



POLITICAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the central role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in shaping political stability and national economic development in contemporary China. However, limited studies have systematically examined the institutional mechanisms linking political stability and economic development under the CCP. Utilizing a qualitative document-based approach, the study analyzes policy reports, party congress documents, and peer-reviewed literature using thematic content analysis. The findings reveal three key mechanisms: ideological alignment, bureaucratic coordination, and centralized policy integration, but from a coherent institutional framework that aligns policy priorities across multiple administrative layers. This coherence reinforces the CCP's legitimacy and enables coordinated implementation of national economic strategies. The results also show a symbiotic relationship between stability and development: sustained economic growth strengthens political legitimacy, while political order provides the conditions necessary for developmental continuity. Nevertheless, the study identifies inherent tensions within China's governance model, particularly those arising from over-centralization, limited administrative flexibility, and growing societal complexity. These challenges indicate that the long-term sustainability of China's political-economic model depends on the CCP's ability to balance centralized authority with adaptive governance. This study contributes by proposing an integrated analytical framework linking institutional governance and developmental outcomes in authoritarian systems. The findings provide insights for policymakers and scholars on governance strategies in centralized political systems.

INTRODUCTION

The political landscape of China in the twenty-first century is characterized by the structural dominance of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in shaping national development. Since the initiation of economic reforms in the late 1970s, the CCP has succeeded in maintaining political stability while driving large-scale economic transformation, elevating China into one of the fastest-growing economies in the world (Zhang, 2019). While political stability is widely regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable economic development, scholars debate whether highly centralized political control may also constrain innovation and institutional adaptability in the long term, and the CCP has consistently integrated political control with

national development strategies through a highly centralized bureaucratic mechanism and the reinforcement of state ideology (Li & Chen, 2021). Through this approach, the CCP not only preserves its political legitimacy but also consolidates its position as the sole institution guiding China's long-term policy trajectory (Huang, 2020).

In parallel, the academic literature emphasizes that China's developmental success cannot be separated from its distinctive combination of political authoritarianism and calibrated economic liberalization. Authoritarian developmentalism refers to a governance model in which centralized political authority directs economic growth through strong institutional control and limited political pluralism (Wu, 2022). Nevertheless, most previous studies have



placed greater emphasis on the economic dimension than on the reciprocal relationship between political stability and economic development, particularly regarding how the CCP's political strategies serve as the foundation for sustaining long-term economic growth (Qiao, 2020). However, limited studies have specifically examined how the CCP's internal institutional mechanisms simultaneously generate political stability and directly shape national economic policymaking.

Existing studies predominantly focus on either the CCP's political control mechanisms or China's economic achievements, yet few examine how the CCP's internal institutional mechanisms simultaneously shape political stability and directly influence national economic development strategies. Furthermore, prior research tends to adopt a macro and normative perspective, without providing an in-depth analysis of the CCP's institutional dynamics as the nexus between political processes and developmental outcomes (Liu, 2021). Consequently, a significant research gap remains, namely the absence of an analytical model capable of explaining the causal interplay between CCP-engineered political stability and China's national economic development.

This study aims to analyze how the CCP's centralized institutional mechanisms shape political stability and influence national economic development in contemporary China that integrates political, institutional, and economic analysis to elucidate how the CCP utilizes its centralized political structure as an instrument to ensure stability while accelerating national economic development. The research not only identifies the CCP's role as a political stabilizer but also explicates the party's internal mechanisms that shape economic policy design, including decision-making processes, power consolidation, and social control. Thus, this study provides a theoretical contribution to understanding the symbiotic relationship between political institutions and economic development within the context of a modern authoritarian state.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in an institutional analysis approach, specifically utilizing a qualitative case study of China's governance system under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The explanatory orientation of this study is intended to uncover causal mechanisms linking political stability and economic development, with a focus on how institutional structures, policy coordination, and governance practices operate within a centralized political system. A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of political structures, governance dynamics, and policy interactions that cannot be fully captured through quantitative indicators alone. The research relies on a document-based analytical approach, utilizing both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include official CCP Party Congress reports, government policy documents, and national development plans published between 2000 and 2024. Secondary sources consist of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and policy analyses relevant to China's political governance and economic development. The selection of documents follows explicit criteria, including relevance to institutional governance, credibility of the source, and contribution to understanding the interaction between political stability and economic policy. These documents are examined to identify thematic patterns related to political control, institutional mechanisms, developmental strategies, and the CCP's governance logic.

