groups consult and decide on all important issues of the host organization, including issues that need coordination with higher party authorities and subordinate units; matters related to the internal structure, responsibilities, and staffing of the host organization; major policy decisions; the appointment and removal of key personnel; arrangements for major projects; allocation of large funds; ideological and political work; the cultivation of corporate culture;[43] and anti-corruption issues. These stipulations prescribe a central place for the party in any non-party organizations. Party groups supplement the overall leadership of the party committees as platforms to micro-manage policy implementation, serving as the party's agent and enforcer of the party line inside government organs and other important social and economic organizations. They insert the party into the fabric of the polity, economy, and society and help to advance the party's agenda in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

Leading Small Groups

Leading small groups (LSGs) are informal *ad hoc* bodies that coordinate and steer activity in a particular issue area within the CCP and government. They are mechanisms used to deal with the structural rigidity of the Chinese bureaucracy, providing

42. "The Chinese Communist Party's Regulations on Party Group Work," *Xinhua*, June 16, 2015.

43. That is, building a positive institutional culture in a company, university, social organization, etc.

the missing "joint" that allows the otherwise "fragmented and disjointed"[44] bureaucracy to function. By superimposing a layer of authority on top of bureaucratic agencies so that they would work together on issues that cut across their jurisdictions, the LSGs add flexibility to the system.

A leading small group is usually headed by a senior party leader, with group members drawn from agencies related to the task at hand. LSGs usually do not appear on official organization charts and are expected to be dissolved as soon as their missions are accomplished. However, some LSGs have persisted for decades—such as the Central Foreign Affairs LSG and the Central Financial and Economic LSG—and become fixtures in the bureaucratic structure.[45]

LSGs are more than a functional device augmenting policy making and public administration. The flexibility of their creation and dissolution also serves as an important tool in elite politics, because they can be used to redistribute power in the system. Since taking over power in late 2012, Xi Jinping has engineered a massive re-centralization of power by establishing a number of powerful LSGs on top of the existing political structures, respectively in charge of comprehensive reforms, national security, Internet and information, and military reform.[46] They are all headed by Xi. Other members of the Politburo Standing Committee also serve on these LSGs, either as deputy head or group members. Whereas in the Politburo Standing Committee Xi has one vote equal to each of the six other members, in these LSGs Xi calls the shots. By letting these LSGs take over many responsibilities of the Politburo Standing Committee, Xi has effectively relegated other standing committee members to being his subordinates. In March 2018, several long-standing LSGs, such as the Foreign Affairs LSG and the Financial and Economic LSG, were upgraded to commissions, and a new commission on implementing

44. An influential model of Chinese policy making is the "fragmented authoritarianism model" proposed by Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg in *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Process* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

45. Alice Miller, "The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups," *China Leadership Monitor* 26 (2008), at https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/CLM26AM.pdf.

46. Alice Miller, "More Already on the Central Committees Leading Small Groups," *China Leadership Monitor* 44, July 28, 2014, at https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/clm44am.pdf; and Cary Huang, "How Leading Small Groups Help Xi Jinping and Other Party Leaders Exert Power," *South China Morning Post*, January 20, 2014, at https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1409118/how-leading-small-groups-help-xi-jinping-and-other-party-leaders-exert.

the rule of law was created.[47] The formalization of LSGs is a recent trend under Xi Jinping that further consolidates the CCP's role in governance.

The Chinese Communist Party as a Meritocracy

The CCP today is a different animal than it was during Mao's time. During wartime (1927–49),[48] when Mao and his colleagues tried to wrest power from the Nationalist Government, the CCP was a revolutionary force consisting of mostly poor, illiterate peasants. Willingness to obey the leadership, to fight, and to sacrifice was the primary criterion for party membership. After the CCP came to power, Mao resisted routinization of the party with incessant political campaigns, such as the Great Leap Forward (1958–62) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), to keep the revolution alive.[49] Loyalty and political correctness, not expertise and professional competence, were the qualities emphasized in a party member. At the end of the Mao era, in 1977, only 3% of the roughly 37 million party members were college educated, compared to 46% of the almost 90 million members in 2016.[50]

Once the "four modernizations" (industrial, agricultural, science and technologies, and national defense) became the top priority for the CCP after 1978, the country was placed back on the track of meritocracy. College entrance exams were restored and civil service exams re-introduced, resuming a millennium-long tradition of imperial civil service. Today, a college education is the minimum requirement for promotion inside the party-state, and China's top leaders—premier Li Keqiang and Xi himself—both hold Ph.D. degrees. Sophisticated systems of cadre training, evaluation, and promotion have been developed,[51] and meritocracy is considered a core feature of what some call the "China model."[52]

At the 3rd Plenum of the 18th Party Congress in November 2013, General Secretary Xi proposed to "modernize the governance system and governing capability" as the overarching objective of institutional reforms; reforming the ruling party

47. Xinhua, "CCP Releases Plan on Deepening Reform of Party and State Institutions," March 21, 2018, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/21/c_137055471.htm.

