

Authoritarian diffusion at a distance? China's impact on levels of and on citizens' support for liberal-democracy in Sub-Saharan African states

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Summary

The recent emergence of authoritarian countries, such as China, as leading economic powers, increasingly engaged in the developing world, has coincided with a 'democratic recession' in certain developing countries. Are these two processes related? Is the rise of authoritarian powers leading to authoritarian diffusion in the developing world as economic linkages increase? Although there is a well-established literature on democratic diffusion (von Soest 2015; Lankina and Getachew 2006; Elkink 2011), authoritarian diffusion is an emerging and increasingly important area of research (Gel'man and Lankina 2008; Ambrosio 2010, 2018). So far, the scholarship has focused on the effects of Russia's economic engagement with its neighbouring countries, finding evidence that authoritarian diffusion is happening (Libman and Obydenkova 2014; Vanderhill 2012; Lankina et al. 2016). However, the literature has not investigated whether authoritarian powers, through economic links, are having influence beyond their own neighbours.

China's increasing role in Sub-Saharan Africa provides an ideal setting to explore this issue as democratic and liberal institutions in these states have not yet been consolidated (Lynch and Crawford 2011) and China has different levels of engagement in different Sub-Saharan African countries (Mohan and Power 2008). Although, the scholarship has argued about the negative political impact of Sino-African cooperation (Tull 2006; Haglund 2008; Ovadia 2013), no one has yet investigated if Chinese economic engagement is affecting the quality of liberal-democratic practices and attitudes in Sub-Saharan African countries.

This thesis tests the hypothesis that higher economic linkages with China have a negative impact on both levels of and attitudes towards liberal-democracy in African states. This is, first, examined at the individual level, by investigating the demonstration effect of the Chinese financed projects, whose geolocated data is combined with the sub-national variation on citizens' attitudes toward liberal-democracy. Then, it tests the learning mechanism of diffusion, at the individual level, by conducting an original survey-experiment in Kenya, a typical African country that has encountered challenges in consolidating its democratic regime and has experienced an increase in Chinese economic engagement. Lastly, the hypothesis is examined at the institutional level, using time-series data on levels of Chinese economic engagement (trade flows) and levels of liberal-democracy.

The findings do not provide strong evidence that authoritarian diffusion is happening at the individual and institutional levels in Sub-Saharan African countries as a result of increasing Chinese economic engagement. Across the different levels and employing different methods and measurements of the dependent and independent variables, the effect is not robust. However, the survey-experiment shows that learning about particularities of the Chinese model influence Kenyan respondents to have a higher preference for the selection of politicians through performance-based appointment rather than through an electoral process. This indicates that what might be diffused is not the authoritarian aspects of the China model, but the performance-based selection of political officials, which is something citizens of African countries have not experienced yet. In general, the results suggest that authoritarian diffusion might not happen at a distance, as geographic distance increases cultural distance and informational gaps between the actors involved in the diffusion process.

Overall, this project contributes to our understanding of the diffusion of authoritarian practices in the developing world by providing a first test of whether China's increasing presence in Sub-Saharan Africa is leading to changing levels and attitudes towards liberal-democracy. It suggests that the democratic rollback currently experienced by certain Sub-Saharan African countries might not be due to the economic linkages with authoritarian regimes.

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Introductory chapter

Introduction

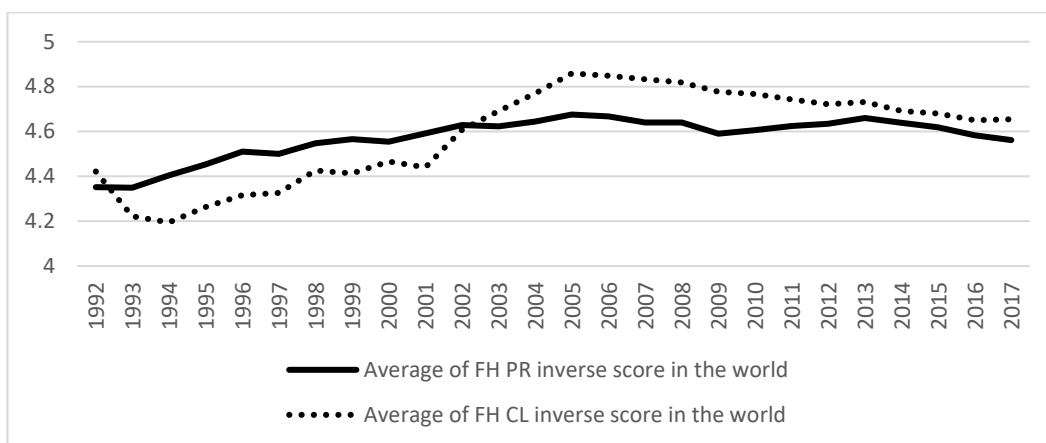
This thesis is motivated by the decline in the quality of the democratic practices and popular attitudes which have been observed as a global phenomenon, affecting certain developed and developing countries (Gat 2007; Kapstein and Converse 2008; Diamond 2008, 2015; Weßels 2015; Kuehn 2017; Plattner 2015, 2017; Walker 2016; Foa and Mounk 2016; Bermeo 2016; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Rakner 2019). This democratic recession has challenged the general optimism of the early 1990s which promoted democratic regimes as “the final form of human government” (Fukuyama 1989, p. 4). In the context in which this recession has been accompanied by a dilution of the international prestige of democratic regimes (Gyimah-Boadi 2015; Hall and Ambrosio 2017) and the emergence of authoritarian regimes as global economic powers (Gat 2007; Diamond 2008, 2015; Walker 2016; Foa and Mounk 2016; Walker 2016; Plattner 2017), an important question has emerged: is the rise of authoritarian powers related in any way to the faltering democratization process?

This chapter engages with this question by making an initial examination of the issue of democratic rollback, observed at both the institutional level, affecting the levels of democracy, and at the individual level, impacting on people’s attitudes towards liberal-democracy. It then discusses the existing internal (e.g. economic, social-cultural and political) and external explanations (globalization and regime diffusion) for this process. Subsequently it examines an alternative rationale that could explain the current rollback phenomenon: whether or not authoritarian diffusion is happening because of the increasing economic linkages between the developing world and authoritarian powers. China’s increasing role in Sub-Saharan Africa provides an ideal setting to explore this issue as democratic and liberal institutions in these states have not yet been consolidated (Lynch and Crawford 2011) while China has different levels of engagement in different Sub-Saharan African countries (Mohan and Power 2008). Finally, this introductory chapter presents the outline of the thesis by summarizing the methodology and findings of all three papers.

Motivation

The end of the bipolar world announced by the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, was interpreted by scholars, such as Fukuyama (1992), to be the *end of the world* [as known] and the triumph of the liberal-democracy. This claim was supported by the significant wave of democratization which resulted in more than 40 countries transitioning to a democratic regime after the end of the Cold War (Mechkova et al. 2017). According to the Freedom House reports' "Freedom in the World" (reported in Figure 1), between 1993 and 2005, the average score¹ for the Political Rights has increased from 4.34 to 4.67, while the Civil Liberties increased from 4.22 to 4.85.

Figure 1 - The evolution of the Freedom House's Political Rights and Civil Liberties inverted scores in the World
(Source: Freedom House – Freedom in the World reports 1993-2018)



This positive trend has inspired a lot of research on the causes and mechanisms that have determined an increasing process of democratization worldwide. Previously, the literature found that democratization is caused by institutional level factors (e.g. level of economic development and regime legacy) and individual level determinants (e.g. religion, education and ethnic fractionalization) (Lipset 1960; Bollen and Jackman 1985b; Muller 1995; Barro 1999; Ross 2001; Auty 2003; Jensen and Skaaning 2012; Lee and Schultz 2012; Pérez-Liñán and Mainwaring 2013; Murtin and Wacziarg 2014; Tang and Woods 2014; Gerring et al. 2018; Lee and Paine 2019)².

¹ In my research, I use the inverted FH score so that 0 is no freedom and 7 is the highest level of freedom.

² The determinants of democratization will be discussed in the Explanations section (pages 18-35).

However, since 2005-2006 (see Figure 1, page 10), the democratic advancements have stalled, and several consolidated and newly transitioned democracies started experiencing degradation in the performance of their liberal-democratic institutions. Freedom House (2018) has recorded its 12th successive year of decrease in the performance of liberal-democratic institutions as 71 countries experienced declines while 35 countries have improved their political rights and civil liberties scores. According to Mechkova et al. (2017), 10 countries lost their status of electoral democracies and now they are considered to be autocracies. Overall, the current democratic rollback has affected several states around the world, regardless of their level of development, but it is more problematic for developing countries as their liberal-democratic institutions might not be strong enough to overcome this new challenge.

On the one hand, this phenomenon has attracted significant attention in the media, with numerous newspapers (e.g. The Economist, New York Times, Forbes, Financial Times) having covered, at least once, the topic of democratic rollback and sharing similar concerns as the academia, regarding the problems posed by this phenomenon for the present and the future of democracies (see Friedman 2008; Rachman 2016; Ogilvy 2017; The Economist 2018). Friedman (2008), for example, claimed, in a New York Times article, that democratic recession is linked to the rise of petro-authoritarian countries. Similarly, Rachman (2016), while writing for The Financial Times, found the emergence of autocrats around the world to be problematic; while democracies, across different continents, experience deterioration of the liberal freedoms and practices. Finally, the recent Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit confirms the recession trend as more than half of the covered countries received a lower score than the previous one (The Economist 2018).

On the other hand, the democratic rollback phenomenon has equally attracted a lot of scholarly attention (Gat 2007; Diamond 2008, 2015; Kapstein and Converse 2008; Plattner 2015; Weßels 2015; Walker 2016; Bermeo 2016; Foa and Mounk 2016; Kuehn 2017; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Rakner 2019). But it has been criticized by some for creating a general pessimistic impression of the health of democratic regimes (Carothers 2009; Merkel 2010). Critics have labelled the overall recession phenomenon as being a myth (Levitsky and Way 2015) or simply

stagnation (Merkel 2010). More moderate critics, such as Mechkova et al. (2017) acknowledged that nowadays democracies face problems, especially in terms of freedoms, but added that the concerns regarding democratic rollback are not fully justified. Weßels (2015) argues that the democratic setback is found only at the level of performance and not at the normative foundation of democracies; the latter would have been more problematic for the future of democratic regime. Others, such as Schmitter (2015), claimed that democracies are witnessing a period of crisis and transition and the negative assessment of democratic institutions could be due to an existing popular scepticism toward political authority. In general, a lot of these scholars are arguing that there is little evidence to support the democratic backsliding theory (Merkel 2010; Schmitter 2015; Levitsky and Way 2015) while claiming that several of the countries experiencing democratic recession were minimal democracies or *competitive authoritarian regimes* to begin with.

While a lot of this criticism could be rooted in their overall optimistic view vis-à-vis the superiority of [Western] democratic model, we cannot ignore the several examples of democratic rollback confirmed by the descriptive data of existing democratic indices (see Figures 1-3, pages 10, 14, 15). Overall, democratic rollback represents a topic of interest for academia, policy practitioners and media commentators. The central motivation of this thesis is to contribute to our understanding on whether authoritarian diffusion is one of the external causes of these processes. The following section will discuss in more details the patterns of this phenomenon.

Patterns of democratization and rollback

According to Huntington (1991)'s theory of democratization, the process of democratization is believed to have happened in several waves of transition from autocratic to democratic regime, interspersed with a period of democratic recession. This implies that the democratic rollback is not a new phenomenon and the countries that have transitioned in the previous waves have faced consolidation problems.

Scholars have used concepts³, such as democratic rollback/ recession (Diamond 2008), backsliding (Bermeo 2016), deconsolidation (Foa and Mounk

³ This research will use all these terms interchangeably to define the democratic rollback process.

2016, 2017) and, more recently, autocratization (Cassani and Tomini 2018) to describe any “deterioration of qualities associated with democratic governance, within any regime” (Waldner and Lust 2018, p. 95) or define any “regime change opposite to democratization” (Cassani and Tomini 2018, p. 1-2). This phenomenon implies a decrease in one or more aspects characteristic for a liberal-democracy, such as political participation, appointments in political functions, horizontal and vertical accountability between institutions or civil liberties and freedoms⁴.

Democratic backsliding should be understood as a process composed of a series of actions, most of the times legal and/or imperceptible, signalling the erosion of liberal-democratic institutions of a regime (Mickey et al. 2017; Waldner and Lust 2018). It is a first step in the degradation process that, ultimately leads to the breakdown of the democratic regime or the transition from a democracy to an autocracy. Therefore, it is important to differentiate between democratic decline that is defined by a loss of democratic quality and the collapse of the democratic regime, characterised by a sudden process of reversing from a democratic to an autocratic regime (Svolik 2008; Tomini 2018; Jee et al. 2019).

According to Jee et al. (2019), democratic backsliding was previously believed to be a phenomenon specific to developing countries, but nowadays, it can also be observed across the Western democracies (see Figure 2, page 14), which are the front of the democratic promotion efforts at global level. Probably the most noticeable example is the case of the United States of America. Based on the V-Dem Liberal-Democracy index, its current performance of the liberal-democratic institutions is at the level of year 1975-6 (see the Figure 75 from the Annexes A, page 249). Scholars have argued that the election of Donald Trump, an outsider to the world of politics with “weak commitment to the democratic rules” and who promoted violence, as president of the USA, confirms the weakening of the party gatekeepers’ influence and constitutes a symptom of the democratic recession in the USA (Mickey et al. 2017; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, p. 60). Foa and Mounk (2016) claimed that the process of deconsolidation can also be observed at the individual level as the support for a democratic regime decreased across time and generations. By analysing the World Values survey waves, they noticed that only 30% of the US

⁴ These characteristics of liberal-democracy will be discussed in more details in Overview of this Research section (pages 58-59).

respondents aged up to 29 years in 2011, consider living in a democracy to be absolutely important while the overall preference for authoritarian alternatives, such as rule by experts, is shared by 50% of respondents (Foa and Mounk 2016, p. 13). Overall, the democratic rollback observed across some of the leading democratic powers may have broader implications for general perceptions of democracy.

Figure 2. The evolution of the V-Dem liberal democracy index of US, UK and Australia (Source: V-Dem data)

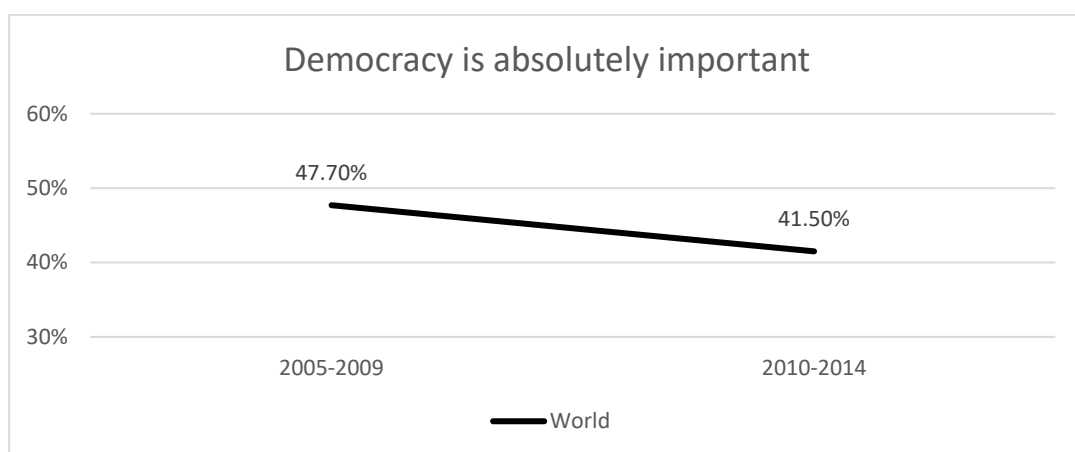


While for the developed countries, it represents a new challenge, for developing countries, the implications of democratic backsliding can be even more dangerous as their liberal-democratic institutions and the public support for the regime are not yet consolidated. On the one hand, Gyimah-Boadi (2015) claims that the decrease in the international prestige of the Western democracies could reduce the pressure of having to adhere to international democratic standards, felt by the elected elite from the developing world whose commitment toward democracy might not be strong. On the other hand, Diamond (2008) argues that citizens' support for a liberal-democratic regime is affected by the limited performance of governments in reducing income inequalities and protecting the individual rights and freedoms and this might lead to openness in exploring the benefits of the authoritarian alternatives. Overall, these scholars highlight the importance of the attitudes of both citizens and the elite vis-à-vis liberal-democracy while investigating the democratic rollback phenomenon, implying the need for adopting a multi-level perspective in understanding liberal-democracy.

This multi-level perspective provides a complex understanding of the concept of liberal-democracy by accounting for the importance and links between levels of liberal-democracy which reflect the supply or “hardware” of democracy and support for liberal-democracy which is the “software” of liberal-democracy. While there is a debate in the literature regarding the weight of each one for the consolidation and survival of a liberal-democratic regime (Hadenius and Teorell 2005; Welzel and Klingemann 2008; Welzel and Inglehart 2008), scholars have acknowledged that both the supply and the demand are crucial for the deepening and stability of a liberal-democracy (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Rose and Shin 2001; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Shin and Wells 2005; Mattes and Bratton 2007; Shin and Tusalem 2007). While the level of and popular support for liberal-democracy could provide the same or different pictures of the health of a liberal-democratic regime, they are not interchangeable as they reflect different types of assessment of the quality of a liberal-democracy (Mauk 2019).

In terms of support for democracy, Figure 3 below shows that, on average, almost 42% of respondents believe that living in a democratic regime is absolutely important, but there has been a significant decrease from the previous wave, by around 6 units. This could indicate that the democratic rollback does not only manifest at the level of institutional performance, but also at the level of the people’s support for liberal-democracy.