Data collection follows a purposive sampling strategy designed to ensure analytical relevance and depth. Documents were identified through academic databases (such as Scopus-indexed journals and policy repositories), government archives, and official CCP publications. Inclusion criteria include thematic relevance to political governance, institutional mechanisms, and economic development strategies, while exclusion criteria eliminate outdated, non-scholarly, or non-contextual materials. This



structured sampling process ensures that the dataset is both comprehensive and analytically meaningful. The selected documents are subjected to a systematic qualitative content analysis involving multiple stages. First, open coding is conducted to identify key concepts and recurring themes related to political stability, institutional control, and economic development. Second, axial coding is applied to establish relationships among categories, linking governance mechanisms with developmental outcomes. Finally, selective coding is used to construct an integrated analytical narrative that explains how the CCP's institutional framework produces a symbiotic relationship between political stability and economic growth. This analysis involves coding, categorizing, and interpreting textual data to uncover underlying themes and relational structures. The coding process follows an inductive–deductive hybrid model. Inductive analysis is employed to allow themes and patterns to emerge organically from the data, particularly regarding institutional practices and governance dynamics. Simultaneously, deductive analysis is guided by established theoretical frameworks such as authoritarian developmentalism and institutional governance theory, which provide analytical lenses for interpreting the findings. This dual approach ensures both empirical sensitivity and theoretical coherence: This dual approach allows the study to generate both descriptive and analytical insights into the CCP's role in maintaining political stability and shaping economic development outcomes.

To ensure analytical rigor, the study employs methodological triangulation by systematically comparing findings derived from official government documents, academic literature, and independent policy analyses. In addition, source triangulation is applied to cross-verify information across different types of documents. The study also incorporates peer debriefing and iterative review of coding categories to minimize researcher bias and enhance interpretive reliability. These strategies collectively strengthen the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the

research findings, comparing official political documents with academic interpretations and independent policy analyses. This triangulation strengthens the validity of findings by minimizing bias from any single information category. The research also incorporates a contextual analytical technique, situating the CCP's governance strategies within China's broader historical, socio-political, and economic environment. By integrating institutional analysis with contextual interpretation, the methodology offers a comprehensive framework for understanding causal linkages between political stability engineered by the CCP and national economic development. Overall, this methodological design supports a robust and nuanced examination of the CCP's governance model and its dual impact on political and economic spheres.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. The Central Role of the CCP in Consolidating Political Stability

The findings indicate that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) operates as the core stabilizing force within China's political system, as evidenced by specific policy directives outlined in the 20th Party Congress report (2022), which emphasize centralized leadership, national policy coherence, and institutional discipline. For instance, the reinforcement of top-level design in economic planning demonstrates how political authority is systematically translated into coordinated governance practices across multiple administrative levels through a combination of ideological control, bureaucratic centralization, and adaptive governance strategies. Document analysis reveals that political stability is not merely the outcome of coercive state strength but reflects the characteristics of authoritarian developmentalism, where centralized political authority systematically aligns institutional mechanisms with long-term economic objectives. This finding supports institutional governance theory, which posits that policy coherence and hierarchical coordination are critical in shaping developmental outcomes in centralized regimes. Official reports from



recent Party Congress meetings highlight consistency in articulating national priorities, strengthening internal discipline, and reinforcing the Party's supremacy over the state apparatus (Li & Chen, 2021). This alignment between political messaging and operational governance ensures that state institutions move in a synchronized direction, thereby reducing policy fragmentation.