48. See Lucien Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915–1949* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1971).

49. Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006); Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, Vol. 3: The Coming of the Cataclysm 1961–1966* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

50. *Xinhua*, June 30, 2017, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-06/30/c_1121242478.htm.

51. Frank Pieke, *The Good Communist: Elite Training and State Building in Today's China* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

52. See, for example, Daniel Bell, *The China Model* (see note 17 above).

is at the core of this "fifth modernization."[53] The three-year "Action Plan for Deepening Party-Building Institutional Reforms" adopted by the Politburo on September 2, 2014 outlined 26 reform measures in four key areas—party institutions, cadre management, grassroots consolidation, and human resources development.[54] Nearly half of the action plan was devoted to upgrading the cadre corps and improving the cadre management system. It outlined 16 reform measures in the areas of cadre selection, promotion and review, performance assessment, the grooming of younger cadres, and incentivization. Cadres at each level are required to have specified training, expertise, experience, and aptitude appropriate for their positions. New indexes of performance evaluation and new criteria for promotion have been developed. Tables 3 and 4 show the prototype forms of performance assessment devised by the Central Organization Department, which is dubbed "the largest human resources department of the world,"[55] with well over 100,000 employees nationwide.[56]

Table 3 lists the criteria used to assess the performance of local leadership teams (mostly party standing committees). They cover six areas of job performance, each containing several sub-criteria that are potentially quantifiable. Based on this master model, the localities are allowed to develop their own assessment programs tailored to local conditions, and they often do so.[57] Table 4 presents the Central Organization Department's master assessment form to measure the quality of individual "leading cadres"—party chiefs and members of the local party standing committee. Here, political loyalty and personal integrity are emphasized together with leadership skills. Ratings by colleagues and other knowledgeable and relevant people are used to generate the rating scores for each cadre.[58] In July 2014, the

53. "The 18th Party Congress Work Report: Policy Blueprint for the Xi Administration," Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief* 12 (November 20, 2012), at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=40182&no_cache=1#.VGWdGeOSz9U.

54. "COD explains deepening party-building institutional reform: to be completed before 2017," at http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2014/09-02/6552844.shtml.

55. Richard McGregor, "The Party Organizer," *Financial Times*, September 30, 2009, at http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/ae18c830-adf8-11de-87e7-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3gftrCCXu.

56. This includes those in its subsidiary departments under local party committees nationwide; see Lance Gore, "Managing Human Resources to Sustain One-Party Rule: The Organizational Department of the CCP," paper delivered at the conference on The Chinese Communist Party in Action, York Hotel, Singapore, August 13–14, 2016.

57. This finding is from the author's interviews with local organizational department officials in Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Hubei, Henan, Jiangsu, Shanghai, and Beijing on multiple trips between March 2013 and May 2017.

58. Li and Gore, "Merit-Based Patronage" (see note 39 above).

Table 3. The Central Organization Department's Key Points of Evaluation of Local State Leadership Teams

Content	Key Points for Assessment[a]
Contents of data analysis based on annual targets	
Economic Development	Level of economic development
	Comprehensive efficiency of development
	Urban and rural resident income
	Regional development gaps
	Cost of development
Social Development	Basic education
	Urban employment
	Medical care and public health
	Urban and rural cultural life quality
	Public safety
Sustainable Development	Energy conservation, emissions reduction, and environmental protection
	Ecology, farmland conservation, and other resource conservation
	Population and family planning
	Research & development and innovation
Contents of comments by the masses[b]	
People's Livelihood	Rise in income level and housing improvement
	Increase in employment and social security
	Convenience in medical service, schooling, and community services
	Cultural facilities; cultural and sports activities
Social Harmony	Public security and sense of physical security
	Mediation in social conflicts; letters and visits work (handling of people's petitions)
	Citizens' moral education and civic virtue
	Safeguarding of democratic rights, building grassroots democracy
Governance	Rule of law, open party, and government affairs
	Quality of public service and [of] work style (attitude, manner, etc.)
	Effective party grassroots organizations and role model of party members (whether party members' behaviour serve as role models for the people to emulate)
	Fighting corruption; clean, self-disciplined leaders

Notes: Entries are literal translations by the author, in order to maintain the original language and mindset that is reflected; descriptions in parentheses are the author's. [a]Analysis and evaluation of the data provided by the various departments on the basis of the annual targets or quotas; [b]"masses" (*qunzhong*) usually refers to selective staff from the bureaucracies of the local party and government, the deputies of the local people's congress and people's political consultative conference, invited retired senior cadres, etc.; sometimes the general public is polled as well.