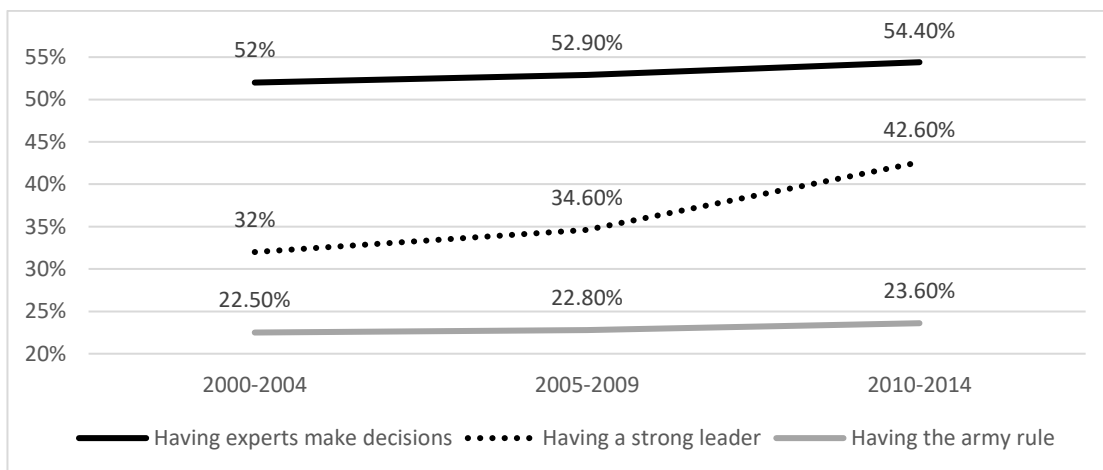
Figure 3. People's preference for democracy, across the world (Sources: World Values Survey, wave 5 and 6)



Other scholars have argued that even in situations of high levels of support, commitment for democracy is not sufficient and it should be accompanied by a rejection of political alternatives (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Shin and Wells 2005; Mattes and Bratton 2007; Plattner 2017). More than 10 years ago, Diamond (2008)

warned about the dangers surrounding the dissatisfied citizens which could turn away from underperforming democratic regimes toward its authoritarian alternatives, particularly the strongman and populist models. More recently, scholars (Steenekamp and Du Toit 2017) have expressed concerns regarding a global trend of increasing support for alternative authoritarian regimes. Based on Figure 4 below, we observe that in the 6th wave of the World Values survey (2000-2014), over 54% of the respondents (a 2 units increase compared to the 4th wave, 2000-4) support a system where experts make political decisions, and approximately 43% (with 10 units increase from the 4th wave) show preference for political models with strong leaders.

Figure 4. Global support for democratic regime alternatives (Source: World Values Survey, waves 4-6)



Several scholars have attempted to analyse the implications of these two trends: decrease in democratic support and increase in demand for political alternatives. Influential academics, such as Norris (1999, 2017), Dalton (2004) and Inglehart (2016) argued that the proliferation of dissatisfied citizens will have a positive impact on the consolidation of a liberal-democratic regime as these citizens, due to their dissatisfactions, become politically active and critical of the performance of the democratic regime. In this context, their criticism acts as feedback for the political elites who can react accordingly and improve the performance of the regime. According to Norris (1999) and Qi and Shin (2011), dissatisfied citizens are important for the progress of democracy and their “critical democratic orientations are significantly more conducive to democratization than either the general endorsement of democracy as the preferred regime, or the self-

expression values of becoming a free and cognitively sophisticated individual” (Qi and Shin 2011, p. 256). Foa and Mounk (2016) have questioned the critical dissatisfied democrats’ argument and claimed that we are witnessing a concerning trend among young generations who express openness towards authoritarian alternative and are less likely than older cohorts to assess living in a democratic country as a necessity. According to Howe (2017), the generational differences could be due to a variance in social norms and values; as younger generations seems to display antisocial values and focus more on individual entitlement.

Other scholars, such as Dahlberg et al. (2015), have indicated that old and new democracies face different challenges which has consequences for the causes of the popular democratic discontent and, implicitly, on their impact for the future of democracy. In this context, Stoker (2006) warned that dissatisfaction with democracy could result in disengagement with politics, something which might not enhance democracy, but it might be harmful to the health of the democratic regime. Scholars that have looked at new democracies reported that dissatisfied democrats in developing regions such as Latin America (Fuks et al. 2017) and Africa (Doorenspleet 2012), are showing less commitment to democracy and are less inclined to politically participate. For example, Fuks et al. (2017) emphasize the need to differentiate between a *critical democrat* and *dissatisfied democrat* as the first concept implies, apart from dissatisfaction, also a high level of education and political interest. They claimed that a developing country, such a Brazil, has a lower number of critical democrats than a developed country and that dissatisfaction in a new democracy could be dangerous as “participation without democratic commitment can result in anti-democratic behaviour” (Fuks et al. 2017, p. 329).

In conclusion, the democratic rollback is not a new phenomenon, but compared to other waves, the recent one has affected democracies regardless of their level of consolidation and has been observed at both the institutional level, decreasing levels of liberal-democracy, and at the individual level, impacting on support for liberal-democracy. The following section will look more in-depth into the current existing explanations of this process that are provided by the literature.

Existing explanations

The processes of democratization and democratic recession are not new phenomena and there is a rich literature that has investigated the possible internal (e.g. economic, social-cultural and political) and external explanations (globalization and regime diffusion) for transitions towards a liberal-democracy and decreases in the performance of liberal-democratic institutions.

a) Internal explanations

Scholars have shown considerable interest in studying the different types of internal determinants: economic, political and socio-cultural. Overall, economic causes have dominated the academic debate. Building on the modernization theory's rationale that indicates that economic growth is responsible for the democratic transitions (Lipset 1960; Diamond et al. 1989; Epstein et al. 2006), scholars have argued that levels of economic development are affecting the consolidation and survival of democratic regimes (Przeworski et al. 1996; Bernhard et al. 2001, 2003; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Boix and Stokes 2003; Kennedy 2010; Boix 2011). Roberts and Wibbels (1999) claimed that the poor economic performance is enhancing the volatility of the party system while Bernhard et al. (2003) found that the newly transitioned democracies are highly vulnerable to economic contraction during the first two legislative elections, which can affect the consolidation of the liberal-democratic institutions. Others, such as Kapstein and Converse (2008) argued that inequality and poverty are more frequent in democracies that have suffered from backsliding. More recently, Walker (2016) claimed that the 2008 economic crisis represented a turning point for many democratic regimes who found themselves unprepared and unable to provide a clear solution to the economic issues, apart from introducing austerity policies. This resulted in an increase in inequality and a slowdown in economic growth, which substantially affected the trust and support of citizens in the ability of the democratic institutions to provide a coherent solution to the current issues.

The second type of factors that could explain both successful consolidation and the process of democratic rollback are the socio-cultural factors: population size (Veenendaal 2013, 2015), and the existence of a civic and democratic culture (Almond and Verba 1989; Inglehart and Welzel 2003, 2005, 2009; Welzel 2007).

According to Veenendaal (2013, p. 248), the implications of population size on democracy is debated in the literature, as small homogenous states could constitute a more conducive environment for political consensus and, thus, enhance the level of democracy, but, at the same, they could lead to executive centralization as the elites have less constraints and there are fewer strings to make them accountable. The latter case could lead to democratic regression.

The existence of a democratic culture could be another element that influences the consolidation of a democratic regime. The creation of a civic and democratic culture happens through the modernization process as the wellbeing and education level of the general population is increasing and this results in a transition from materialist and traditional values to secular, self-expression and postmodernist values (Inglehart and Welzel 2003, 2005, 2009). The generalization of these new values implies that the basic needs for survival and security are met and thus, citizens start to value more their freedoms and civil rights, becoming more tolerant towards minorities. According to Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 2009), the self-expression values are fundamental for the consolidation of a liberal-democracy as citizens become more interested in politics, more civically and politically active, as well as, they are demanding that their rights and freedoms to be protected. These claims are supported by Welzel (2007)'s findings which shows empirically that mass emancipative values are relevant in preventing loss in the quality of democracy.

The last type of internal factors that can determine democratic rollback are political. These include: electoral volatility and fragmentation (Kuenzi and Lambright 2005, Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2013, Manning 2005), concentration of power in the executive (Linz 1990; Mainwaring 1993; Fukuyama et al. 2005; Fish 2006; Rupnik 2016), government performance (Kapstein and Converse 2008), colonial legacy (Acemoglu et al. 2014) and ethnic fractionalization/politicization (Roeder 1999). According to Bernhard et al. (2015), party institutionalization and the existence of a strong civil society are both found to be significant in reducing the probability of democratic breakdown while Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2013) claims that political actors' radical preferences increase the possibility of democratic rollback.

Other scholars have studied the effect of different types of systems of governance. Linz (1990), for example, argued that presidential systems tend to produce unstable democracies, especially in the presence of political fragmentation, while Mainwaring (1993, p. 199) observed that out of the 31 stable democracies studied over a period of 25 years, only 4 had a presidential system. Finally, Fish (2006) adds to this debate, by confirming the importance of a stronger legislative in sustaining the performance of liberal-democratic institutions and showing that there is a positive and strong correlation between legislative power and levels of democracy, measured using the Freedom House's Political rights and Civil liberties indices.

Colonialism and ethnic fractionalization constitute important variables in understanding the consolidation process, especially, for countries that have transitioned during the third wave of democratization. Scholars argued that the type of colonial rule had substantial impact on the development of the political institutions after decolonization. For example, Acemoglu et al. (2014) claimed that indirect colonial rule can be linked to the creation of weak and patrimonial states as governments are unable to enforce their authority, the political elites are alienated from the population while the public goods and resources are unevenly distributed across the society. Additionally, a lot of these new democracies, particularly from Africa, are characterized by an increased politicization of ethnicity, which according to Roeder (1999), decreases the likelihood of democratic survival due to a higher probability of ethnopolitical conflict.

Particularly for the most recent wave of democratic recession, scholars have drawn attention to the role of political polarization and the rise of populism (Krastev 2007; Davies 2019). While the 2008 financial crisis has shaken the popular trust in democratic institutions, the mass migration crisis which started in 2015 has further diluted the authority of liberal-democratic governments in tackling the issue. In this context, populist parties started gaining more supporters with a nationalist discourse that called for illiberal policies, such as the construction of physical walls to stop the migrants flows and the expulsion of migrants to their countries of origin (Walker 2016; Puddington and Roynance 2017; Foa and Mounk 2017). Examples of populist or extreme right-wing parties that have risen dramatically can be found all over the world: Hugo Chávez's parties (Fifth Republic

Movement and United Socialist Party of Venezuela) in Venezuela until his death in 2013, the Five Star Movement in Italy received more than 30% of the votes in the 2018 general election and entered the government, PiS (Law and Justice) in Poland won a legislative majority in 2014 and the Fidesz party in Hungary, dominated by Viktor Orbán who serves as a Prime Minister from 2010 and is known for his sympathy for illiberal democracy, according to his 2014 speech, from Băile Tușnad (Romania). In particular, Central European countries, such Poland and Hungary, that were, previously, considered to be successful examples of democratic transition and consolidation (Rupnik 2016; Foa and Mounk 2017; Plattner 2017; Palonen 2018; Cianetti et al 2018; Przybylski 2018), have experienced deterioration in the aspects of rule of law and civil liberties. This was reflected, especially, in censorship of media and political reforms that attacked the judicial independence (Przybylski 2018).

In general, the scholarship has prioritized the study of internal or domestic explanations for understanding the process of democratization and democratic rollback. Scholars have looked at different types of internal factors: economic (e.g. level of development), socio-cultural (e.g. population size and the existence of a civic and democratic culture) and political (e.g. electoral volatility and fragmentation, concentration of power in the executive, government performance) (Almond and Verba 1989; Linz 1990; Mainwaring 1993; Przeworski et al. 1996; Roeder 1999; Bernhard et al. 2001, 2003; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Boix and Stokes 2003; Inglehart and Welzel 2003, 2005, 2009; Fukuyama et al. 2005; Manning 2005; Kuenzi and Lambright 2005; Fish 2006; Welzel 2007; Kapstein and Converse 2008; Kennedy 2010; Boix 2011; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2013; Veenendaal 2013, 2015; Acemoglu et al. 2014; Rupnik 2016).

b) External explanations

While looking at the external explanations for democratic transitions and consolidation, the scholarship has, first, investigated the role of globalization (Rudra 2005; Kriesi et al. 2006; Rodrik 2018) and international actors (Mahoney and Snyder 1999; Boix 2011; Levitz and Pop-Eleches 2010; Pevehouse 2002; Levitsky and Way 2006; Kaoutzanis et al. 2016). On the one hand, the impact of globalization is debated: while some considered it to be dangerous for newly transitioned

democracies as it could lead to increased levels of income inequality (Kapstein and Converse 2008), others argued that it could be beneficial for the consolidation of a democratic regime if there is an increase in social spending (Rudra 2005). On the other hand, international actors, including states and organizations, have an important role in spreading and consolidating the democratization process across the world. According to Pevehouse (2002), membership in international organizations can support the consolidation of democratic regimes through the inclusion of political conditionalities (e.g. Copenhagen criteria for the EU membership). For example, the role of the EU in promoting democracy has been extensively studied by the scholarship literature, in the context of the democratic transition and consolidation of the Central and East European states. Previously, scholars such as Lankina et al. (2016), have confirmed, empirically, the role of the EU in countering autocratic influence in its proximity. Still, recently, in the wake of the rise in populism and illiberalism across EU countries, more scholars (Sedelmeier 2014; Müller 2015; Iusmen 2015, Kelemen 2017; Kelemen and Blauburger 2017) have questioned the efficiency of the EU institutions in spreading democracy, while not being able to properly sanction the illiberal practices across the EU members.

Another external explanation for the process of democratization is offered by the democratic diffusion literature that focused on explaining the geographic diffusion of democracy (Starr 1991; O'Loughlin et al 1998; Kopstein and Reilly 2000; Bell and Staeheli 2001; Doorenspleet 2004; Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Lankina and Getachew 2006; Simmons et al. 2006; Gleditsch and Ward 2006; Obydenkova 2007; Leeson and Dean 2009; Elkins 2003, 2011, 2013; Börzel and Risse 2012; Solingen 2012; Graham et al 2012; Houle et al. 2016; Lankina et al. 2016).

The process of diffusion can be defined as a complex process that involves the transmission of attitudes and practices between individuals, groups of people or countries (Welsh 1984). This definition builds on the previous theoretical conceptualization of diffusion (e.g. Eyestone 1977; Welsh 1984; Starr 1991; Simmons and Elkins 2004; Elkins and Simmons 2005; Simmons et al. 2006; Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Graham et al. 2012) by emphasizing the key aspects that characterize diffusion: it is perceived as a process, it has an object of diffusion (e.g. attitudes and practices) and it is facilitated by actors of diffusion (which can be individuals, groups or institutions). It is closest to the classical conceptualization

from the diffusion literature, such as Welsh (1984, p. 3) who argued that diffusion “refers to the process of which institutions, practices, behaviour, or norms are transmitted between individuals and/or between social systems”. I argue that the main advantage of this type of definition is its broader approach in understanding the process of diffusion as it fits the purpose of this research: studying diffusion as a multilevel process that can be observed at both individual and institutional levels. Similar to Bunce and Wolchik (2006), I expect diffusion to be observed across as well as inside countries.

In comparison, many conceptualizations from the literature on Democratic Diffusion (Bunce and Wolchik 2006 and Graham et al. 2012) and International Political Economy (e.g. Simmons and Elkins 2004 and Simmons et al. 2006) understand diffusion as an institutional level process through which political innovations are adopted by governments or institutions, influenced by the prior implementation in other places. My research needed a definition that encompasses both practices (which I investigate at the institutional level) and attitudes (that I study at the individual level). Thus, this implies a level of interdependence or conditionality between adoption/changes in policies across different countries (Simmons and Elkins 2004; Elkins and Simmons 2005; Simmons et al. 2006; Gleditsch and Ward 2006; Graham et al. 2012), which differentiates my definition from theirs as I expect the practices and attitudes subject to the process of diffusion to be emulated by institutions and, respectively individuals, based on a self-interest choice and, not due to pressure from the Chinese government (following the policy of non-interference), interdependence or geographic proximity. Scholars from the International Political Economy literature, such as Simmons et al. (2006), mentioned, in their conceptualization of diffusion, the role of intermediary actors (e.g. international organization) in facilitating the process of policy diffusion at international level. Other scholars (e.g. Eyestone 1977; Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Gleditsch and Ward 2006) have emphasized the institutional aspect of the process of diffusion by observing the geographical and temporal clustering of democracies. According to the democratic diffusion literature, being in the proximity of democratic regimes enhances the prospects of democratic transition. In other words, there is an interdependence between neighbours that results in a domino effect: the chances that a non-democratic country becomes a democracy is

positively correlated with the number of democratic neighbours (Starr 1991; Leeson and Dean 2009).