Moreover, evidence suggests that the CCP's stability mechanism is deeply interwoven with its ability to shape sociopolitical narratives, a finding that aligns with Huang (2020), who emphasizes ideological control as a central pillar of political stability. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating how narrative construction is not only a tool of legitimacy but also an instrument for coordinating economic policy implementation across governance levels. Through state-controlled media, ideological training, and grassroots mobilization, the Party has cultivated a political culture that normalizes centralized authority as a necessary condition for national progress (Huang, 2020). This narrative not only legitimizes the CCP's governance model but also strengthens societal acceptance of political continuity. As Zhang (2019) argues, China's political stability is sustained by an intricate combination of ideological coherence and administrative discipline, both of which are continuously reinforced across Party institutions.

2. CCP's Institutional Mechanisms and Their Impact on Economic Development

The analysis further demonstrates that China's rapid economic growth is closely tied to the CCP's highly coordinated institutional mechanisms. Rather than functioning as a passive overseer of economic policy, the CCP acts as an active architect, guiding strategic sectors such as technology, infrastructure, finance, and industrial upgrading. Policy documents reviewed in this study indicate that economic planning remains deeply embedded in long-term political visions, as illustrated by the 'dual circulation' strategy and initiatives promoting technological self-reliance in sectors such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence. These policies demonstrate how the CCP integrates economic priorities within a centralized

political framework to enhance national competitiveness and reduce dependence on external markets (Wu, 2022). These strategies reflect the Party's commitment to aligning political priorities with economic objectives.

A critical assessment reveals that such centralization can generate both strengths and weaknesses (Pearson et al, 2021). On one hand, the centralized structure enables rapid mobilization of resources, swift implementation of national projects, and coherent responses to external challenges such as economic shocks or geopolitical tensions. Qiao (2020) highlights that China's ability to maintain high economic growth despite global uncertainties is largely attributed to the Party's ability to coordinate multi-level policymaking in a unified manner. On the other hand, excessive centralization may reduce local policy experimentation and constrain adaptive governance, particularly in rapidly evolving sectors such as digital innovation and regional economic diversification (Xuhua & Peihua, 2021). This limitation may lead to inefficiencies in policy responsiveness, as local governments possess limited autonomy to tailor solutions to region-specific challenges (Saich, 2020). Over time, such constraints could weaken institutional resilience and hinder the sustainability of economic growth in an increasingly complex socio-economic environment. However, the CCP appears increasingly aware of these risks and has begun to recalibrate governance mechanisms to incorporate controlled decentralization, particularly in pilot zones and innovation clusters (Liu, 2021).

3. The Symbiotic Relationship Between Political Stability and Economic Development

The study finds strong evidence supporting the argument that political stability and economic development in China form a mutually reinforcing relationship (Zheng & Wu, 2024). This causal linkage operates through a feedback loop in which political stability enables long-term investment planning, policy continuity, and infrastructure development, while sustained economic growth enhances state legitimacy, public trust, and regime durability (Zhang, 2021). This dynamic interaction illustrates a self-reinforcing governance cycle that is



central to the CCP's developmental model. Political stability provides the environment required for long-term planning and investment, while sustained economic development reinforces the CCP's legitimacy. This reciprocity is apparent in the Party's strategic narrative, which presents economic achievement as proof of the effectiveness of centralized governance (Huang, 2020). The mutual reinforcement also explains why the CCP invests heavily in safeguarding political order as a prerequisite for developmental success.

However, a deeper critical analysis reveals that this symbiotic relationship may also contribute to structural tension (DeLisle & Yang, 2022). As economic modernization accelerates, societal expectations grow more complex, creating pressure for institutional reforms in areas such as transparency, accountability, and administrative responsiveness. The CCP's challenge lies in balancing its long-standing commitment to centralized control with the need to adapt governance strategies to an increasingly sophisticated socio-economic environment. According to Zhang (2019), the future durability of China's political-economic model depends on whether the Party can innovate institutionally without compromising its core political authority. This tension underscores the dynamic nature of CCP governance, which must continuously evolve to maintain equilibrium between political order and economic progress.

4. Critical Evaluation of the CCP's Governance Model

A critical evaluation of the CCP's governance model reveals both structural advantages and inherent vulnerabilities. The advantages include the ability to coordinate national strategies effectively, maintain long-term policy coherence, and mobilize national resources during periods of crisis (Wang, 2023). These strengths have contributed to China's rapid transformation from a low-income country to a major global economic power in less than half a century (Wu, 2022).