Source: Central Organization Department Document 13 (2009) and appendixes, available at http://www.360doc.com/content/11/0411/11/6675769_108781285.shtml.

Table 4. The Central Organization Department's Key Points for Evaluation of Local Leading Cadres

Category	Content	Key Points for Assessment[a]
Moral character	Party loyalty	[Having] ideological faith; carrying out the party line and policy; implementing democratic centralism; [abiding by the party's] political discipline
	Theoretic mastery	Being adept in learning; thinking strategically; [having] overall steering capability; being skillful at handling policies
	Being principled	Being courageous to take charge and skillful at management; exercising criticism and self-criticism
	Moral quality	[Having] good work ethic, public morality, family values, and personal integrity
Ability	Leadership approach	[Having correct] view on development and political achievement; [being good] at macro policy making (e.g., innovativeness)
	Organizing skill	[Being good at] organization, mobilization, coordination of various parties (division of labor and cooperation) and emergency response; maintaining social stability
	Law abiding	[Having] rule of law consciousness; the level of following the law (administration according to the law)
Diligence	Attitude	Devotion to the cause; sense of responsibility and conscientiousness
	Work style	Being down to earth; [having] pragmatism; staying in close relations with the masses
Achievements	Duty fulfillment	Duty fulfillment; team management or policy implementation
	Dealing with complicated issues	Resolving complex and hot-button issues that concern the masses
	Consolidating basic work	Emphasis on long-term and base-level work (or department management), and on institution building
Integrity	Clean and self-disciplined	Following clean government regulations (accept auditing); disciplining spouse, children, and staff; accepting supervision; [following a frugal] lifestyle

Note: Entries are literal translations by the author, in order to maintain the original language and mindset that is reflected.

Source: Central Organization Department Document 13 (2009) and appendixes, available at http://www.360doc.com/content/11/0411/11/6675769_108781285.shtml.

Politburo approved regulations that specify the criteria for the removal of incompetent cadres. The measure is deemed necessary to unclog the crowded career ladder and further shape the CCP into a meritocracy.[59]

The CCP has also begun to enforce the long-standing requirement that cadres report to relevant party authorities on major features and events of their lives, such as marital status, family assets, income, housing, and the businesses and immigration status of their immediate family members. Routine verification of these reports has also begun, on the basis of both random sampling and mandated pre-appointment and pre-promotion screening. A dual system that separates positions and ranking is being phased in to reduce the incentives for buying and selling official posts. Under this system, a cadre's rank is not tied to the position held, and a cadre holding no important position can thus still be promoted in rank (and hence remuneration).[60]

Human resource development has become an important part of party building in recent decades. The portfolio of the Central Organization Department includes managing not only cadres and party members but also "talents" (*rencai*)—anyone with significant skills and expertise regardless whether they are a CCP member or not.[61] The CCP considers the control of human resources crucial to maintaining its ruling position and has invested enormous resources in the training, retention and use of human resources, especially in science, technology, and engineering. Each year, nearly 40% of new party members are recruited from college campuses; the CCP considers it strategic to control the nation's future talent pool early on and takes human resources to be a matter of national as well as regime security.[62]

The Party's Roles in Governance

The CCP is not a conventional political party as found in Western democracies. It does not aggregate and articulate interests in society through electoral campaigns.

59. Lance Gore, "Chinese Communist Party under Xi Jinping's Stewardship in 2015: Re-Building the Leninist Party Rule," East Asian Institute Background Brief 1104, 20 January 2016.

60. Ibid.

61. David Zweig and Huiyao Wang, "Can China Bring Back the Best? The Communist Party Organizes China's Search for Talent," *China Quarterly* 215 (2013): 590–615; David Zweig, Chung Siu Fung, and Wilfried Vanhonacker, "Rewards of Technology: Explaining China's Reverse Migration," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 7 (2006): 449–71; Qiang Zhi and Margaret Pearson, "China's Hybrid Adaptive Bureaucracy: The Case of the 863 Program for Science and Technology," *Governance* 30 (2017): 407–24; and Lance Gore, "Managing Human Resources to Sustain One-Party Rule" (see note 56 above).

62. Lance Gore, "The Social Transformation of the Chinese Communist Party: The Prospects for Authoritarian Accommodation," *Problems of Post-Communism* 62 (2015): 204–16.