Table 1. Conceptualizations of diffusion from the diffusion scholarship

Paper	Definition of diffusion	Literature	Comparison with my definition of diffusion
Welsh (1984, p. 3) – cited in Starr (1991, p. 359)	“Diffusion refers to the process by which institutions, practices, behaviors, or norms are transmitted between individuals and/or between social systems”	Democratic and Policy diffusion	<u>Similarities:</u> almost identical with my definition, identifies diffusion as being a process, it specifies the object of diffusion (institutions, practices, behaviour or norms) and the actors (individuals, social systems)
Simmons and Elkins (2004, p. 171)	“the decision to liberalize (or restrict) by some governments influences the choices made by others”	International Political Economy	<u>Similarities:</u> diffusion as a process, mention of diffusion actors (governments) and objects (government choice) <u>Differences:</u> diffusion at institutional level, due to interdependence between government choices
Simmons et al. (2006, p. 787)	“International policy diffusion occurs when government policy decisions in a given country are systematically conditioned by prior	International Political Economy	<u>Similarities:</u> diffusion as a complex process, involving actors (governments) and objects of diffusion (policy decisions/choices)

	policy choices made in other countries (sometimes mediated by the behavior of international organizations or even private actors or organizations).”		<u>Differences:</u> diffusion as an institutional level process, presence of mediators (IO and private actors or organizations), diffusion characterized by conditionality or interdependence between policy decisions
Bunce and Wolchik (2006, p. 286)	“a process wherein new ideas, institutions, policies, models or repertoires of behavior spread geographically from a core site to other sites, whether within a given state (as when the movement of new policies invented in one political subunit spreads to other subunits within a federal polity) or across states (as the spread, for example, of public sector downsizing or non-governmental organizations)”	Diffusion of electoral models/ democracy	<u>Similarities:</u> diffusion as a process that can happen inside and across states, with actors and object of diffusion <u>Differences:</u> diffusion as a geographic process that involves mainly institutions as actors.
Elkins and Simmons	“one transition increases the	Democratic and policy diffusion	<u>Similarities:</u> diffusion as process of transition/change

(2005, p. 33)	probability of another transition”		<u>Differences:</u> interdependence between policy changes
Eyestone (1977, p. 441)	“Any pattern of successive adoptions of a policy innovation can be called diffusion”	Policy diffusion	<u>Similarities:</u> diffusion as a process, with an object of diffusion (policy) <u>Differences:</u> spillover effect
Graham et al. (2012 p. 675)	“diffusion occurs when one government’s decision about whether to adopt a policy innovation is influenced by the choices made by other governments”	Policy diffusion	<u>Similarities:</u> diffusion as a process, with an object of diffusion (policy in this case) <u>Differences:</u> diffusion at the institutional level, interdependence between the adoption of policies
Gleditsch and Ward (2006, p. 916)	No direct definition. “Transitions to democracy have also clustered geographically, and countries have been far more likely to undergo transitions to democracy following transitions in neighboring states”	Democratic diffusion	<u>Similarities:</u> diffusion as a process <u>Difference:</u> geographic clustering and interdependence between democratic transition

There are several potential explanations for why and how this process of democratic diffusion might be happening which are known as the mechanisms of diffusion: neighbourhood effect, learning, linkage, demonstration, prestige,

accommodation etc. Probably the most widely investigated channel of democratic diffusion is the neighbourhood effect, also known as the proximity effect. Brinks and Coppedge (2006, p. 464) argued that there is a “tendency for neighbouring countries to converge toward a shared level of democracy or non-democracy”. There are many studies that have offered empirical evidence regarding the likelihood of autocracies to transition to a democratic regime if they are surrounded by democracies (Doorenspleet 2004; Cederman and Gleditsch 2004; Gleditsch and Ward 2006; Brinks and Coppedge 2006). For example, Cederman and Gleditsch (2004, p. 605) found that the probability that a randomly selected country is a democracy increases from 0.30 to 0.84 when the neighbourhood states’ level of democracy is above the normal threshold. Others such as Lankina and Getachew (2006, pp. 559-560), studied the role of the EU in spreading democracy in its neighbourhood and observed that as distance from Helsinki (used as reference point for the EU) increases by 1%, the level of democracy of Russia’s regions decreases by 0.055 in the next 2 years, 0.061 in the next 3 years and, respectively, 0.062 in the next 4 years.

The process of diffusion is enhanced by the existing interconnection between countries, known as linkage. According to Levitsky and Way (2006, p. 379), linkage is defined as the “density of ties and cross-border flows” between countries. Based on justifications provided by Lankina et al. (2016, p. 10), linkage can lead to diffusion because: it creates a relationship of interdependence, especially economic or commercial, which makes the maintenance of the link crucial and with high switching costs for the receiver country (e.g. specialized economies); it implies a learning process across both elites (e.g. public officials have to facilitate access and accommodate foreign investors) and general public; and it can contribute to economic growth by providing an impetus for development. Scholars have used linkage to explain the democratic diffusion process across Europe, especially by exploring the role of economic interconnections. For example, Obydenkova (2007) discovered that economic and communication links with the European Union are positively correlated with democratic regime change in Eastern regions of Europe. Similarly, Lankina et al. (2016) showed that EU aid represents a mechanism to counter authoritarian influence. In general, linkage has been most often looked at in relation to countries in close geographic proximity.

Other mechanisms of diffusion are the demonstration and prestige effects. Scholars have encountered difficulties in disentangling between proximity, demonstration and prestige mechanisms. On the one hand, the demonstration effect implies that the diffusion of particular practices, norms, attitudes or policies is occurring based on practical examples of their successful implementation in other countries. According to Leeson and Dean (2009, p. 535), countries are more likely to adopt “democracy-enhancing ideas” that were seen to be successful for their neighbours. On the other hand, the prestige effect of major powers indicates that global powers can become models for other actors and influence the regime in other countries based on the prestige of their institutions and practices (Fordham and Asal 2007). Specifically, as major powers are responsible for establishing the norms of the international community, the practices and norms that have led to their successful performance are perceived as legitimate by the other countries and, implicitly attractive for those interested in replicating their success.

Socialization and learning are typical mechanisms for studying diffusion at the individual level. On the one hand, socialization usually involves an interaction at a supranational scale between the members of the elite from different countries and, in this way, it facilitates the familiarization with new practices, norms or ideas. For example, Greenhill (2010) finds that international organizations such as EU, UN or ILO have a positive effect on the diffusion of human rights norms through the socialization of the states’ political representatives. On the other hand, scholars define learning as a voluntary change of beliefs and differentiated between two main types of learning: rational/Bayesian (full maximization of actor’s utility) and bounded (based on cognitive shortcuts) (Bennett and Howlett 1992; Levy 1994; Mishler and Rose 2002; Meseguer 2005, 2006; Simmons et al. 2006; Graham et al. 2012). The empirical investigation of the learning mechanism has been limited due to difficulties in measuring it and disentangling learning from other mechanism of diffusion (Levy 1994; Rohrschneider 1996; Gilardi 2010).

Overall, the literature on democratic diffusion provides strong theoretical and analytic frameworks for understanding the process of transition from non-democratic to democratic regimes. But it has encountered difficulties in disentangling between the different mechanisms of diffusion and did not anticipate

the phenomenon of decrease in the performance of liberal-democracies, across the world.

In the context in which the rise of authoritarian powers has coincided with a loss in the global prestige and performance of liberal-democracies across the world, authoritarian diffusion could constitute an alternative explanation for the democratic rollback process. It represents a relatively new framework in research, developed from the democratic diffusion literature, aiming to understand the role of authoritarian actors in global and regional politics. The increasing attention given to the rise of autocratic powers has been captured in special issues from academic journals such as *Democratization* 2012 (Finkel and Brudny 2012a) and the *Journal of Democracy* 2015 which focused on “emerging threats to democracy from a global resurgence of authoritarianism” (Way 2016, p. 64). Scholars have provided a lot of evidence about the emergence of authoritarian countries and the increasing importance of authoritarian diffusion process (Ambrosio 2007, 2010; Gel'man and Lankina 2008; Allison 2008; Diamond 2008; Gat 2007; Puddington 2008; Tolstrup 2009, 2014, 2015a; Merkel 2010; Heydemann and Leenders 2011; Cameron and Orenstein 2012; Vanderhill 2012; Finkel and Brudny 2012a, 2012b; Libman and Obydenkova 2014; Gerlach 2014; Bank and Edel 2015; Bamert et al. 2015; von Soest 2015; Way 2016; Lankina et al. 2016; Vanderhill 2017). It has mainly investigated the role of Russia, as a major authoritarian power, interested in countering the democratic promotion efforts of the EU and stabilizing the rule of local autocrats in its proximity (Ambrosio 2007; Obydenkova 2007; Jackson 2010; Finkel and Brudny 2012a, 2012b; Koesel and Bunce 2013; Bader 2014; von Soest 2015; Lankina and Niemczyk 2015; Tolstrup 2015a).

The first attempt to create a common framework for the authoritarian diffusion literature belongs to Ambrosio (2010, 2018) who described it in terms of appropriateness and effectiveness. First, appropriateness is similar to the prestige mechanism from the democratic diffusion literature as it refers to the fact that as authoritarian practices are seen to be successful, they become attractive for other countries who are interested in replicating this success and in this way, they gain international legitimacy. Second, effectiveness can be translated into a learning experience as actors learn about authoritarian practices that have been previously tested in other countries. Similar to the learning mechanism from the diffusion

literature, this implies an active interest from the learner in identifying those *effective* practices and implementing them. In addition to these mechanisms, Ambrosio (2010, p. 384) argues that the process of authoritarian diffusion is enhanced by other factors, such as “geography, linkage, international organizations, major power prestige, and reference groups”, which reiterates some of the channels through which diffusion is known to happen.

While the democratic diffusion literature has mainly looked at the diffusion of democratic practices and norms across different regime types or from consolidated democracies towards autocracies leading to their transition to a democratic regime, the authoritarian diffusion literature can be characterized by two directions of study. First, the autocratic learning or the study of diffusion of authoritarian practices across authoritarian regimes has investigated the prevention practices, used by authoritarian regimes to reduce democratization pressure and, strengthen the autocratic rule both internally and in the proximity. The second direction of study in the authoritarian diffusion literature looks at the diffusion of authoritarian practices and norms across different regime types or from autocracies to democracies. My research will contribute to the second direction of the literature and more details about the contribution of the thesis is included at the end of this section, on pages 33-35.

In the first strand of the literature, authoritarian diffusion has focused on studying the “firewalls” or prevention practices to insulate authoritarian regimes from the pressures for democratic reform and strengthen authoritarian rule. On the one hand, scholars have investigated the resilience practices (internal and external) used by authoritarian countries to counter democratic promotion efforts which constitute a threat for the rule and survival of autocrats (Ambrosio 2007; Finkel and Brudny 2012a, 2012b; Tolstrup 2015a; Vanderhill 2017). Vanderhill (2017), for example, argues that China and Kazakhstan have employed censure (reduced access to information about democratic regimes) and propaganda (pro-government narrative) to prevent any threats to their authoritarian rules. Others, such as Finkel and Brudny (2012a, p. 6) identify five different techniques used by autocracies during the Colour Revolutions to prevent the spread of pro-democratic attitudes: isolating citizens from undesired external influence, marginalizing the opposition, the use of repression against any attempt to weaken the government rule,

distribution of goods to reward loyal citizens, as well as persuading people into believing that the authoritarian regime is superior. Tolstrup (2015a) discusses similar strategies employed by Russia, in its neighbourhood, to reduce the democratization effect of presidential elections in Ukraine (2004) and Belarus (2006) and the parliamentary elections in Moldova (2005 and 2009). Acting as a *black knight*, Russia used different techniques in order to support authoritarian leaders across its neighbours: signalling invincibility, preventing elite defection, and constraining the opposition strength, popular protests and the sensitivity to democracy promotion (Tolstrup 2015a, p. 677).

Another way in which authoritarian powers can also diffuse their norms and practices is through the frameworks of regional cooperation. One example of such cooperation framework is the creation of regional organizations or institutions who act as *epistemic communities* by allowing socialization and knowledge-sharing between authoritarian elites. According Allison (2008), regional organizations from Central Asia (e.g. the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Community) act as a solidarity community where members find support against the spread of democratic ideas and practices.

The second strand of the literature refers to the study of authoritarian diffusion across different regime types or from autocratic to democratic regimes (Ambrosio 2012; Chou 2015; Chou et al. 2017; Buzogány 2017; Brownlee 2017). In the context of the recent democratic rollback trend, the scholarship has questioned the role of the authoritarian powers in this process, but this strand of the literature is still at an incipient state. So far, these scholars argue that the concerns regarding the impact of authoritarian power on democracies are unfounded as they find no support for such claims. Chou (2015) and Chou et al. (2017), for example, explored the appeal of the China model in the context of the Australians' apathy towards democracy but they find that poll data does not confirm such concerns. Similarly, Buzogány (2017) investigated whether the deepening of illiberalism in Hungary could be due to a process of diffusion of authoritarian norms from Russia but he also claimed to find no support for this hypothesis. Overall, while more scholars have shown an increasing interest in understanding whether authoritarian powers could affect the performance of democratic institutions worldwide, currently, the preliminary results indicate that it might be too early to be concerned with this

issue. This research contributes to this literature by providing a first empirical test of whether or not the increasing economic engagement of China in Sub-Saharan Africa is leading to a process of authoritarian diffusion in a developing world region which might be more susceptible to diffusion.

In terms of mechanisms of diffusion, this scholarship has borrowed the same explanations used by the democratic diffusion scholars, such as geographic or neighbourhood effect, linkage, learning and demonstration mechanism. First, linkage represents one of the most explored channels of authoritarian diffusion. Scholars have argued that links (e.g. economic) between Russia and post-URSS countries could act as a limiting factor by reducing the probability of transitioning to a democratic regime (Obydenkova and Libman 2012; Cameron and Orenstein 2012). According to Libman and Obydenkova (2014, p. 170), there are several reasons for why trade linkages might lead to adoption of non-democratic practices and norms: they contribute to economic growth, create high switching costs and lead to trade concentration (intensive connections and specialization of national economies). Others, such as Tansey et al. (2017) find that autocratic linkage (measuring economic, socio-political and geographic interconnections between autocratic regimes) increases the probability of the survival of autocracies. Scholars have also argued about the existence of a neighbourhood effect. As in the case of the democratic diffusion literature, many of them have investigated together the mechanisms of linkage and proximity. For example, Cameron and Orenstein (2012) have found that intensive economic links (e.g. trade and industrial relations) combined with geographic proximity are more likely to determine a lower evaluation of the quality of democracy of the recipient state(s).

Learning is another widely studied mechanism of authoritarian diffusion, especially, in threatening situations for the survival of the authoritarian regimes, such as the Arab Spring and the Colour Revolutions (Heydemann and Leenders 2011; Weyland 2012; Hale 2013; Heydemann 2013. Bank and Edel 2015; Hall and Ambrosio 2017). For example, during the Arab Spring, the survival of the Assad regime could be explained by a learning process based on the failures of the governments from Tunisia and Egypt (Heydemann 2013). Another example of authoritarian learning refers to the development of the Chinese political and development model based on a learning experience of the Chinese leadership from

the successful performance of the authoritarian government of Singapore (Ortmann and Thompson 2014).

In conclusion, the study of authoritarian diffusion has gained more interest from scholars looking to understand and explain the implications of the major authoritarian powers' foreign policy in their proximity. Still, this literature has several limitations which this thesis aims to address.

First, a major focus of this literature has been on Russia and its efforts to deter democratic diffusion across its neighbours. But as scholars agree that authoritarian regimes are not homogenous (Koesel and Bunce 2013; von Soest 2015; Tosun and Croissant 2016), the study of authoritarian diffusion needs to be extended by looking at other authoritarian powers, apart from Russia. The emergence of China as a global economic power has been regarded by many international commentators as a potential alternative and successful economic model (Gat 2007; Lange 2010; Cooley 2015). So far, the studies that look at China are mainly researching regime resilience and democracy prevention policies (e.g. Wilson 2009; Koesel and Bunce 2013; Way 2016; Vanderhill 2017)⁵.

Second, the various mechanisms of diffusion (e.g. demonstration effect, neighbouring effect and linkages) have been usually study together (Obydenkova 2007; Gel'man and Lankina 2008) which creates a confusion regarding the amount of influence exercised by each mechanism individually. Due to an extensive focus on the geographic aspect of the diffusion (e.g. the effect of EU or Russia on Eastern European countries), mechanisms such as linkage and the demonstration effect were usually studied in relation to neighbours' influence or proximity. In this context, it is necessary to differentiate, theoretically and empirically, these mechanisms of diffusion.

Third, one main criticism of the study of international diffusion refers to the study of this process at one unit of analysis. As diffusion is a complex process which can involve both the public and institutions, research is needed, linking the two, in order to provide a more complete picture of the diffusion process (Burnell and Schlumberger 2010). Traditionally, the literature on international diffusion gave more attention to the investigation of the diffusion process at institutional level. The

⁵ A detailed discussion of the papers that have looked a China as an actor of diffusion will be included in the China in Africa section (pages 42-46).

existing studies that are looking at sub-national level diffusion are exploring the diffusion effects across a federal state (e.g. Russian regions) and are still investigating the impact at the level of regional institutions, and not on people's attitudes and norms (Lankina and Getachew 2006; Obydenkova and Libman 2012; Libman and Obydenkova 2014; Lankina et al. 2016). Furthermore, scholars, such as Vanderhill (2017) have claimed the necessity to study diffusion not only at the level of elites, but also the level of masses. We know that, in a specific context and under certain conditions, either the general public or the elite and even both can be influenced by the diffusion process. But, at this stage, we are not sure where in society diffusion occurs.

Fourth, there is a need to disaggregate between the type of practices and attitudes that are being diffusion (e.g. illiberal such as low protection of civil liberties and non-democratic like rigged elections). In the context of the rise of illiberalism at global level, there has been a significant increase in studies looking to understand the expansion of illiberal practices across borders and the implication of proximity to major authoritarian powers, such as Russia (Boyle 2016; Buzogány 2017; de la Torre 2017; Krastev 2018). These pioneer studies have the merit of setting a new direction in the study of authoritarian diffusion by differentiating between illiberal and non-democratic aspects of the authoritarian diffusion.

Fifth, the study of the authoritarian practices should also be extended to other geographic areas, apart from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. One under-represented area is Sub-Saharan Africa, a region that has been for a long time under the influence of Western democracies but has recently witnessed an increasing Chinese economic engagement.

Lastly, diffusion has been perceived simply as a proximity process, with less attention being given to the question of whether diffusion can also happen at a distance. The process of globalization has determined high interconnections between countries located on different continents which could enable diffusion at a distance. Moreover, the scholarship has mainly studied the diffusion effect in the proximity of democratic actors (e.g. the EU diffusing its democratic practices to the Central and Eastern Europe) and did not attempt to investigate whether the global economic interconnections between countries across the world could lead to a process of diffusion happening at a distance. In terms of mechanism of diffusion that

could work at a distance, the diffusion mechanisms that have been previously studied in the presence of linkage (e.g. learning, demonstration and prestige) may also work at a distance. On the other hand, it could be that cultural distance between actors might act as a barrier to diffusion, indicating an important scope condition for diffusion theory that has not been specified.