Nevertheless, the governance model also encompasses risks. The over-reliance on top-down decision-making may reduce institutional flexibility

and weaken local-level policy innovation (Brauteseth, 2023). Furthermore, the concentration of authority within the Party increases vulnerability to internal political shocks, particularly if governance failures occur in key sectors. Liu (2021) warns that without mechanisms for distributed accountability, centralized systems may face difficulty adapting to new external pressures such as digital disruptions, demographic decline, or geopolitical fragmentation. It is therefore crucial to view CCP governance not as a static structure but as an evolving system that must balance continuity with adaptability.

5. Overall Synthesis

Overall, the study demonstrates that the CCP's political stability mechanism and its economic development strategies are deeply interconnected through a centralized institutional logic. Unlike previous studies that examine these dimensions separately, this research provides an integrated analytical framework that explains how institutional coherence simultaneously produces political order and economic growth, thereby offering a novel contribution to the study of authoritarian developmental systems. While this model has produced significant developmental outcomes, it is also characterized by contradictions that require continuous institutional adjustment. The CCP's future success will depend on its ability to manage these contradictions while preserving the political coherence that underpins its developmental achievements.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) functions not only as a central stabilizing force but also as a strategic institutional actor that systematically integrates political control with economic governance. This integration reflects a broader model of state-led development in which centralized authority is utilized to produce long-term policy coherence, institutional alignment, and coordinated economic transformation, thereby offering a deeper theoretical understanding of governance in contemporary authoritarian system.



Through a combination of ideological reinforcement, bureaucratic centralization, and adaptive governance, the CCP has succeeded in maintaining a high degree of political stability, which in turn creates the structural conditions necessary for long-term economic planning. The findings reveal that political stability in China is not merely the outcome of coercive state capacity, but the result of institutional coherence and the Party's ability to align national priorities across different levels of governance. This institutional coherence strengthens the CCP's legitimacy and underpins its capacity to implement large-scale developmental agendas effectively.

However, a critical analysis of China's governance model suggests that the apparent success of the CCP's centralized system also carries inherent structural tensions, particularly between the need for political control and the demand for institutional flexibility. These tensions manifest in challenges related to innovation capacity, administrative responsiveness, and governance transparency, which may become increasingly significant as China transitions to a more complex and knowledge-based economy. The same mechanisms that support coherence and stability—such as hierarchical decision-making and strong ideological control—may simultaneously constrain local innovation, reduce administrative flexibility, and limit institutional responsiveness. As China's socio-economic landscape becomes more complex, these limitations may intensify, demanding more nuanced governance strategies. The challenge for the CCP is to preserve the benefits of centralization while developing adaptive mechanisms capable of addressing emerging societal demands, technological disruptions, and global economic uncertainties.

The study also finds that the relationship between political stability and economic development in China is deeply symbiotic. Economic achievements reinforce political legitimacy, while political stability enables long-term economic strategies. Yet this reciprocal dynamic is not without risks. Overdependence on political centralization may

hinder institutional reform, particularly in areas that require transparency, participation, and accountability—elements increasingly significant in a modern, innovation-driven economy. Thus, the sustainability of China's development model depends on the CCP's ability to reconcile its commitment to political control with the need to evolve institutionally.

In conclusion, the CCP's governance model represents a highly effective but dynamically fragile system—one capable of producing impressive developmental outcomes, yet continuously exposed to structural pressures that demand institutional adaptation. Future research should explore comparative analyses between China and other authoritarian or hybrid regimes to assess the generalizability of the proposed framework. Additionally, further studies could incorporate quantitative indicators and field-based data to examine how institutional mechanisms operate at sub-national levels, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between political stability and economic development. This study contributes to the literature by proposing an integrated analytical framework that links institutional coherence, centralized governance, and economic development within authoritarian systems. By explicitly connecting political stability mechanisms with economic policy outcomes, this research advances the theoretical discourse on authoritarian developmentalism and provides a more nuanced explanation of how institutional structures shape developmental trajectories.

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