Instead, it executes the will of the party leadership, who autonomously define what is in the nation's and the people's best interests. The CCP is taking over much of state administration and as a result has become more technocratic and meritocratic. The modernization of the state is increasingly taking the form of modernizing the party. From the preceding analysis, the following roles that the CCP plays in China's governance can be identified:

Supplying the Purpose

The China Dream is an ongoing project befitting the CCP as a vanguard Leninist party. The CCP supplies the purpose that guides its policies and action programs, which in turn provide not only the drive but also the legitimacy for the party—as long as the people share its underlying values and objectives. Unlike a liberal democracy in a free market economy, where political direction is open-ended—to be defined by the electorate, interest groups, and vote-seeking politicians at election time—China has not reached (and perhaps never will reach) the stage at which the state merely has to uphold a set of rules and let the players determine the outcome. China's political system is goal-oriented to an extent that liberal democracies are not. The CCP's is a semi-routinized revolutionary regime that derives its essence from a nationalist movement. Through its control of local party chiefs and the nation's human resources, the CCP is in a position to steer national development with long-term planning and systematic execution that few other regimes in the world are capable of today.[63]

Integration and Coordination

Party organizations, spanning the polity, society, and economy, but all under a central command, play a key role integrating the public administration in a vast and diverse country with a population of 1.4 billion. China's turbulent modern history has instilled among the populace, as well as the political elite, a fear of the country sinking into disunity again, and the CCP is considered a powerful guarantee that this will not happen. With the party in firm control, the central authorities allowed

63. Works arguing for the potency of the Chinese system include Bell, *The China Model* (see note 17 above); Ann Lee, *What the U.S. Can Learn from China: An Open-Minded Guide to Treating Our Greatest Competitor as Our Greatest Teacher* (San Francisco, Calif.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 2012); Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus*, Foreign Policy Centre, May 2004; Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2009); and Stefan Halper, *The Beijng Consensus: How China's Authoritarian Model Will Dominate the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

widespread reform experiments in the localities, where multiple development models emerged.[64] The decades of experiences gained from these experiments provided the foundation for the Xi leadership to engage in "top-level design" (*dingceng sheji*) with his "LSG for Comprehensively Deepening the Reforms." The comprehensive control of resources also allows the party, at least in theory, to adopt a more holistic approach to development, as illustrated by Hu Jintao's "scientific development outlook" and Xi Jinping's concept of "innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development,"[65] and China's massive investment in renewable energy.[66]

Resource Mobilization

Probably no other party in today's world is more capable of mobilizing resources than the CCP, which has engaged in mass mobilization from its founding in 1921, first in agitating among the industrial workers and then in instigating peasant revolts, land grabbing, and guerrilla warfare. The CCP owed its wartime success largely to its capability in mobilizing the rural masses. In peacetime, the CCP under Mao carried on this tradition to an excess, with disastrous consequences during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. In the reform era (since 1978), the party turned to institution building and its operation has become more rule-based, especially under Xi Jinping. However, its capacity to mobilize has been preserved, together with the basic organizational structure and operational mode. It still has a sizable cadre corps specialized in propaganda and "ideological and political work." Campaigns continue to be waged for various purposes, from macro-economic

64. This pertains primarily to the era before Xi Jinping's 2013 recentralization reforms, which removed much local autonomy. The models include: the southern Jiangsu model, which featured a form of "local state corporatism" (see Jean Oi, *Rural China Takes Off: The Institutional Foundations of Economic Reform* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999]); the Wenzhou model, which featured private entrepreneurship (see, e.g., Yehua Dennis Wei, Wangming Li, and Chunbin Wang, "Restructuring Industrial Districts, Scaling up Regional Development: A Study of the Wenzhou Model," *Economic Geography* 83 [2007], 421–44); and the market- and world-oriented Guangdong model and the state-led Chongqing model (see, e.g., European Council on Foreign Relations, "One or Two Chinese Models?," *China Analysis* [November 2011], at http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/China_Analysis_One_or_two_Chinese_models_November2011.pdf; and Lance Gore, "China in Search of a New Development Model: Chongqing or Guangdong?" [EAI Background Brief No. 718, May 2012]).

65. These are catch phrases of their respective policy platforms. Other examples are Mao's "continuous revolution," Deng's "reform and opening," and Jiang Zemin's "three represents."