This research project extends the study of authoritarian diffusion process by looking at China in Africa as a case of authoritarian diffusion at the distance, where China is a global economic power that managed to develop without democratizing while Sub-Saharan Africa is an under-researched geographic area in the literature. Methodologically, the project will contribute by adopting a multilevel approach in studying the diffusion of authoritarian attitudes and practices at both the institutional and individual levels. Combined, this allows the disentangling of different mechanisms of diffusion (prestige, accommodation, demonstration and learning) and an assessment of where in society diffusion may be occurring. The overall contribution of the thesis to the authoritarian diffusion literature is more empirical than theoretical or methodological, as I test current theoretical mechanisms using the most up to date methodologies to study the process of diffusion in a geographic area previously understudied by the scholarship. In particular, the China in Africa case allows for studying diffusion at both individual and institutional level of analysis, using existing mechanisms that have been already theorized by diffusion scholars (learning and demonstration at individual level, while prestige and accommodation at institutional level). The methods of investigation used (e.g. survey-experiment for studying learning) are based on recent scholarship methodological recommendations and attempts (e.g. Butler et al. 2017) used an experimental design to investigate policy learning across US municipal policymakers). My overall conclusion that shows weak support for autocratic diffusion suggests that this literature can be take forward by investigating the conditions under which diffusion can happen as, as Ambrosio and Tolstrup (2019) have recently argued, it is important to differentiate *authoritarian diffusion from illusion*.

China in Africa

a) China in Africa as a case study

This section will discuss in more details the reasons behind choosing Sub-Saharan Africa as a geographic area of interest and China as an actor of authoritarian diffusion. On the one hand, Sub-Saharan Africa constitutes an under-studied region from the perspective of the study of the authoritarian diffusion literature. This is especially relevant in the context in which this region has been affected by the recent democratic rollback phenomenon and has encountered difficulties in being economically performant. On the other hand, China represents an alternative actor of authoritarian diffusion, compared to Russia. Although there are diffusion studies that have looked at the role of China in preventing the democratic promotion efforts of the West (Wilson 2009; Koesel and Bunce 2013; Way 2016; Vanderhill 2017), to my knowledge, there is no empirical study that investigates the implications of China as a global economic power, in the context of democratic backsliding in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Sub-Saharan African countries were part of the third wave of democratization which took place in the early 90s and their liberal-democratic gains have been acknowledged by the scholarship and the international society (Kurlantzick 2013; Gyimah-Boadi 2015; Rakner 2019). According to the Freedom House (1991), out of the 47 Sub-Saharan African countries that were independent in 1990, only four countries were rated as being Free and 15 countries were Partially Free. In 2005, out of the 48 countries, 11 were free and 23 Partially Free (Freedom House 2006). In this period, Sub-Saharan African states achieved visible improvements in terms of liberal-democratic practices: the average inverted score for Political Rights have increased from 3.11 in 1992 to 3.77 in 2005 while the Civil Liberties have increased from 3.2 in 1994 to 4 in 2005 (see Figure 5, page 37). Still, similarly to the global trend, the liberal-democratic performance of Sub-Saharan African governments has been constantly decreasing since the mid-2000s. Scholars, such as Rakner (2019), have claimed that the political elites from Sub-Saharan African countries have used legal channels to restrict the civil liberties and political rights in their countries which is similar to the backsliding practices across the world.

Figure 5. The evolution of the Freedom House's Political Rights and Civil Liberties scores in Sub-Saharan Africa

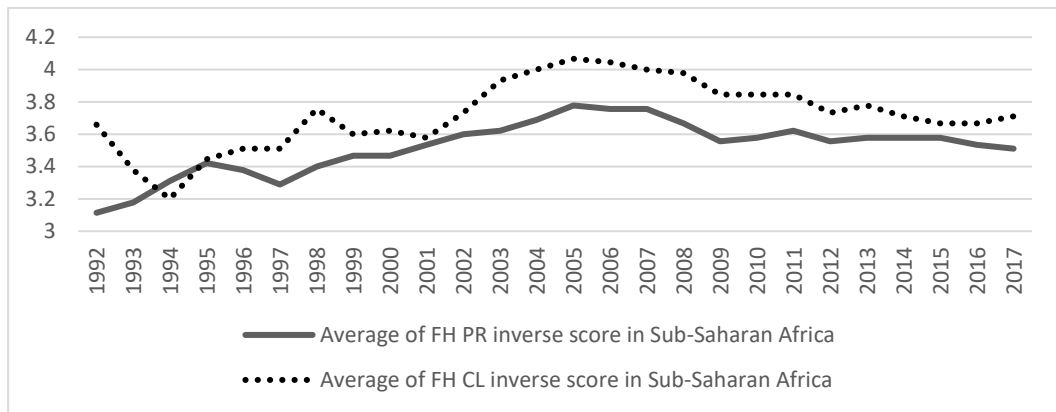


Figure 6. The evolution of the Freedom House's Civil Liberties inverted scores across Sub-Saharan Africa regions

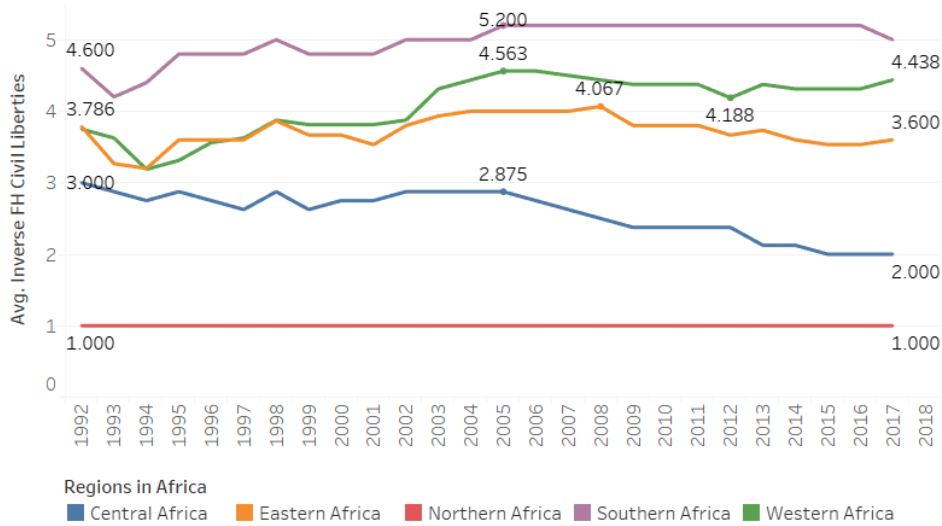
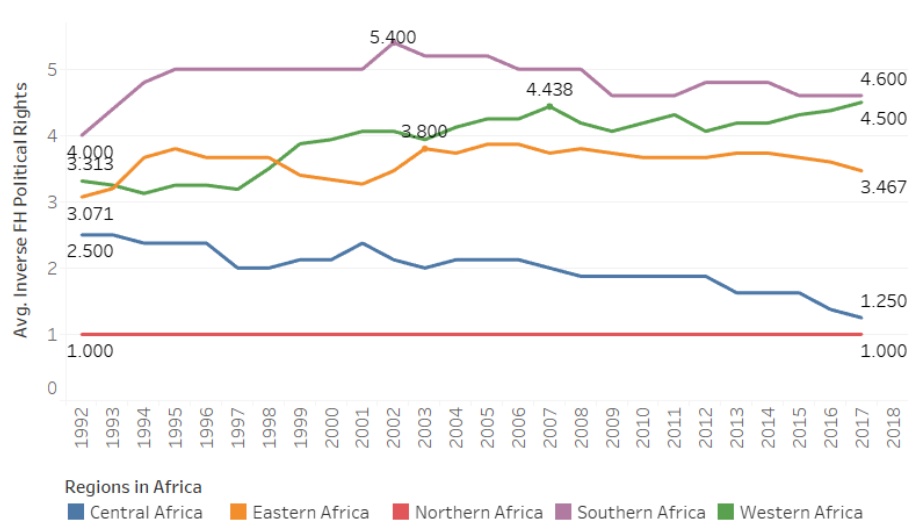


Figure 7. The evolution of the Freedom House's Political Rights inverted scores across Sub-Saharan African regions



To further explore the democratic backsliding trend in Sub-Saharan Africa, I explore the disaggregated data, by regions: Central Africa⁶, Eastern Africa⁷, Northern Africa⁸, Southern Africa⁹ and Western Africa¹⁰. In Figures 6 and 7 from page 37, we observe that, apart from Northern Africa which has a constant score of 1 for both FH Civil Liberties and FH Political Rights, Central Africa is the region with the most visible decline in democracy performance: from a score of 3 for Civil Liberties and 2.5 for Political Rights in 1992 to a score of 2 and, respectively 1.25 in 2017. The remaining three regions generally followed the regional average trend (see Figure 5 page 37) by recording an increase from 1992 until mid-2000s, followed by a decrease. For example, Eastern Africa's FH Civil Liberties score decreased from 4 in 2008 to 3.6 in 2017 while the Political Rights' score decreased from 3.8 in 2003 to 3.4 in 2017. Then, the score for FH Civil Liberties, in Western Africa, dropped with .4 between 2004 and 2012, while the FH Political Rights score oscillated during this period and recorded two declines of around .3 in 2007-2009 and 2011-2012. Last, Southern Africa has the best democratic performance out all regions, which is not surprising considering that it includes consolidated democracies such as Botswana and South Africa. The evolution of its Civil Liberties score remained constant after 2005, around 5.2 , while its Political Rights score decreased from 5.4 in 2002 to 4.6 in 2017.

Kenya is an example of country from Eastern Africa, that has seen substantial progress in the consolidation of the liberal-democratic institutions, with Political Rights and Civil Liberties scores improving from 1 in mid 1990s to 5 in 2005 (see Table 57, page 249, from the Annexes A). But this progress has been disrupted by a series of non-democratic and illiberal action of the Kenyan government, such as, the limitation of media freedom, after the presidential elections in 2007 and 2017, when several TV stations have been closed down and journalists were arrested (Nyabola

⁶ Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Dem. Rep. of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

⁷ Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

⁸ South Sudan and Sudan.

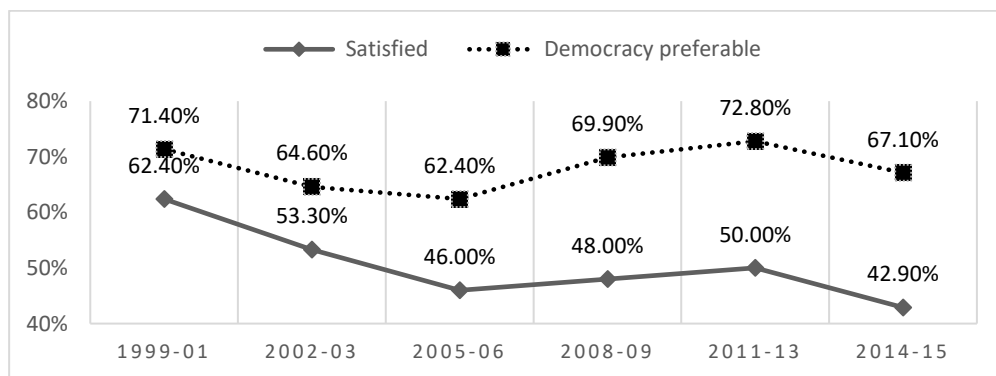
⁹ Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.

¹⁰ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

2018). Pre and post-election violence have also been a feature of Kenyan elections (Ajulu 1998; Steeves 1999).

The recession trend is also observed at the individual level, in terms of decrease in citizens' support for liberal-democracy. According to the Afrobarometer survey data, in Sub-Saharan African states, the level of popular satisfaction with democracy is below the level of support for democracy by almost 20% (see Figure 8 below). This could indicate the existence of dissatisfied democrats in the region that, according to Fuks et al. (2017), might represent a further threat for the consolidation of the democratic regime if they are not properly engaged in the democratic process. Gyimah-Boadi (2015, p. 106) argued that "masses of poor people who have been left behind economically are susceptible to vote buying and co-optation through political patronage, and this presents a mortal danger to democracy on the continent". Similarly, Lekalake (2017) finds that 60% of the respondents from Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe negatively assess the governmental performance in solving the most important problems for their countries.

Figure 8. Support for and Satisfaction with democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa (Source: Afrobarometer, rounds 1-6)



In Sub-Saharan Africa, the evolution of both support and satisfaction with democracy displayed an S shape trend (see Figure 8 above), compared to the democratic performance of institutions that recorded a V shape trend or an increase until mid-2000s followed by a decrease (see Figure 5 page 37). The S shape trend is characterized by a decrease in people's support and satisfaction with democracy between Round 1 (1999-2001) and Round 3 (2005-2006), then an increase in Round 5 (2011-2013) and again a decline in Round 6 (2014-2015). Based on these observations, we could argue that the first signs of democratic

rollback can be detected at the individual level, in terms of popular support, before it was recorded at the institutional level.

Figure 9, from page 41 presents the variation of average support for democracy across the 5 Sub-Saharan African regions and reflects the percentage of Afrobarometer responders agreeing to the statement that democracy is preferable (expressed as decimals). The first observation is that countries from Central Africa and Northern Africa are covered only in Round 5 and 6. In this period, the average support for democracy has increased from 64% to 67% in Central Africa and decreased from 51% to 43% in Northern Africa. The disaggregated support for democracy across the other three regions follows the overall regional trend (see Figure 8, page 39) by displaying an S shape. In Eastern Africa, the popular support declined from 75% in Round 1 to 57% in Round 3, then it grew again to 74% in Round 5 and decreased to 64% in Round 6. Western Africa's average support for democracy recorded 72% in Round 1, but then it decreased with 6% in Round 2, increased again to 76% in Round 5 and decreased with 3% in Round 6. Last, Southern Africa had a 60% support for democracy in Round 1, declined to 56% in Round 2, then rose again to 65% in Round 4 and, finally, dropped with 2% in Round 6. To sum up, apart from Central Africa and Northern Africa, the overall evolutions indicate that Eastern Africa experienced a decreasing trend while Southern and Western Africa had a slight increase throughout the 6 rounds.

Another issue to discuss here is whether the Sub-Saharan African countries that experience a decline at institutional level also record a decrease in terms of individual support. Out of the sample of 45 countries Sub-Saharan African countries only 28 are surveyed by the Afrobarometer throughout the 6 rounds. Moreover, the number of countries varies from round to round. For example, Round 1 includes 12 countries¹¹, Round 2 has 16¹², Round 3 has 18¹³, Round 4 includes 19¹⁴, Round 5 - 6 have 28¹⁵. The majority of these countries are in Western (12) and Eastern Africa (9), while only 5 are in Southern Africa, 1 in Central Africa and 1 in Northern Africa.

¹¹ Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

¹² Four new countries (Cabo Verde, Kenya, Mozambique and Senegal) added to the 12 from Round 1.

¹³ Two new countries (Benin and Madagascar) in addition to the 16 from Round 2.

¹⁴ One new country (Liberia) in addition to the 18 from Round 3.

¹⁵ Nine new countries (Mauritius, Niger, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Swaziland, Guinea) added to the 19 from Round 4.

Figure 9. The evolution of democratic support across the 5 Sub-Saharan African regions (Source: Afrobarometer)

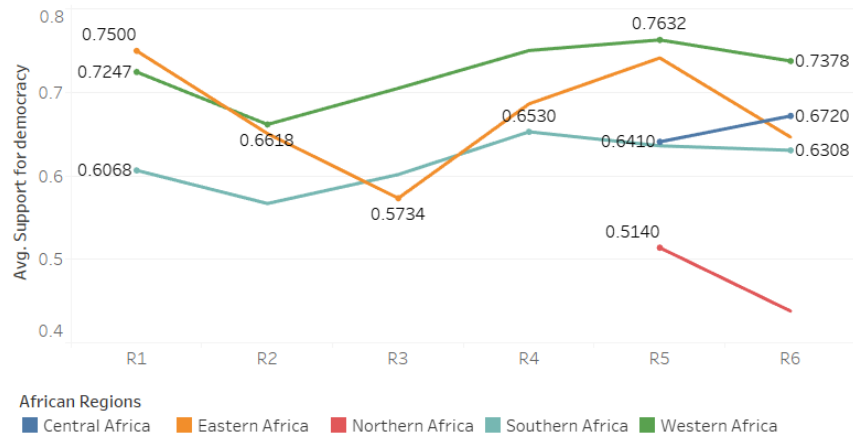


Table 2. The evolution of mean score of FH PR and FH CL across 12 Sub-Saharan African countries

	Eastern Africa					Southern Africa				Western Africa		
	Malawi	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Botswana	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa	Ghana	Mali	Nigeria
1999	5.000	4.000	3.000	3.500	2.500	6.000	4.000	5.500	6.500	5.000	5.000	4.500
2000	5.000	4.000	2.500	3.500	2.500	6.000	4.000	5.500	6.500	5.500	5.500	4.000
2001	4.500	4.000	2.500	3.500	2.000	6.000	4.000	5.500	6.500	5.500	5.500	3.500
2002	4.000	4.500	3.000	4.000	2.000	6.000	5.500	5.500	6.500	5.500	5.500	3.500
2003	4.500	4.500	3.500	4.000	2.000	6.000	5.500	5.500	6.500	6.000	6.000	4.000
2004	4.000	4.500	3.500	4.000	1.500	6.000	5.500	5.500	6.500	6.000	6.000	4.000
2005	4.000	4.500	3.500	4.000	1.500	6.000	5.500	6.000	6.500	6.500	6.000	4.000
2006	4.500	4.500	3.500	4.500	1.500	6.000	5.500	6.000	6.000	6.500	6.000	4.000
2007	4.000	4.500	3.500	4.500	1.500	6.000	5.500	6.000	6.000	6.500	5.500	4.000
2008	4.000	4.500	3.500	5.000	1.500	6.000	5.500	6.000	6.000	6.500	5.500	3.500
2009	4.500	4.500	3.500	4.500	2.000	5.500	5.000	6.000	6.000	6.500	5.500	3.500
2010	4.500	5.000	3.500	4.500	2.000	5.500	5.000	6.000	6.000	6.500	5.500	4.000
2011	4.500	5.000	3.500	4.500	2.000	5.500	5.000	6.000	6.000	6.500	5.500	4.000
2012	4.500	5.000	3.500	4.500	2.000	5.500	5.500	6.000	6.000	6.500	2.000	4.000
2013	4.500	5.000	3.000	4.500	2.500	5.500	5.500	6.000	6.000	6.500	3.500	4.000
2014	4.500	5.000	2.500	4.500	2.500	5.500	5.500	6.000	6.000	6.500	3.500	3.500
2015	5.000	4.500	2.500	4.500	3.000	5.500	5.000	6.000	6.000	6.500	3.500	3.500
2016	5.000	4.500	2.500	4.000	3.000	5.500	5.000	6.000	6.000	6.500	3.500	4.000
2017	5.000	4.000	3.000	4.000	2.500	5.500	5.000	6.000	6.000	6.500	3.500	4.000

Average mean score of FH PR and FH CL: 1.500 to 6.500

Table 3. The evolution of democratic support across 12 Sub-Saharan African countries regions (Source: Afrobarometer)

		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Eastern Africa	Malawi	0.6550	0.6400	0.5610	0.7380	0.7560	0.7090
	Tanzania	0.8360	0.6450	0.3760	0.7150	0.8450	0.5730
	Uganda	0.7990	0.7490	0.6100	0.7920	0.7930	0.6410
	Zambia	0.7470	0.7030	0.6420	0.8000	0.8980	0.7430
	Zimbabwe	0.7130	0.4750	0.6620	0.6780	0.7890	0.7290
Southern Africa	Botswana	0.8470	0.6560	0.6910	0.8490	0.8180	0.8300
	Lesotho	0.4020	0.5000	0.5030	0.4570	0.5500	0.4960
	Namibia	0.5770	0.5440	0.5650	0.6390	0.6360	0.7380
	South Africa	0.6010	0.5680	0.6480	0.6670	0.7190	0.6380
Western Africa	Ghana	0.7650	0.5160	0.7510	0.7810	0.8170	0.6890
	Mali	0.5970	0.7110	0.6760	0.7200	0.6180	0.7470
	Nigeria	0.8120	0.6760	0.6530	0.7190	0.6910	0.6510

Avg. Support for democracy: 0.3760 to 0.8980

Thus, the optimum number of countries that can be used to address the above issue is 12 as these countries are surveyed in all 6 rounds of the

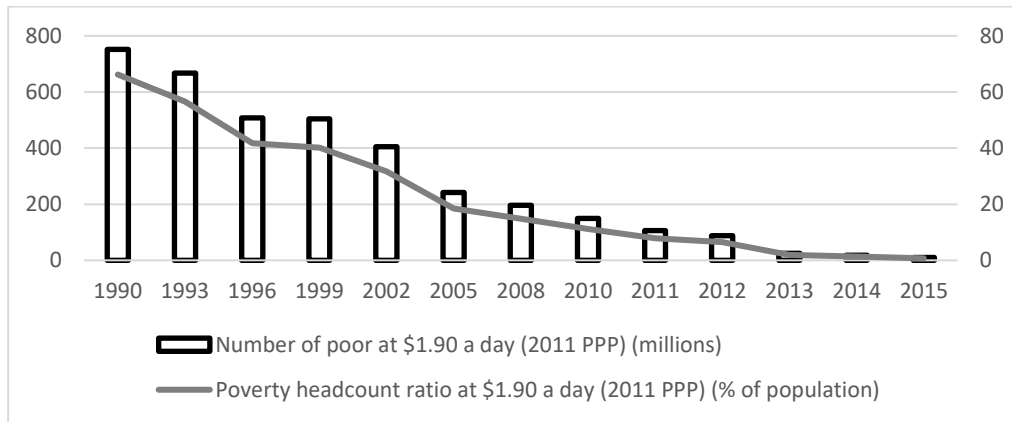
Afrobarometer and also covered by the Freedom House data. To facilitate the comparison, I use highlight tables because they are visually effective in identifying the temporal variation. By exploring Tables 2 and 3 from page 41, we observe that Mali is one example of country that has experienced noticeable decline in the democratic performance of institutions (from an average of 5.5 in 2000 to 2 in 2012), but the popular support for democracy has consolidated, by increasing from .59 in Round 1 to .74 in Round 6. Then, Nigeria is a case of Sub-Saharan African country that has recorded decrease in support for democracy (around .16 between Round 1 and 6) while the average score of FH PR and CL has been roughly constant. Another example is represented by South Africa who had a stable high score for institutional performance between 2004-2017 while the percentages for individual democratic support have oscillated substantially between .56 and .71.

After analysing these newly added graphs, I acknowledge that the picture is not clear cut regarding the democratic rollback. This lack of clarity is itself a strong motivation for further empirical investigation and my work does in fact support this macro level overview by showing no clear effect of diffusion. Thus, I argue that Sub-Saharan Africa represents an important case region for studying the process of democratic recession in the developing world as the region mirrors the general global trends and represents an area under-studied in the context of the authoritarian diffusion literature.

Second, China could be an actor of authoritarian diffusion as, similarly to Russia, it became a major economic power that has the ability of influence the international system. Its position of global economic power has been confirmed by international economic institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, who described China as having “the fastest sustained expansion by a major economy in history”, leading to a drastic decrease in the poverty rate from 66% in the 1990 to 0.7% in 2015 and lifting more than 750 million people out of poverty (see Figure 10 from page 43; World Bank 2019). In 2014, China became the world’s largest economy on a purchasing power parity basis with an average GDP growth rate between 8-10% over the past 30 years (Chen et al. 2014, p. 3; Olivier 2014, p. 16). It was also the top producer based on the gross value of the industrial and agricultural outputs (Besada and O’Bright 2017, p. 657). Lastly, China is, as well, the largest holder of foreign reserves in the world, with value of over \$3 trillion

dollars, which translates into a share of over 13% of the US market at its disposal (Desjardins 2018; Babones 2018; Leong 2019).

Figure 10. The evolution of the poverty trend in China (Source: World Bank's Poverty and Equity database)



The rise of China as a global power has become a topic of interest for the International Relations scholars in the context of what some have viewed as the de-legitimation of the liberal-democratic norms at international level. According to the hegemonic shocks' theory, institutional reforms are affected by the changes in international norms due to the relative distribution of power across actors at global level (Gunitsky 2014). Specifically, the diffusion of democracy in waves is considered to be a product of the successful performance of Western democratic regimes, throughout the 20th Century, which led to the legitimation of democracy as an international norm. More recently, scholars, such as Öniş (2017) have described the current democratic recession trend as being part of a crisis of de-legitimation of the liberal-democratic norms at international level. The continuous decrease in levels of liberal-democracy across the globe, together with the problems in economic recovery after the financial crisis and the military engagements of the West in the Middle East; all these are believed to have contributed to the erosion of the status of the liberal-democracy as an international norm. At the same time, the alternative authoritarian norms are considered to have gained more prestige over the past years, in particular, the Beijing consensus model which has been perceived as a challenger to the dominance of the liberal-democratic norms (Chou et al. 2017; Öniş 2017; Ambrosio 2018). Thus, if we are currently witnessing a hegemonic shock, this means there is a change in the balance of power, at the international level, as authoritarian powers are extending their influence which may result in authoritarian models slowly becoming legitimate international norms.

In addition to its major power position, China represents an interesting case for the authoritarian diffusion literature as it embodies a particular model of authoritarian governance. Although both China and Russia are authoritarian regimes, they share fundamental differences¹⁶ which has led scholars to acknowledge the need to investigate each authoritarian regime individually (Koesel and Bunce 2013; von Soest 2015; Tosun and Croissant 2016). Compared to Russia which is known for its aggressive promotion of authoritarian practices (Babayan 2015), China uses subtle and business-like foreign policy strategies to engage internationally (Gill and Reilly 2007; Melnykovska et al. 2012; Koesel and Bunce 2013; Chou et al. 2017; Öniş 2017). These are articulated around the principles of non-intervention and mutual benefit, meaning that China has renounced its missionary intention of spreading the communist revolution and, instead acts as a counter to the hegemonic tendencies of the West¹⁷ (Taylor 2007; Luce 2017; O'Brien 2017).

Thus, in light of this foreign policy philosophy, China has sought to be perceived as major power that has no interest in interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. Scholars, such as Tolstrup (2015b), have argued that external actors' actions can be characterized by different degrees intentionality. For example, Russia has always been a typical example of an autocracy promoter that deliberately sought to impact on the internal policies of neighbourhood countries. It has acted as a "black knight" by interfering in the electoral process from Ukraine (2004), Belarus (2006) and Moldova (2005 and 2009) (Tolstrup 2015a). Still, although the scholarship has argued that China might also act as "black knight" whenever the promotion of democracy in its proximity dangerously questions the legitimacy of the Communist Party rule, there is a general consensus across scholars regarding the indirect and soft power type of strategies, particularly, employed by China against the contagion of liberal-democratic norms (Gill and Reilly 2007; Melnykovska et al. 2012; Koesel and Bunce 2013; Chou et al. 2017; Öniş 2017; Sharshenova and Crawford 2017).

So far, the studies that have investigated the role of China in the context of the diffusion theory have looked at the strategies used by Chinese government to

¹⁶ I will discuss the particularities of the China model in the Theory section of Paper 1 (pages 75-77).

¹⁷ An in-depth discussion of Chinese foreign policy will be included in the next section (pages 49-51).

anticipate and prevent the promotion of democratic norms and practices in its proximity (e.g. Central Asia) and internally, across its territories (Wilson 2009; Koesel and Bunce 2013; Hackenesch 2015; Omelicheva 2015; Way 2016; Sharshenova and Crawford 2017; Vanderhill 2017; Wong 2019).

On the one hand, scholars discussed the different types of techniques used by China to deter democratic pressure at home and abroad. According to Vanderhill (2017), there are two types of “firewalls” employed by China: censorship on the media/internet and limited access to foreign websites to avoid public contestations; and the use of an “alternative narrative” presenting its own understanding of the democratic regime as one which will be gradually implemented by the Central Communist Party (with focus on economic and social performance and not on civil and political rights). Externally, Sharshenova and Crawford (2017) argue that China uses indirect strategies to undermine the democratic promotion efforts of the West in the Central Asia, such as: offering untied aid, providing an example of alternative model of stable and economically successful authoritarianism, ensuring security and stability in the region through the institutional framework of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation.

On the other hand, scholars have shared doubts regarding the potential real impact of these strategies employed by China. Wong (2019), for example, claims that the economic linkages with either the US or China had a minimal impact on the process of regime change in Myanmar and Thailand, as this was more likely to be affected by internal reforms. Others, such as Melnykovska et al. (2012), found, empirically, that the Chinese business-type of engagement is unexpectedly enhancing democratic governance in Central Asia, but they do not provide any potential explanation for such results. In general, while comparing the impact of threats in the proximity (Myanmar) and internally (Hong Kong), Chen and Kinzelbach (2015) claims that China is more reactive towards democratic pressure that might lead to internal contestation of the regime and threaten the survival of the Communist Party. Also, compared to the democratic promotion models of the West that are neither addressing nor adapting to the local cultural and political needs, the authoritarian models embodied by China and Russia are seen as more compatible with the interests of the Central Asia countries (Omelicheva 2015). In general, these studies are part of the first strand of the authoritarian diffusion

literature by investigating the role of China in preventing democratization spill over while fewer studies have looked at China in the context of the second strand, as an external actor that diffuses its authoritarian practices across different regime types. As previously mentioned, this research will contribute to the latter direction of study from the authoritarian diffusion scholarship by investigating whether Chinese economic linkages with the developing democratic world can lead to a diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices.

There are two papers that are particularly close to the aim of this research. First, Hackenesch (2015), while looking at the economic linkages between China and autocracies from Africa, argues that the presence of China in Ethiopia and Angola is not more relevant in deterring the US and EU attempts to promote democracy in these countries than the domestic factors, such as the consolidation of government strength in the absence of a strong internal contestation. This study is similar to my research as it is an attempt to study the political impact of China in Africa, but it is different from mine as it has a reduced sample of Sub-Saharan African countries (2) and it looks at authoritarian diffusion across the same type of regime (autocracies) while this research will investigate the process of diffusion across different regime types (from autocracy to developing democracies).

The second study is Chou et al. (2017) that discusses the potential appeal of the Chinese and Singaporean authoritarian models to citizens from a developed and consolidated democracy, Australia. They analyse the available polls on attitudes towards democracy and argue that there is no indication, based on these polls, that the decrease in support for liberal-democracy experienced in Australia, could be due to a preference for these alternative authoritarian models. This study is similar to my research as it looks at diffusion across different types of regime (from an autocracy to a democracy), but it is different from mine as it samples a developed and consolidated democracy which constitutes an extremely hard test for the diffusion theory. Moreover, Chou et al. (2017) is different from my research as it investigates the diffusion process at the individual level by assessing existing survey polls, while my research tests the diffusion process, following a multi-level approach and looking at both individual and institutional level (see Overview of this research, pages 62-64).

Overall, these two studies represent two important attempts in extending the study of authoritarian diffusion towards understanding the impact of economic linkages between developing democracies (Sub-Saharan Africa) and authoritarian powers (China), which represents, at this point, an under-researched topic. Such an investigation is, particularly, relevant as Chinese economic engagement in Sub-Saharan African countries has been linked by some scholars to a growth performance in the region (Samy 2010; Baliaoune-Lutz 2011; Whalley and Weisbrod 2012; He 2013; Sindzingre 2016).

The results of the Afrobarometer survey data round 6 (2014-2015), presented in Figures 11-14, pages 47-8, indicate that there is a general positive perception of the population regarding the economic and political influence of China in their country (65%) and the Chinese assistance in meeting the countries' needs (56.7%) while 42.2% of the respondents acknowledge that China has a lot of influence on the economy of their countries. This descriptive data confirms the argument of Mattes and Bratton (2007), that the citizens of Sub-Saharan African countries are characterized by realism and pragmatism as they are able to assess the degree of the Chinese engagement in their country and appreciate the importance of the Chinese investments. In support of the last point, Figure 12 shows that almost 50% of the respondents indicate that the Chinese investments (targeting the local infrastructure and business related) are the main factors influencing the positive view of the China in Sub-Saharan African countries.

Figure 11. The average public perception of China's economic and political influence in 30 Sub-Saharan African countries (Source: Afrobarometer, round 6)

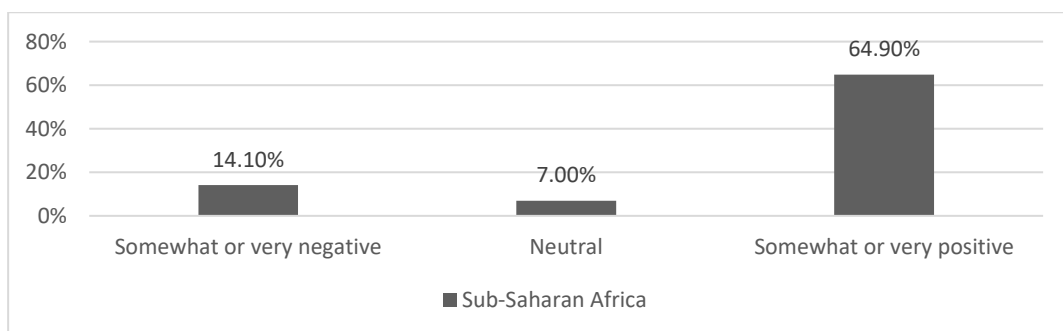


Figure 12. The average public perception regarding the China's assistance does a good job at meeting the needs of 30 Sub-Saharan African countries (Afrobarometer, round 6)

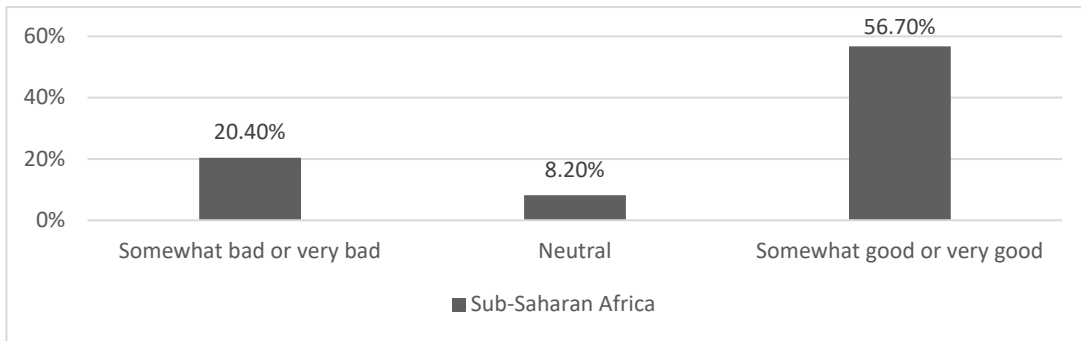


Figure 13. The average public perception on the China's influence on the economy of 30 Sub-Saharan African countries (Source: Afrobarometer, round 6)