66. The Climate Group, "China's fast track to a renewable future" (2015), at https://www.theclimategroup.org/sites/default/files/archive/files/RE100-China-analysis.pdf.

policy (such as the effort to expand rural markets in the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997 and the various drives to bring down inflation and cool down the economy before 2010) to ideological and political rectification (such as Jiang Zemin's "three represents,"[67] Hu Jintao's campaign of "preserving the vanguard nature of the party," and Xi Jinping's anti-corruption and "massline education"[68] campaigns). The CCP has not strayed too far from its traditional ways at the same time that its organizations have penetrated deeply into China's polity, society, and economy to afford it policy tools generally unavailable to other regimes.[69]

Furnishing Popular Accountability

Far from being a tyrannical autocracy, China's party-infused governance has incentives to make public policy and administration more responsive to society through a mechanism that may be dubbed "downward pressure-induced popular accountability." Deeply embedded in Chinese society, the CCP's roughly 89 million members and 4.5 million grassroots organizations provide dense linkages and constant interfaces with the people and keep the party informed of conditions in society. The existence of party organizations in the governance structure has injected a dose of populism into public policy and public administration. The top leadership's concern with regime legitimacy and longevity has exerted tremendous pressure on lower level cadres to stay alert to social change and be responsive to popular

67. That is, the CCP represents "the most advanced forces of production, the most advanced culture, and the vast majority of the population." The introduction of the "three represents" is an ideological adaptation to the market economy made under former general secretary Jiang Zemin in 2000. Under this doctrine the CCP is no longer the representative of only the proletariat; it now allows capitalists to join it as well, since they are one of the most important human resources in a market economy. See Joseph Fewsmith, "Studying the Three Represents," *China Leadership Monitor* 8 (October 30, 2003), at https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/clm8_jf.pdf.

68. "Massline" (or "Mass Line") is the Maoist approach to managing the relationship between the communist party and the people. It utilizes grassroots organizations of the party and requires cadres and party members to engage in extensive consultation, persuasion, and mobilization among the masses as the way to exercise leadership. See James Wang, *Contemporary Chinese Politics*, ch. 3 (see note 27 above); and Authur Steiner, "Current 'Mass Line' Tactics in Communist China," *American Political Science Review* 45 (1951): 422–36.

69. For analyses of the changes and continuity in the evolution of the CCP, see Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard and Zheng Yongnian, eds., *Bring the Party Back in: How China is Governed* (Routledge, 2004); and Lance Gore, *The Chinese Communist Party and China's Capitalist Revolution: The Political Impact of Market* (London: Routledge, 2011).

sentiment and demands.[70] This downward pressure-induced accountability and responsiveness is a primary feature of the Chinese model of governance.

Weaknesses

Like all well-designed systems, the Chinese model has unintended consequences and is subject to erosion by shifting opportunity cost structure and the dynamic of power relations.[71] Besides, parallel party-state hierarchies necessarily have elevated administrative costs. Due to space constraint, only three weaknesses are singled out for a brief discussion here.

First, because it is political, Chinese governance cannot be rational in the Weberian sense. There are inherent limits to the rationalization of the party-state or the streamlining of public administration, as well as to the rule of law.[72] The party's political role is built into the otherwise rational bureaucracy of the state, which is cross-contaminated through interlocking appointments and structural dualism. The CCP politicizes many legal and technocratic issues and, in the case of the state-owned enterprise, distorts the market. For instance, because of tremendous pressure from the top to be responsive to the masses and to maintain social tranquility,[73] lower-level party officials often go to great lengths to maintain stability, even if superficially, regardless of the cost and in disregard of the rules, procedures, and even laws; they may try to bribe protesters or offer them leniency from the law in order to deflate their anger and undermine their collective actions.[74] Compared to state bureaucracies, the party is less bound by rules and procedures and hence

70. Tang, *Populist Authoritarianism* (see note 11 above); Li and Gore, "Merit-Based Patronage" (see note 39 above); and Rong Jingben et al., Congyalixing tizhi xiang mingzhuhezuodezhuanbian [*Transition from Pressurized System to a Democratic Cooperation System*] (Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press, 1998).

71. Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).

72. See Lance L. P. Gore, "The Political Limits to Judicial Reform in China," *Chinese Journal of Comparative Law* 2 (2014): 213–32.

73. *Weiwen* in the Chinese official discourse. According to some estimates, China now spends more on maintaining social stability than on defense.