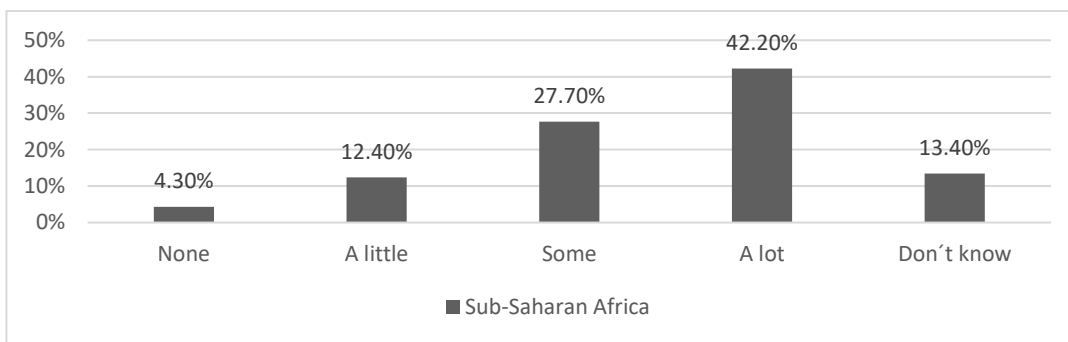
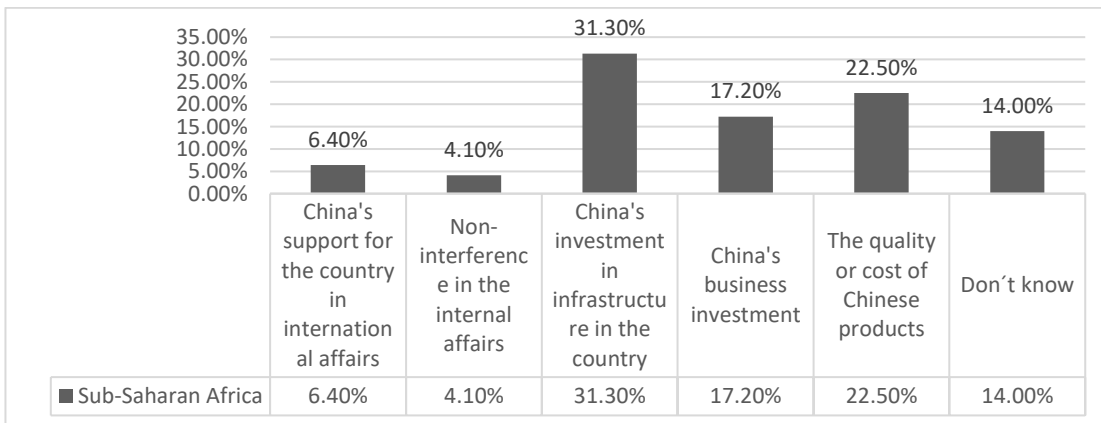


Figure 14. The average public perception on the factors contributing to the positive image of China in 30 Sub-Saharan African countries (Source: Afrobarometer, round 6)



To conclude, China represent a major power whose dramatic economic growth has shown that authoritarian regimes can economically perform without political liberalization. At the same time, China is also an important actor of authoritarian diffusion that embodies a specific model of authoritarian governance and employs indirect types of strategies to achieve its foreign policy interest. So far, Russia has been the main focus of the authoritarian diffusion literature, while the studies that have looked at China have investigated its role in preventing the spread of democracy in its proximity. Still, less interest has been given to the study of the

implications of Chinese economic linkages with developing democracies, in the context in which China's external economic engagement has significantly expanded geographically and in terms of quantity. The next section will look into more details at the features of the Chinese foreign policy.

b) Characteristics of the Chinese foreign policy

Chinese foreign policy has attracted a lot of scholarly attention, especially since China has become an important player at the global level and a challenger of the status quo of the international regime established by Western democratic powers after the Second World War. Since 1950, China has articulated its foreign policy under the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence which promoted “mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence” (MFA 2014). This means that the foreign Chinese economic engagements are not tied to a specific political performance of the recipient country and thus, become an alternative to the political conditionalities used by the Western developed countries to economically engage with developing countries. Scholars have argued that the “no political strings attached” policy is, especially, attractive for countries that have struggled to meet the political conditionalities of the West, by giving access to untied Chinese finance (e.g. aid, investments) in generous amounts (Breslin 2013; Sharshenova and Crawford 2017).

Additionally, the Chinese government has promoted the “go-out policy” to encourage Chinese businesses to invest and extend their economic activity outside China. The main purpose of this policy was to find additional sources of natural resources needed in order to support the high growth Chinese economy in a longer term (Olivier 2014). Since 1993, China switched from being an exporter to being one of the world's largest importers of resources (Besada and O'Bright 2017). The combination of “no-strings attached” and “go-out” policies are believed to be responsible for the dramatic increase in the Chinese economic engagement across the globe, but particularly in developing areas, such as Africa and Latin America. While the Chinese economic engagements have been widely and warmly welcomed by developing countries (Sharshenova and Crawford 2017; Hodzi 2018), Western developed democracies perceived them with mistrust as they constitute a

dangerous competition that might lead to a displacement of the Western foreign engagement.

Another characteristic of the Chinese foreign policy is the focus on the South-South cooperation and the promotion of multilateralism in international politics. According to Taylor (2007), these policies follow the *anti-hegemon* philosophy, meaning that China is looking to develop links with developing countries so as to prevent the Western hegemonic powers from further extending their influence in these regions. The reasoning behind the South-South cooperation is that China shares the same common memory, with the South countries, of suffering from the colonizing actions of the Western democracies. Based on this logic, the southern countries, together with China, have a common goal of developing and prospering without replicating the previous experience and without the interference of the Western powers (Taylor 2007; Mohan and Power 2008).

South-South cooperation also involves the endorsement of multilateral politics as a counter to the supremacy of the Western democracies across the globe. The promotion of multilateralism in international relations involves the creation of regional organizations (e.g. FOCAC in Sub-Saharan Africa, SCO and AIIB in Asia and “16+1” in Central and Eastern Europe, CCF in Latin America) and international platforms of cooperation (e.g. OBOR) (Holslag 2011; Breslin 2013; Jakóbowski 2018; Turcsányi and Qiaoan 2019). These initiatives represent institutionalized frameworks through which China is promoting its foreign policy principles and creates a constant dialogue with the countries from the region. This type of interaction is useful for the Chinese government to get the information needed in order to adapt its approach towards the needs and interests of each actor from the region (Holslag 2011).

Scholars, such as Besada and O’Bright (2017), have argued that Sub-Saharan Africa became a highly attractive economic partner for China in the context of the increasing tensions from the Middle East region. Moreover, one of the factors that have facilitated the significant and fast increase in the Chinese economic engagement in Sub-Saharan African countries is that Sino-African cooperation is believed to be characterized by a complementarity of the individual interests of the actors involved: on the one hand, Sub-Saharan African countries have access to natural resources that China needs while, on the other hand, China provides

generous amounts of finance, in various forms (e.g. trade, FDI and aid) which Sub-Saharan African governments can easily access as they come without political conditionalities (Olivier 2014; Besada and O'Bright 2017).

Lastly, another feature of the Chinese foreign policy is the promotion of *One China* policy (Broich and Szirmai 2014). It dates back the Cold War period when both China and Taiwan sought to achieve international recognition as being the official representative of the Chinese people. At that time, the Western countries temporarily admitted Taiwan in the UN and, thus, disregarded the communist government from Beijing, which perceived this act as an attempt at imposing their global dominance. Although, in the meanwhile China gained a place in the Security Council of the UN and achieved extended global recognition which drastically limited the number of countries still recognizing the independence of Taiwan, the Chinese government continues to expect, from all partner countries, an official acknowledgement that China is the only representative political body of the Chinese people.

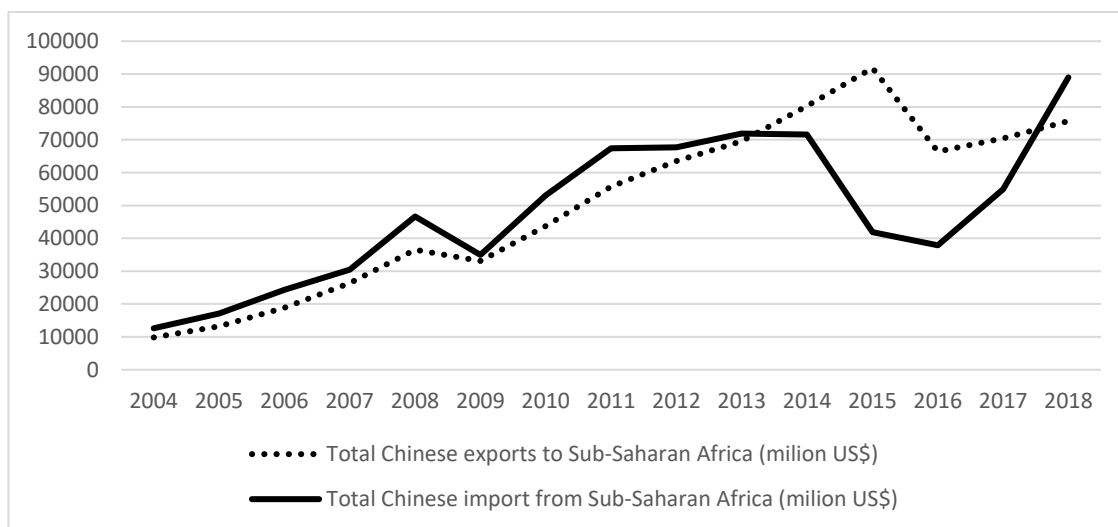
In conclusion, China has developed a unique foreign policy, based on its own experience as a developing country and meant to address the shortcomings of the Western foreign engagements. By promoting non-interference in internal affairs, China aims to present itself as an external actor that has no desire to meddle in the internal politics of other countries while expecting similar behaviour from its counterparts. For this reason, we might consider China to be a potential example of a non-intentional actor of diffusion, especially in the situations that do not pose any danger to the survival and internal authority of the Chinese Communist Party. Moreover, its increasing external economic engagement, which has led to the establishment of economic linkages with different regions and countries across the world, enables us to question whether or not China is diffusing its practices at a distance.

Through its different approach to global politics, China could become an alternative to the supremacy of the liberal-democracy, but its foreign engagement has attracted both critics and supporters. The following section of this chapter will go into more details about the debate regarding the determinants and implications of the Sino-African cooperation.

c) China in Africa debate

China's successful story in poverty reduction could represent an example of an alternative model showing that economic development is possible without political liberalization. Instead, the Chinese government has shown adaptability in implementing reforms towards economic liberalization, in a top-down manner by the political elites which are carefully selected based on loyalty and performance-based recruitment. Through the China model, China has managed to drastically reduce its poverty rate from 88% in 1981 to 6.5% in 2012 (Wu 2016a; World Bank 2018). Following these internal achievements, China has quickly gained an international reputation for becoming a world economic power in just a few decades while preserving its authoritarian regime. At international level, China sought to inspire and assist other developing countries in finding their own road toward development, and, for this reason, it promoted the South-South cooperation initiative. The Chinese engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa is definitely older than the South-South policy direction, but it has been revigorated and substantially increased under this framework. According World Bank (2017) report, China became the top trade partner for Sub-Saharan African countries, by surpassing the former colonial powers. Specifically, according to Figure 15 below, the level of the Chinese exports to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2015 was 7 times the value of 2004 while the Chinese imports from Sub-Saharan Africa increased more than 700% between 2004-2018.

Figure 15. Total value of trade flows between China and Sub-Saharan Africa (Source: SAIS-CARI)



The increasing economic engagement of China in Sub-Saharan Africa has raised concerns regarding the profile of the African partners of China or whether the China economic engagement is particularly strong in countries that have experienced democratic rollback at either, or both institutional and individual levels. In Paper 3, Endogeneity section (pages 227-230), I argue that there are no reasons to believe that Chinese trade engagements in Africa are driven by the regime type and support this claim with an in-depth discussion of the previous findings in the literature, descriptive data and statistical models. First, I discuss the findings of the scholarship that has analysed the factors influencing the Chinese economic engagement in Africa and conclude that they are mostly economic (e.g. resources, market potential) and not regime related (Sanfilippo 2010; Chen et al. 2016; Broich 2017; Mourao 2018). I also plot the average level of Chinese trade engagement by the performance of democratic institutions (average Polity2 score and FH inverted scores) and based on Figure 70-73, pages 228-229, I observed that the top trade partners of the Chinese government in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to be anocracies, according to Polity, which are classified as being Partially Free by the Freedom House. Last, I address the reverse causality concerns by testing the impact of levels of democracy on Chinese trade (see Table 50, page 224) and found no significant effect in this regard.

Additionally, I use highlight tables to evaluate the evolution of popular support for and levels of democracy in the countries with the highest amounts of Chinese trade¹⁸. I express Chinese imports and exports as percentage of the recipient's country GDP constant 2010¹⁹ as this accounts for the importance of the Chinese trade engagement for the local economy. According to Table 75-76, from page 276-279, the top ten countries from which China imports are Congo (16.1% of GDP), Angola (12.6% of GDP), Mauritania (9.8% of GDP), Equatorial Guinea (7.5% of GDP), Sierra Leone (4.6% of GDP), Gabon (4.3% of GDP), Zambia (4.2% of GDP), Dem. Rep. of the Congo (4% of GDP), Sudan (3.3% of GDP) and Liberia (3% of GDP). Also, the top 10 countries to which China exports: Liberia (69% of GDP), Togo (25% of GDP), Gambia (18.7% of GDP), Benin (17.5% of GDP), Mauritania (4.9% of GDP),

¹⁸ As discussed on page 40, not all the Sub-Saharan African countries are covered in Afrobarometer.

¹⁹ This is the way I measure the independent variable in Paper 3

Guinea (4.6% of GDP), Ghana (4.2% of GDP), Mozambique (3.6% of GDP), Madagascar (3.4% of GDP), and Ethiopia (3.3% of GDP).

Table 4. The evolution of mean FH PR and CL by the top countries with highest Chinese imports

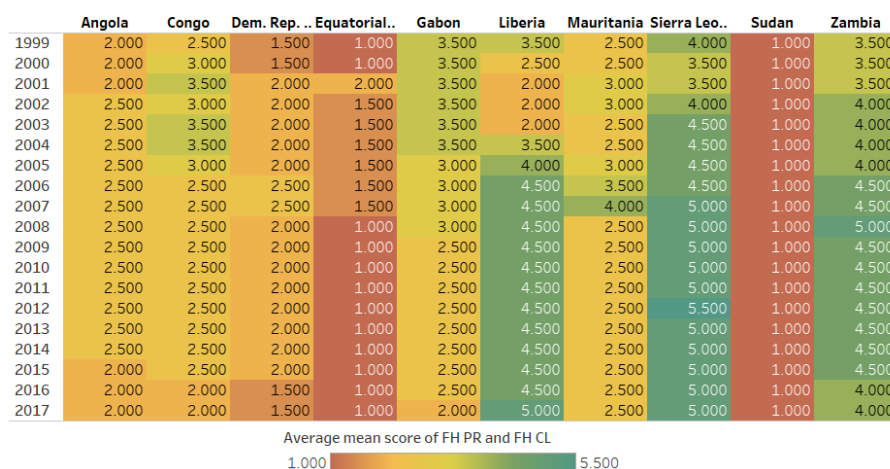


Table 5. The evolution of mean support for democracy in the top countries with highest Chinese imports

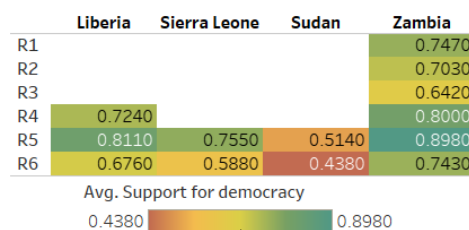


Table 6. The evolution of mean FH PR and CL by the top countries with highest Chinese exports

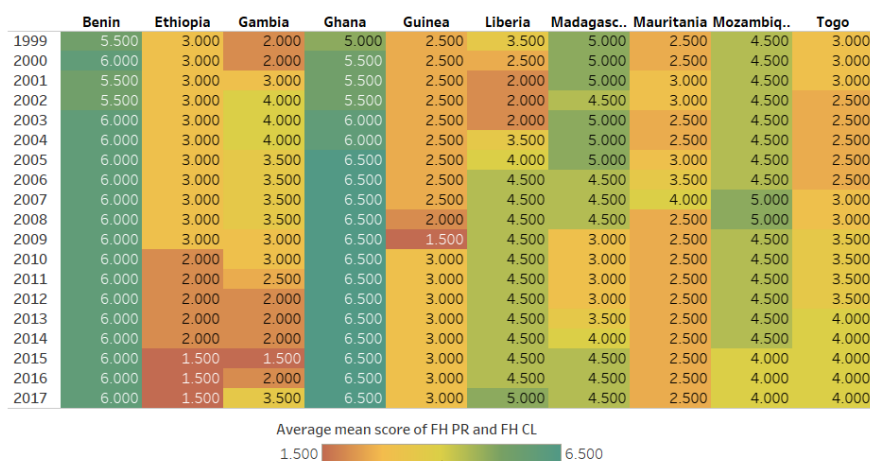
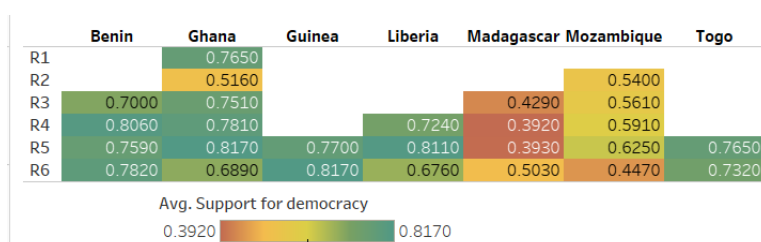


Table 7. The evolution of mean support for democracy in the top countries with highest Chinese exports



Looking at Tables 4-7 page 54, we notice that there is an evident variation across time and levels, such as institutional performance and individual support for democracy. For example, across the countries with the highest Chinese imports, we observe cases that, in terms of average FH PR and CL, have experienced decrease (Gabon, from 3.5 in 1999 to 2 in 2017; Congo, from 3.5 in 2001 to 2 in 2017), increased (Sierra Leone, from 3.5 in 2000 to 5 in 2017; Liberia, from 2 in 2001 to 5 in 2017) and oscillations (Angola had an small increase to 2.5 in 2002 and a decrease to 2 in 2015, Democratic Republic of Congo's average score grew with 1 point between 2000 and 2006 and then it declined back to 1.5 in 2016).

Out of the 10 countries from which China imports, only four are covered in the Afrobarometer and all of them have experienced a recent decrease in popular support for democracy (between Round 5 and Round 6). Table 6 shows that similar diverse trends across the countries to which China exports, but generally speaking, these countries have a better overall democratic performance (2 Free, 5 Partially Free and 3 Not Free in 2017) than those from which China imports (3 Partially Free and 7 in 2017)²⁰. In terms of democratic support, more export countries are covered in the Afrobarometer (7 compared to 4 in the case of the import countries) and the majority of these countries have experienced oscillations throughout the different rounds and from Round 5, 3 experienced an increase (Benin, Guinea and Madagascar) and four had a decrease.

The increasing engagement of China in Africa has become a topic of interest for many political scientists and analysts. The literature has focused on understanding and explaining the determinants and implications of this relationship. At this stage, the China in Africa literature is characterized by a high polarization between the critics and supporters of Chinese activities in Africa.

First, scholars have looked to understand the economic and political determinants of Chinese engagement in Africa. On the one hand, Biggeri and Sanfilippo (2009) and Mao and Tang (2016) found that access to raw natural resources and market potential are two economic factors that attract the Chinese engagement in Africa. But, this resource-oriented engagement is not a new practice nor is it specific to China; considering that it was also used by Western countries to

²⁰ Freedom categories with reverse scores: Free (5.5 to 7), Partially Free (3 to 5) and Not Free (1-2.5).

engage with the countries from the region. Also, as discussed in the previous section, the resource-seeking is an important feature of the Chinese foreign policy, pursued in order to support the continuous growth performance of the Chinese economy. This has determined the Western media and political leaders, such as the German politician Guenter Nooke and the former US Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and Rex Tillerson, to accuse China of neo-colonializing Africa by providing suspect investments that undermine good governance, using land grabbing practices, not employing locals and joining the new *scramble for Africa* (Frynas and Paulo 2006; Melber 2008; Reuters 2011; Downie 2011; Atwood 2018; Powanga and Giner-Reichl 2019). Still, renowned African experts, such as Deborah Bräutigam, have rebutted these claims, arguing that existing data and field research indicate that more than 75% of the workers employed by Chinese companies are locals, the amount of Chinese investment in Africa is exaggerated and the Chinese loans “generally have comparatively low interest rates and long repayment periods” (Bräutigam 2018).

On the other hand, the political determinants of Chinese engagement in Africa refer, in particular, to the promotion of *One China policy* and UN voting alignment (Broich and Szirmai 2014; Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Broich 2017; Dreher et al. 2018). For example, Fuchs and Dreher (2015) and Dreher et al. (2018) argue that both these factors are important in explaining the distribution of the China aid: while the recognition of Taiwan leads to a decrease in the amount of Chinese aid received, voting in line with the Chinese foreign policy interest at the UN has a strong and positive impact on the share of China aid. Similarly, Broich (2017) finds that the non-recognition of Taiwan is a strong determinant of the Chinese official finance.

Second, another strand of the scholarship (Lee 2009; Biggeri and Sanfilippo 2009; Balamoune-Lutz 2011; Whalley and Weisbrod 2012; Bräutigam and Xiaoyang 2011) has been interested in exploring the implications of the increasing Chinese engagements in Africa. Several scholars (Balamoune-Lutz 2011; Whalley and Weisbrod 2012; He 2013; Borojo and Jiang 2016) have argued that the Chinese economic cooperation (particularly trade and investments) with Sub-Saharan African countries is contributing to local growth and development. For example, Balamoune-Lutz (2011) finds a positive and significant effect of the African exports

of a single commodity to China, on national levels of growth in African countries. Additionally, He (2013) argued that the positive effect of imports from China is higher than the impact of engagement with Western countries, such as France and the US. Likewise, Whalley and Weisbrod (2012) observed that the contribution of Chinese investments to growth in Sub Saharan Africa varies between 0.01% in Botswana, Ghana and Kenya to 1.01% in Zambia. Although they recognized that Chinese economic activities have a substantial merit in reducing the levels of unemployment and poverty, scholars have also warned about the possibility of creating a relationship of dependence between China and African countries (Carmody et al. 2012).

Other scholars (e.g. Tull 2006; Haglund 2008; Carmody et al. 2012; Ovadia 2013; Ubi 2014) have looked at the political impact of Chinese engagement with African states. While some scholars have warned about the negative consequences of the increasing Chinese engagement in Africa, such as the delay of democratic reform (Tull 2006), and weak institutions (Haglund 2008; Ovadia 2013); others have indicated that the Sino-African relationship can be beneficial under certain conditions, like the development of institutional capacities (Ubi 2014). Tull (2006), for example, has argued that African leaders will be too focused on attracting Chinese investments rather than concentrating on the safeguarding of democratic values and peace building efforts. Additionally, Haglund (2008) insisted that the incompatibility between the Chinese business characteristics and the regulation environment from Zambia can have a negative effect because of the limited capacities of the Zambian institutions to provide oversight of the Chinese activities. But, probably the most significant criticism against the Chinese engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa is that it props up dictators across Sub-Saharan African countries. Still, the scholarship has yet to provide empirical support for such strong claims as, so far, the preliminary results show mixed and inconclusive results. For example, Bader (2015, pp. 664, 667) argues that the “Chinese economic cooperation seems to be less conducive to authoritarian persistence than expected” as increased economic engagement with China is found to lead to higher stability of the party-based regime but, at the same time, it destabilizes the non-party based systems if the amounts received account for up to 0.2% of the recipient’s GDP.

In conclusion, the China in Africa literature is characterized by a polarized debate between the supporters and critics of the Chinese engagement in Africa. The study of the political impact of the Sino-African cooperation is characterized by numerous arguments, but the majority of them have not been tested empirically. This research will contribute to the China in Africa literature by assessing whether the Chinese economic engagement in Sub-Saharan African states is affecting the political attitudes of the African citizens and the quality of the liberal-democratic institutions by diffusing its authoritarian practices which have been proven to be economically successful as part of the Chinese model. In particular, it extends the study of the political implications of the Chinese economic engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa by adopting a multilevel approach and looking at both individual and institutional levels. Then, it disaggregates the Chinese economic engagement into trade flows and aid projects, in order to capture the complexity of China's foreign engagement in Africa. The overall contribution of the thesis to the literature on China in Africa is also empirical as the scholarship offers a rich theoretical debate which has advanced multiple theories meant to explain the implications Sino-African economic relationship, but which has been characterized by limited empirical investigations.

Overview of this research

a) Argument

This research investigates the impact of the Chinese economic engagement on levels and support for democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. It will first contribute to the authoritarian diffusion literature by studying the role of China as an actor of diffusion in the context of its engagement in Africa. To my knowledge, there is no empirical study that has systematically investigated the process of authoritarian diffusion by looking at China's increasing economic presence in Africa. It will also contribute to the authoritarian diffusion literature by testing whether diffusion can happen at a distance as this allows us to isolate economic linkages from other types of linkages (e.g. cultural). At the same, it will add to the literature on China in Africa by investigating empirically the political implications of Chinese economic engagement, which will be measured in a disaggregated manner as Chinese trade flows and aid projects.

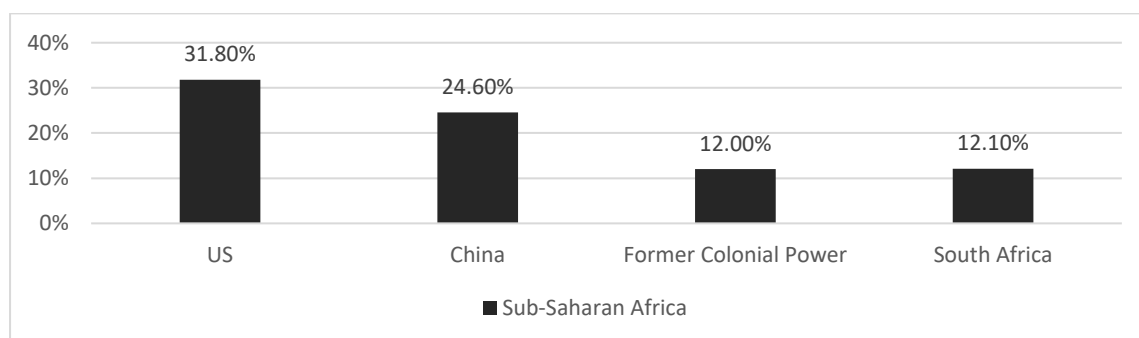
This research argues that Chinese economic engagement in Sub-Saharan African countries could represent an example of diffusion of alternative authoritarian models of development. Scholars, such as Gat (2007), Walker (2016), Foa and Mounk (2016), Plattner (2017), Walker (2016) and Diamond (2008, 2015) have emphasized that the democratic recession trend should be understood in the context of the rise of authoritarian regimes (e.g. China and Russia) as they represent a challenge for the liberal-democratic world by providing an alternative model of economic development. The rise of authoritarian powers has challenged the old conceptions that only democracies can achieve economic development, while scholars have shared concerns regarding the fact that these autocracies could present their alternative development models to the developing countries struggling with consolidating their economies and political regimes (Gat 2007; Diamond 2008, 2015; Plattner 2017). From an International Relations perspective, this could translate into a hegemonic shock as liberal-democracy is seen as an eroding international norm while the authoritarian models are gaining more international prestige and legitimacy.

On the one hand, these authoritarian models could be appealing to political elites from the developing countries due to their achievement of being economically performant without having to transition to a liberal-democracy (Lange 2010; Cooley 2015). Scholars, such as Hodzi (2018), have emphasized on the agency of the African elites in the development of the Sino-African cooperation. Particularly, the elites from Sub-Saharan African countries are considered to be responsible for the increase in the Chinese economic engagement in Sub-Saharan African countries, while acting as rational actors by using these Chinese finances to consolidate their internal political position. This is relevant in the context in which Tolstrup (2013) has argued about the important role of elites as gatekeepers in the diffusion process by mediating the linkages between their country and external actors. Thus, as the Chinese economic engagement comes with “no strings” attached, it might appeal to African countries’ elites who might adopt the Chinese authoritarian practices in return for access to new economic resources. Moreover, the increasing global prestige of China might represent another incentive for the politicians from Sub-Saharan African countries to adopt the Chinese practices that are considered to be

linked to the dramatic transformation of China, from one of the poorest countries in a global economic power in just a few decades.

On the other hand, the public from the developing democracies could show willingness to explore these alternative models if the current democratic regimes are underperforming (Diamond 2008). According to a recent Afrobarometer survey round data (Figure 16), the citizens of the Sub-Saharan African countries see China as the second-best model of development (24.6%) that their country should follow, although the appeal of the West still remain substantial (31.8%). In the context of the increasing number of Chinese finance projects across Sub-Saharan African countries, we might expect to see authoritarian diffusion happen at the individual level through the mechanism of demonstration. The implementation of the Chinese projects constitute real-life examples of how the China model works in practice. Then, the diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices might also happen through a learning mechanism as citizens from Sub-Saharan African countries learn about the features of the China model which contributed to its high growth performance. This might further erode their support for democracy, especially, in the context of increasing dissatisfaction with the economic performance of democratic institutions in their home countries.

Figure 16. The average public perception regarding the best model of development for the Sub-Saharan African countries' needs (Afrobarometer, round 6)



Scholars such as Fukuyama (2015), argued that underperforming democracies are an issue in the context in which some authoritarian countries, such as China and Singapore, are perceived to be receptive to the economic needs of their people while, at the same time, embodying alternative authoritarian models of government. Also, these authoritarian models are seen to be more politically stable and durable, according to the recent studies in the literature (Köllner and Kailitz 2013). Other scholars, such as Gat (2007) consider China to present an economically

efficient type of authoritarian regime by exemplifying a successful implementation of neo-liberal economic policies by a centralized government.

Another reason for why developing areas, such as the Sub-Saharan Africa could be susceptible to the appeal of the authoritarian models is that these countries have already experienced successive failures in development policy and reducing poverty. While being under the influence of the Western democracies, the Sub-Saharan African governments followed the policy recommendations known as the Washington Consensus, which implied: economic and political liberalization, and especially, a relative quick transition to democratic regime (compared to the experience of their mentors, the Western developed democracies). Additionally, in order to become recipients of aid and investments from the West, these countries were required to demonstrate a good performance of the liberal-democratic institutions. But, instead of strengthening their national economies, Western aid created a dependency relationship between Sub-Saharan African states newly transitioned democracies and their Western donors. The scholarship has called this period (1970-80) as the lost decade for the development of Sub-Saharan Africa and rooted their poor performance of the 1990s in the dysfunctionalities of the Washington Consensus model (Van de Walle 2001; Carmody 2007; Bracking 2007).

Overall, scholars have argued that as the international prestige of authoritarian powers is increasing and the democratic norms are in decay, authoritarian models became viable and legitimate alternatives (Hall and Ambrosio 2017). In addition, Western democracies and the international/regional organizations founded by them are known to prioritize democracy promotion as an important point on their foreign policy agenda (Kapstein and Converse 2008; Grimm 2015), but it has been argued that due to lack of consensus, their promotion actions became fragmented and uncoordinated, ultimately, making way for the authoritarian powers' engagement across the world. This research investigates whether authoritarian powers, such as China, diffuse their authoritarian practices through their increasing economic linkages with the developing world. In the context of increasing Chinese economic engagement with Sub-Saharan African countries, we might witness a process of authoritarian diffusion happening at the institutional level, impacting on levels of the democracy due to the increasing prestige of the Chinese institutions and norms and, at the individual level, affecting

peoples' attitudes towards liberal-democracy through real life demonstrations of how China works in practice as well as a learning process about the Chinese practices that are linked to the high growth performance of the China model. The following section gives a detailed discussion of the measurements and operationalization of the variables of interest for this research.

b) Dependent and independent variables

In terms of methodology, this research contributes to the authoritarian diffusion literature by adopting a multi-level approach in capturing the variables of interest and the relationship between them. Scholars such as Elkins (2003, 2011) and Burnell and Schlumberger (2010) have argued about the importance of looking at two levels (elite and mass) and assess at what level diffusion is happening. By studying the process of diffusion at two levels, this research provides a more complex picture on the process and could help evaluate at what level does diffusion occurs, considering that previous research found that under certain circumstances, either the general public or the elite can be influenced by the diffusion process. Moreover, scholars have argued that the study of the democratic recession phenomenon, although has grown over the years, this has also translated into a fragmented literature (Jee et al. 2019; Tomini and Wagemann 2018; Cassani and Tomini 2018). This fragmentation is observed at the levels of measurement and operationalization, as scholars have employed a diversity of measurements to account for democratic backsliding at either the institutional or the individual level. This research will address this issue by employing multiple complementary measurement of the dependent variable and in this way assess, not only at what level, but also what aspect of liberal-democracy is found to be affected by the diffusion process.

First, I capture democratic recession at the institutional level through levels of liberal-democracy and at the individual level through support for liberal-democracy. At institutional level, I use the different measurements of levels of liberal-democracy available, such as Polity, V-Dem, Freedom House and Cheibub et al. (2009, 2010)'s Democracy and Dictatorship. Although these measurements tend to be highly correlated statistically, they reflect an assessment of the quality of certain liberal and democratic practices. Briefly, this means that they are not perfect

synonyms, but instead they complement each other. A similar argument was made by Waldner and Lust (2018) who argued that the different existing measurements of regime change that should not be used interchangeably in research. At the individual level, I avoid using abstract typical questions that ask about people's support for democracy, but do not link the concept of democracy to specific aspects, such as liberal or democratic (Schedler and Sarsfield 2007). This choice is motivated by the fact that scholars have argued that such minimalist measures of support for liberal-democracy could lead to overreporting in democratic support (Inglehart 2003; Kiewiet de Jonge 2016). In this context, I create a unique complex measurement for people's attitudes towards liberal-democracy by aggregating their individual attitudes regarding different liberal and democratic aspects, following the existing models for measuring levels of liberal-democracy.

Second, the independent variable, Chinese economic engagement is also operationalized in a disaggregated way into Chinese trade flows and Chinese finance projects (aid). First, in Paper 1 which investigates the process of diffusion at the individual level, the independent variable is the number of Chinese financed projects located at three administrative levels and buffer areas (ADM1 or regional level, ADM2 or district, and 25km, 50km and 75km buffers) as well as distance from a Chinese project to the closest Afrobarometer cluster. These represent common ways of measuring the Chinese economic presence at the sub-national level (e.g. Kilama 2016; Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b). Then, in Paper 3 which looks at institutional level diffusion, the independent variable is trade flows, operationalized as imports from and exports to Sub-Saharan African countries. I use the dataset provided by SAIS China Africa Research Initiative as this research institute checks the data provided by the Chinese government in the China Statistical Yearbooks and compare it with the other official reports of the Sub-Saharan Africa countries to the U.N. Comtrade and UNCTAD. The independent variable is expressed as lagged Chinese imports and lagged Chinese exports measured as percentage of recipient country's GDP constant 2010 US\$. Due to issues with data quality and availability, I will not explore the impact of the Chinese FDI flows on levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries.