74. A key motive is to avoid score deduction in their performance evaluation, in which a "mass incident" (popular protest) in the "social stability" category carries tremendous weight; see Li and Gore, "Merit-Based Patronage" (see note 39 above). Local cadres also use a variety of other irregular or even unlawful methods of coercion to achieve their objectives; see, for example, Kevin O'Brien and Yanhua Deng, "The Reach of the State: Work Units, Family Ties, and 'Harmonious Demolition,'" *The China Journal* 74 (2015): 1–17; and Yanhua Deng, "Autonomous Redevelopment: Moving the Masses to Remove Nail Households," *Modern China* 43 (2017), at https://doi.org/10.1177/0097700416683901.

better positioned for taking initiatives. Flexibility can be an advantage, but sloppy or selective implementation of rules and policies can also be the consequence.[75] In short, the governance system outlined above by no means always works as designed.[76]

Second, the excessive concentration of power in the hands of the party chiefs (from the general secretary at the top, down to the party secretary of an elementary school) has led to pervasive corruption. Politics at the interpersonal level often turns out to be vastly different from what the party desires. The top leadership seems determined to preserve the mandate of heaven by catering to the masses, and central policies generally reflect this concern. That is perhaps why the central state usually enjoys high popular support while local cadres tend to be regarded as villains.[77] Moreover, as individuals, party officials may not be responsive to the masses, because they owe their positions to appointments from above rather than to elections from below—their accountability runs upward, not downward. The paradox of rampant corruption amid overall policy success is rooted in this structural weakness and the characteristic incentive matrix of Chinese officialdom.[78] It is primarily the top-down pressure that has kept the cadre corps responsive to societal demands.[79] Strong and systematic as it is now, such pressure is not as inescapable as that from periodic popular elections.

As a result, the cadre corps is always in danger of degenerating into a privileged class, as happened in the Soviet Union under Brezhnev.[80] "Losing touch with the masses" (as well as with ordinary party members due to weak intra-party democracy) is a danger that the leadership has constantly warned against as a matter "of

75. See, for example, Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China," *Comparative Politics* 31 (1999): 167–86.

76. For illustrations of how formal institutions and rules are perverted by the concentration of power and opportunistic interpersonal networks in China, read the stories in Lance Gore, *Chinese Politics Illustrated* (see note 27 above).

77. Tang, *Populist Authoritarianism*, ch. 2 (see note 11 above). However, support for the central government, while still high, has been in decline since 2002; see Shan Wei, "Chinese Citizens' Declining Trust in Their Central Government," East Asian Institute Background Brief No. 1271, National University of Singapore, August 10, 2017.

78. Li and Gore, "Merit-Based Patronage" (see note 39 above).

79. Consistent with the cultural argument, the author's interviews in China with cadres do suggest that they still subscribe to the traditional Confucian ideal of benevolent governance and the state-society relations modeled on the family metaphor; however, it is difficult to measure and test the effects of such traditional beliefs on cadre behavior (see note 57 above).

80. The most influential exposé of this tendency is a book by the Yugoslavian dissident Milovan Dilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1957). The book may have played a role motivating Mao's Cultural Revolution.

life and death for the party and the state."[81] Mao tried to fight this tendency with the disastrous Cultural Revolution and Xi tried to do so with a massive, prolonged anti-corruption campaign, but the CCP to this day has not really found a robust institutional solution. As Fukuyama puts it, China "has not solved the bad emperor problem,"[82] despite some Chinese scholars' argument that the meritocratic procedures and lengthy grooming process for cadres to rise to the top have minimized if not solved the problem.[83] The persistence of the problems of cadre privilege and losing touch is rooted in the substantial institutional continuity from classic communism, which in turn suggests that the CCP has not fully digested the lessons of the Soviet collapse. Electoral democracy does not guarantee the selection of quality leaders, but it is a fairly reliable mechanism for getting rid of the undesirable ones. The Chinese system usually churns out capable and experienced leaders but is often stuck with unpopular ones, especially at the top. This is not a black or white issue, but a trade-off between popularity and competence.

Third, the Chinese model lacks adequate participation by the general public. The top-heavy party-state hierarchy, with the attendant concentration of power in the hands of party chiefs and the authoritarian culture, is not only a source of corruption and power abuse but also inhospitable to horizontal innovations, such as the development of governance networks that incorporate multiple partners from both state and society in the delivery of services and devising solutions to social problems. The strong party-state may well come at the cost of the vitality of society.[84] More innovativeness and better accountability could be achieved with broadened citizen participation and greater government transparency, but the

81. For example, a TV miniseries of eight episodes was produced under the title *Sugong-wangdang de lishijiaoxun* (The Historical Lessons of the Demise of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), which party members were required to watch, repeatedly hammered on this point. It is available at http://www.360doc.com/content/12/0301/19/8235852_190900179.shtml.

82. Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 312 (see note 6 above).

83. "The China Model: A Diaglogue between Francis Fukuyama and Zhang Weiweit," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 28, at https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1540-5842.2011.01287.x,

84. Although this claim has been made frequently, it is far from empirically established so far. People assume, not without reason, that tight control of the internet through the Great Fire Wall and the strict curtailment of free association and freedom of speech are detrimental to innovations. The flight of capital and the exodus of entrepreneurs and middle class professionals are reported to be surging in recently years; see, for example, Murong Xuecun, "China's Middle-Class Anxieties," *New York Times*, May 10, 2016; Coco Liu, "Why are Middle Class Chinese Moving Their Money Abroad?" *South China Morning Post*, May 27, 2017; and Lance Gore, "The Exodus of the Rich from China," East Asian Institute Background Brief, No. 891, January 2014.

regime's recent efforts at suppressing civil society and greater ideological control may have long-term detrimental effects on China's political development.

Nevertheless, China's party-dominated governance model has delivered impressive results. Even massive corruption, on a scale that in other countries has led to the fall of the state and deterioration of the economy (for example, Suharto's Indonesia and Marcos's Philippines), has not slowed China's growth. China has not had a recession since 1992 and its economy largely escaped the two global financial crises of 1997 and 2008, emerging stronger from each. The Xi regime's comprehensive reform programs are addressing some of the system's weaknesses, especially the reforms intended to "cage power with institutions," which emphasize stricter rules and laws, better supervision, and the renewed moral and ideological re-indoctrination of cadres and party members.[85] The fact is that many of the dangers that people see in the system remain potential and may be avoidable if the top leadership is strong, clear-minded, and determined, while the benefits reaped from this governance model have been real and tangible. Therefore, there are good reasons to heed the lessons from the Chinese experience.

Implications for Good Governance

When the World Bank first brought forth its good governance concept, it was meant as a correction to the previous over-emphasis on liberalization and democratization in Western aid-reform programs. The Bank realized from its experiences that even well-functioning democracy does not substitute for effective policy making and execution. However, the concept has subsequently incorporated all things deemed politically correct, including democracy, civil society, transparency, accountability, human rights protection, and the rule of law. The Bank's governance index captures all three ingredients of Fukuyama's political development, which Kofi Annan (and much of the literature) also considered essential to good governance. The concept has expanded so much that it "more often obscures than enlightens."[86] The problem multiplies when this out-of-focus lens is applied to the developing world. From the liberal perspective, the Chinese model of governance, which conspicuously lacks democratic elections and checks and balances as

85. For example, the CCP decided in March 2018 to revamp the supervision system, merging the party's Central Discipline Inspection Committee and the Ministry of Supervision plus several departments from the Supreme Court and the Supreme Procuratorate to create the State Supervision Commission, which has substantially expanded the scope of oversight on public employees regardless of party membership status.

86. Merilee S. Grindle, "Good Governance, R.I.P.: A Critique and an Alternative," *Governance* 30 (2017): 17–22, at 17.

prescribed by the liberal democratic ideal, is bound to failure. However, while it has produced massive corruption, as expected, it has also delivered decent governance and spectacular economic growth, which are unexpected; for under this system even corrupt officials are held accountable for their job performance. The Chinese case suggests that similar results can be achieved with alternative institutions and different cultural assumptions. It also highlights a few points with regard to the research on good governance.

The first concerns repression. The institutional framework outlined above suggests a massive power asymmetry between state and society. The liberal mindset automatically sees potential evil in this power imbalance and anticipates great despotism detrimental to modernization. Indeed, the party-state is very capable of repression, as is well documented in in the West.[87] However, it also has delivered progress in a wide range of areas besides rapid economic growth and massive poverty alleviation.[88] The institutional line of inquiry identifies stronger institutions for regime resilience, while the cultural line and the political dynamic outlined above account for a policy orientation that has considerably moderated the predatory tendencies of the state. The combination of these factors may go a long way explaining China's overall policy success. The collapse of China has been anticipated for the past 29 years, but scholars continue to come up with excuses for its delay rather than re-examine their theoretical models.[89]

Second, regime legitimacy can be achieved in ways other than electoral democracy. Even in liberal democracies, studies have shown that that electoral democracy's role in the establishment of legitimacy is limited. "Legitimacy," as Rothstein puts it, "turns out to be created, maintained, and destroyed not at the input but at the output side of the political system. Hence, political legitimacy depends at least as much on the quality of government as on the capacity of electoral systems to create effective representation."[90] In the Chinese case, the way that party organizations

87. See, for example, the U.S. State Department's annual country report on human rights, available at https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/.

88. For a summary review of China's achievements in the reform era and the challenges ahead, see World Bank, "China 2030: Building a Modern, Harmonious, and Creative High-Income Society," available at http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/China-2030-overview.pdf.

89. An example is Gordon Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York: Random House, 2001), which anticipated the collapse of China in 2006. The author subsequently postponed the date to 2011, 2012, 2016, 2017, and onward.

90. Bo Rothstein, "Creating Political Legitimacy: Electoral Democracy vs. Quality of Government," *American Behavioral Scientist* 53 (2009): 311–30, at 311. A similar argument has been made in Hsin-hsin Pan and Wen-Chin Chu, "Quality of Governance and Political Legitimacy: Governance-Based Legitimacy in East Asia," Asian Barometer Working Paper 121, 2017.

are structured in the government, the way that party members are embedded in the society and the economy and, arguably, the absence of electoral democracy all may have helped to generate considerable popular accountability within a single-party dictatorship. Meanwhile, China has avoided many problems associated with democratic politics, such as divisiveness, paralysis in policymaking, the near-sightedness of politicians, inconsistency of public policies, political gridlock, and what Fukuyama dubs vetocracy.[91]

Finally, weak rule of law may not form as large a handicap as commonly assumed. Its adverse effects are mitigated in China by the higher level of political institutionalization in general in the post-Mao era, the increasingly rule-based public administration, enhanced meritocracy, and the rising consciousness of individual rights among the population.[92] Researchers such as Peter Evans identified the internal cohesion of the bureaucratic state, rather than external constraints imposed by the rule of law, as the key strength of the East Asian developmental states.[93] More importantly, because of the transformative mission of the CCP and national rejuvenation as an ongoing project, the rule of law, which privileges the existing, more or less fixed order and status-quo interests, is necessarily constrained. The unpredictability and likely injustice resulting from the lack of clear rules and strictly enforced laws are detrimental to individuals and businesses, but may be the price paid for adaptive agility.

The Chinese case also raises some fundamental methodological questions. Strengths in a number of areas may have contributed to China's developmental success and the regime's legitimacy: the capacity for rapid adaptation and long-term planning; the capabilities for resource mobilization, policy coordination, and policy and institutional experiments; effective national leadership; constant responsiveness to popular sentiments; political meritocracy; alternative forms of interface between state and society; and maintaining stability while pursuing policy

91. Francis Fukuyama, "American Political Decay or Renewal? The Meaning of the 2016 Election," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2016): 58–69.

92. Rights in China are usually proclaimed by the government for the people in laws and policy statements. The Chinese people are shrewd in utilizing the state's own words against the wrongdoings of government officials; they do not normally get to define their rights (except by cultural traditions) and demand them accordingly, as in the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. They are, however, good at holding the state accountable to their own words by exploiting the divisions within the state and the discrepancy between central policies and local state behaviors. See Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

93. Peter Evans, "Predatory, Developmental, and Other Apparatuses: A Comparative Political Economy Perspective on the Third World State," *Sociological Forum* 4 (1989): 561–87.

and institutional agility in a fast-changing and globalizing world. However, these areas are not adequately covered by the mainstream governance literature centered on the experiences of Western liberal democracies. While China's experience suggests there should be a significant broadening of the concept and hence the research agenda of good governance, the dynamic fluidity in these areas is not easily handled by the static model of liberal democracy.

The better than expected outcomes of the Chinese model of governance suggest that the solution to China's problems, and perhaps to governance problems in other developing nations as well, may not require convergence to liberal democracy, especially when the latter is having its own crises of governance since the 2008 financial crisis.[94] The Chinese model is idiosyncratic and far from robust. While it cannot be duplicated, it may offer some lessons. And generally, research of good governance could benefit from examining successful non-Western experiences. Much more work is needed to sort out the conceptual and theoretical issues, and rigorous empirical research is required to test the validity of the claims that have been advanced above. Hopefully, this article can serve in a catalyst role.

Lance L.P. Gore is a Senior Research Fellow at the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore. He previously taught at Bowdoin College and the Fletcher School of Tufts University. His recent publications include *The Chinese Communist Party and China's Capitalist Revolution: The Political Impact of Market* (Routledge, 2011); *Chinese Politics Illustrated: the Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (World Scientific, 2015); "The Social Transformation of the Chinese Communist Party," in *Problems of Post-Communism* (2015); and "Labor Management as Development of the Integrated Developmental State," in *New Political Economy* (2014). He can be reached at eaigore@nus.edu.sg.

94. See Freedom House's press release on January 16, 2018, "Democracy in Crisis," at https://freedomhouse.org/article/democracy-crisis-freedom-house-releases-freedom-world-2018. For a public debate on this issue, see Jeffrey Isaac, "Is There a Crisis of Democracy? The Rise of Trump-like Figures in Democracies," at http://www.publicseminar.org/2016/12/is-there-a-crisis-of-democracy/. See also Kofi Annan, "The Crisis of Democracy," at http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/supporting-democracy-and-elections-with-integrity/athens-democracy-forum/. Samuel Huntington anticipated much of this many years ago in *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).