The disaggregation of the Chinese economic engagement into trade flows and aid projects is useful to capture the complexity of China's foreign engagement

in Africa, while, at the same time, acknowledging the complementarity between the different channels of the Chinese external economic engagement (Broich and Szirmai 2014; Lemi 2017). The different channels of economic cooperation are similar in terms of purpose as they represent ways through which China achieves its foreign policy interests (e.g. access to market and natural resources). Moreover, scholars, such as Biggeri and Sanfilippo (2009), have argued that these channels are interconnected and complement each other as they are part of the Chinese government's particularized strategy toward Sub-Saharan African countries. For example, Dong and Fan (2017) finds empirically that the Chinese imports of natural resources constitute an important and significant determinant of the increasing levels of Chinese overseas direct investments in the partner country. Moreover, the patterns of Chinese trade flows to Sub-Saharan African countries are considered to be influenced by China's high demand for natural resources. This led to a concentration of Chinese imports from these countries in a few categories of primary commodities while Chinese exports were composed mainly of manufactured goods (Biggeri and Sanfilippo 2009; Eisenman 2012). For example, Eisenman (2012, p. 806) argues that, in 2005, 90% of the Chinese imports from the region were *metals, minerals, wood, stones and textile*; while 80% of the exports from 2009 included "metal and petroleum products".

To sum up, this research adopts a multilevel approach which allows for a systematic investigation of the authoritarian diffusion process at the institutional and individual level. On the one hand, the dependent variable offers a complex view on the performance of liberal-democracy by measuring both levels of and support for democracy. On the other hand, the independent variable is the Chinese economic engagement that is also measured in two ways: Chinese trade links at the institutional level and Chinese aid projects at subnational level. In all, by disaggregating both the dependent and independent variables, the research aims to provide an in-depth, complex view on the process of authoritarian diffusion by finding what aspects are being diffused and at what level in the society diffusion might occur.

c) Outline of the thesis

The thesis is organized according to the “three papers” model meaning that it is composed of three separate papers, which are organized following a bottom-up perspective in regard to the dependent variable (starting with individual levels attitudes towards liberal-democracy and finishing with country levels of liberal-democracy).

The first paper investigates the process of authoritarian diffusion by testing the demonstration mechanism of diffusion at the individual level. It hypothesizes that the presence of Chinese financed projects might affect people’s attitudes towards liberal democracy by demonstrating authoritarian practices which have been proven to be economically successful as part of the Chinese development model. For the dependent variable, it uses survey data from Afrobarometer rounds 5 and 6 (with respondents from 28 Sub-Saharan African countries) to create a complex Liberal-Democracy composite using Bayesian factor analysis and Markov Chain Monte Carlo method with over 100 000 iterations. I combine this with geocoded data on the location of Chinese financed projects. Thus, the independent variable is measured in two ways: as distance from a Chinese project to the closest Afrobarometer cluster and, as the number of Chinese financed projects located at different buffer areas around the respondents’ cluster (25km, 50km and 75km), and 1st level and 2nd level administrative divisions.

Overall, the results of the multilevel models show no strong evidence for the hypothesis that diffusion is happening at the individual level. This claim is supported by the high percentage of non-significance for the proximity and counts coefficients (47% out of the total 72 models), the direction/significance of the effect changes across measurements and rounds, as well as, even when the expected significant effect is found, its magnitude is small. The additional analyses do not uncover any specific pattern that might explain these results.

The paper discusses several possible theoretical and empirical explanations for these results, such as the projects not clearly demonstrating the features of the China model, the labour practices presented by Chinese companies in Africa not being different from those of the West and, lastly, the nature of the data. First, I suggest that although there may be issues with the data, this dataset was used in peer-reviewed published papers (Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Kilama 2016; Dong and

Fan 2017; Kish and Raleigh 2016; Dreher et al. 2016, 2018; Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b). But, the increasing distance between Chinese government and the Chinese companies that are implementing aid projects abroad, leads to less information about China model being transmitted to the local population. Another potential explanation refers to the similarities in labour practices of Chinese and American companies active in Africa (Rounds and Huang 2017). This implies, again, that the process of the authoritarian diffusion of the Chinese practices might not happen as the information about the China model is not properly conveyed to the public from Sub-Saharan African states.

The second paper investigates the process of authoritarian diffusion at the individual level by testing the learning mechanism through a survey-experiment with a nationally representative sample of 400 Kenyan respondents. It tests whether learning about the Chinese model affects the respondents' attitudes towards different aspects of liberal-democracy. I find support for one of the hypotheses as having received the treatment with particular information about the features of the China model that contributed to the high growth economic performance, negatively effects the respondents' preference for choosing politicians through elections. Specifically, odds of choosing a score of 2 or higher (more democratic) versus a score of 1 (non-democratic) are more than 31% lower for the respondents from than treatment group than those in the control group. These results imply that the treatment group shows a higher preference than the control group for choosing the politicians through a performance-based appointment rather than through an electoral process. This indicates that what may be diffused is something Africans have not experienced yet, meritocracy. However, there is no evidence of diffusion on the other aspects of a liberal-democracy.

The paper discusses a range possible empirical and theoretical explanations that might explain the results: biases in the sample, potential issues with the treatment effect, country-level processes and the existence of cultural and information gaps. I, first, rule out the possible empirical issues regarding the sample or the treatment and, then, argue that cultural distance is the most reasonable argument as it captures the difficulty experienced by people in learning about new models, mainly due to existing cultural and informational gaps. In this context, the findings indicate that diffusion might not happen at a distance, as geographic

distance increases cultural distance too and makes learning harder. The paper contributes to our understanding of authoritarian diffusion in developing countries by providing the first test of the learning mechanism through an experimental design. It concludes that cultural distance between actors of diffusion may inhibit the learning process of authoritarian practices.

The third paper investigates the process of authoritarian diffusion at institutional level by testing whether higher levels of economic linkages (trade flows) are negatively affecting the levels of liberal-democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries. It argues that the Chinese authoritarian practices might be attractive to elites from Sub-Saharan African countries due to, first, the prestige of the Chinese model that achieved a high growth performance without political liberalization and, second, as Chinese economic engagement comes with no political strings attached, they might enable the African elites to revert to autocratic preferences and destabilize democratic institutions.

The results of the linear regression with AR(1) Prais-Winsten correction and panel-corrected standard errors (PCSE), as well as, the GLM models with logit link are not consistent throughout the different measurement of the dependent variable and the different model specifications. These findings are in-line with those from the previous two papers as they do not provide strong support in favour of the main hypothesis that a process of diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices is observed at the institutional level, due to increasing trade engagement.

The paper discusses three different theoretical and methodological possible explanations for the non-diffusion results. First, authoritarian diffusion might not be happening as although democratic regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa have encountered problems in the consolidation process, the democratic transition has managed successfully to create relatively robust institutions. The next possible explanation refers to potential data issue related to the use of Chinese trade data. Finally, another explanation for these non-diffusion results is that the appeal of the West is still strong in Sub-Saharan African region. Even if the Sino-African economic engagement has soured over the past decades, facilitated by the complementarity of the actors' economic interests, this might not sever the longstanding cultural and historical links that exists between Sub-Saharan Africa and the West. Thus, it might be too early to assume that the prestige of the China model is strong enough to

surpass that of the West. The paper adds to the literature of authoritarian diffusion by testing whether external actors can be influential across their border, based on the prestige of their performance and institutions.

Overall, this project contributes to our understanding of the diffusion of authoritarian practices in the developing world by providing a first test of whether China's increasing presence in Sub-Saharan Africa is leading to changing levels and attitudes towards liberal-democracy. It suggests that the democratic rollback currently experienced by the Sub-Saharan African countries might not be due to the economic linkages with authoritarian regimes. Geographical distance increases cultural distance and widens informational gaps, creating barriers to the diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices.

Paper 1: The impact of Chinese finance projects on public attitudes towards liberal democracy in Sub-Saharan African states

Abstract

China's economic engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa has increased drastically over the past decade which has raised questions about whether this may be affecting the public attitudes towards liberal democracy. These questions are especially relevant in the context in which China provides an alternative model of development to the Western liberal-democracy.

This paper asks: Is authoritarian diffusion happening at the individual level in Sub-Saharan African states? What is the impact of increased economic linkages with China on attitudes towards liberal democracy? The paper argues that the citizens of African countries might adopt the Chinese authoritarian attitudes and based on their real-life demonstration as part of the many Chinese finance projects across Sub-Saharan African countries.

It tests this argument by using survey data from 28 Sub-Saharan African countries combined with geocoded data on the location of Chinese financed projects. By exploiting sub-national variation in the location of Chinese projects, and hence respondents' exposure to them, it investigates whether proximity to and counts of Chinese financed projects affect public attitudes towards liberal democracy by diffusing authoritarian attitudes which have been proven to be economically successful as part of the Chinese development model. This hypothesis will be tested, using multilevel model specifications, such as Linear Mixed-Effects Models.

Overall, the results are mixed, indicating that there is no strong evidence that diffusion is happening. This paper extends the study of authoritarian diffusion, at the individual level, in developing countries by suggesting that geographical distance might lead to the creation informational gaps that act as barriers to the process of diffusion.

Introduction

In Africa, between 2011 and 2015, the overall support for democracy has decreased by 7%, while the preference for non-democratic alternatives (such as one-party regimes) has increased with almost 2% (Mattes and Bratton 2016, p. 14). Although these changes are modest, they coincide with a period when African regimes have remained unstable and fragile, with several episodes of democratic breakdown, such as electoral violence in Kenya, civil conflict in South Sudan and military intervention in Burkina Faso (Diamond 2015; Freedom House 2015a). Scholars, such as Diamond (2008, p. 37), have warned about the dangers represented by dissatisfied citizens who might “eventually lose faith and turn to authoritarian alternatives”, especially in a context where authoritarian powers, such as China are providing examples of alternative models of economically successful development (Ramo 2004; Li 2015). The recent results of the Afrobarometer survey data, round 6, have indicated that the demand for democracy in Africa is decreasing, as only 43% of African respondents can be considered committed democrats (Mattes and Bratton 2016, p. 19).

So far, the literature on support for democracy has focused on explaining the variation in democratic support by investigating the influence of either domestic variables (economic and political performance of institutions) (Fernandez and Kuenzi 2010; Andersen 2012) or socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. gender and education) (Shafiq 2010; Cho 2014). They have indicated that support for democracy is positively correlated with economic performance (Krieckhaus et al. 2014), but negatively with corruption (Anderson and Tverdova 2003). This paper will contribute to this literature by extending the study of external determinants and testing whether the presence of alternative authoritarian models matters.

This paper will try to answer the following questions: Is authoritarian diffusion happening in Sub-Saharan African states at the individual level? What is the impact of increased economic linkages with China on attitudes towards liberal democracy? These questions will be addressed by using survey data from Afrobarometer round 5 and 6 (with respondents from 28 Sub-Saharan African countries) combined with geocoded data on the location of Chinese financed projects. By exploiting sub-national variation in the location of Chinese projects, and hence respondents’ exposure to them, it will investigate whether proximity to and

counts of Chinese financed projects is affecting the public attitudes towards liberal democracy by diffusing authoritarian attitudes which have been proven to be economically successful as part of the Chinese development model. This hypothesis will be tested, using multilevel model specifications, such as Linear Mixed-Effects Models.

Overall, the findings do not provide support for the hypothesis that authoritarian diffusion is happening at subnational level in Sub-Saharan African countries. Nevertheless, the paper provides a comprehensive test of the demonstration mechanism of diffusion by assessing the impact of the presence of Chinese finance projects and extending the study of the diffusion process at the individual level. It suggests that increasing geographical distance between the diffuser (China) and the receiver (citizens of Sub-Saharan African countries) could lead to the creation of information gaps that act as barriers to the process of diffusion. The paper contributes to the literature on China in Africa, by investigating the political implications of Chinese finance projects and assessing whether it affects public attitudes towards liberal-democracy.

Literature review

The literature on support for democracy has been developed in a period when democracy has had little competition and, thus, limited attention has been paid to the influence of alternative authoritarian models. The theoretical foundation of this literature was first developed by David Easton in the early 70s. Easton (1965, 1975) distinguished between two kinds of support for democracy: specific (satisfaction vis-à-vis institutional outcomes) and diffuse support (attachment to what democracy represents). Later, Bratton and Mattes (2001) have updated this terminology by describing citizens' support as being either instrumental (democracy as a means/instrument to achieve wellbeing) or intrinsic (appreciation of the values and norms embodied by a democracy). These have been operationalized in subsequent studies and used extensively to evaluate the health of political regimes (Huang et al. 2008; Memoli 2011; Huang 2011; Doorenspleet 2012; Magalhães 2014 and Teixeira et al. 2014).

The main concern of the literature on support for democracy has always been the need to explain the variation in democratic support, over time and across

countries. On the one hand, scholars have investigated the impact of institutional level determinants of support for democracy, such as political and economic “goods” (e.g. levels of economic inequalities and public safety) and the assessment of the government’s performance (e.g. corruption and effectiveness). For example, Anderson and Tverdova (2003) find a negative correlation between the levels of corruption and the public support for democratic regimes. Others, such as Evans and Whitefield (1995), Andersen (2012) and Krieckhaus et al. (2014) have shown that there is a negative correlation between economic inequalities and democratic support; while Magalhães (2014) found that government effectiveness represents an important institutional determinant of support for democracy. In general, the scholarship has considered the macro-level variables as being the main factors that affect people’s attitudes towards democracy.

On the other hand, scholars have found inspiration in modernization theory (Lipset 1959, 1960), by testing socio-demographic variables (e.g. education and income) as predictors for understanding popular attitudes towards democracy. Some of them, Gibson et al. (1992) and Krieckhaus et al. (2014), have found that educated people express a predisposition for democracy. Shafiq (2010) also confirmed the role of education as an important determinant of support for democracy outside the Western context, in Muslim countries, finding that secondary and higher level of education increases public support for democracy. Another widely studied variable is income and previous findings have indicated that it has positive impact on support for democracy (Shafiq 2010; Andersen 2012). The impact of age is debated as some studies, such as Gibson et al. (1992) and Donovan and Karp (2006), which have shown that young educated people are more likely to support democracies, while, others, e.g. Krieckhaus et al. (2014), have shown that older citizens rather than the younger are showing a preference for supporting democratic systems. Finally, scholars have also looked at the positive impact of social learning (Miklikowska and Hurme 2011) and democratic and political knowledge (Memoli 2011; Cho 2014), on support for democracy as it increases the popular confidence and trust in the democratic institutions.

Following the findings of the broader literature, the scholars that investigated the determinants of support for democracy in Africa have looked at the impact of both domestic and socio-demographic variables (Bratton and Mattes

2001; Evans and Rose 2007, 2012; Mattes and Bratton 2007; Moehler and Lindberg 2009; Fernandez and Kuenzi 2010; Doorenspleet 2012; Konte and Klasen 2016; Konte 2016). On the one hand, Bratton and Mattes (2001) and Mattes and Bratton (2007) confirmed that institutional level variables, such as government performance assessment, is enhancing the public attitudes toward democracy in Africa. On the other hand, others like Evans and Rose (2007, 2012) have studied socio-demographic determinants, finding a strong and positive effect of the level of education on support for democracy in Africa. Konte and Klasen (2016) find that the impact of the gender gap on support for democracy is not significant after controlling for different measures for gender discrimination. In addition to the explanatory variables borrowed from the broader literature, this scholarship has also investigated the impact of other variables, specific for developing countries, such as remittances and public safety. For example, remittances are found to exert a negative effect on support for democracy in Africa (Konte 2016), while the individual perception of public safety in Africa is positively correlated with public attitudes towards democracy, as experiencing a physical attack reduces the odds of being a democratic supporter by approximately 0.75 (Fernandez and Kuenzi 2010, p. 459).

Overall the literature on support for democracy has focused on understanding democratic support by looking at two types of theoretical explanations of why people support democracy (intrinsic/instrumental or diffuse/specific) and by testing the impact of domestic institutions and socio-demographic determinants. So far, what has been underexplored is if support for democracy is a relative evaluation and therefore if external influences and alternative models matter. As China presents citizens of African states with an alternative authoritarian development model, it is important to ask questions about its impact on public attitudes towards liberal democracy.

Theory

This paper investigates whether proximity to and the numbers of Chinese financed projects is affecting people's attitudes towards liberal democracy by diffusing authoritarian attitudes which have been proven to be economically successful as part of the Chinese development model.

The process of diffusion can be defined as a complex process that involves the transmission of attitudes and practices between individuals, groups of people or countries (Welsh 1984). While most of the diffusion literature has looked at geographic and temporal diffusion of democracy (Weyland 2005; Obydenkova 2007), authoritarian diffusion is an increasingly important research area in the context of the reversing global trend in democratization (Lankina et al. 2016; Vanderhill 2012; Darwich 2017; Bank 2017). Recently, this literature has witnessed a proliferation of studies trying to understand the recent degradation of the performance of liberal institutions in previously consolidated democracies, such as Hungary (Boyle 2016; Buzogány 2017; Krastev 2018). They constitute a breakthrough in the study of authoritarian diffusion showing the necessity to disentangle between the type of practices that are being diffused, such as illiberalism (e.g. low protection of civil liberties) and non-democratic rule (e.g. elections controlled by the government).

Second, the literature on diffusion has mainly perceived diffusion as an elite level process (Burnell and Schlumberger 2010), while acknowledging the need to study diffusion also at the level of masses (Vanderhill 2017). There are several research papers that have investigated the process of diffusion at the subnational level by testing, first, the spread of democratic attitudes across regional institutions from Russia, due to proximity to the EU or bilateral economic linkages, such as trade, investments and aid (Lankina and Getachew 2006; Obydenkova 2007, 2008; Lankina et al. 2016) and, second, the prevention of democratization by employing economic and geopolitical links as limiting factors (Obydenkova and Libman. 2012; Libman and Obydenkova 2014).

On the one hand, Obydenkova (2007, 2008) finds a significant effect of economic linkages, such as trade, investments and projects on democratic practices and attitudes (e.g. media freedom, civil liberties, economic and political liberalization), but not of geopolitical variables, such as proximity to the EU. Similarly, Lankina et al. (2016) shows that aid linkages also matter for the success of the democratic promotion efforts of the EU. On the other hand, Obydenkova and Libman (2012) finds that distance from Moscow is a strong predictor of low levels of democracy while Libman and Obydenkova (2014) argue that trade linkages between Russian regions and former Soviet Union members act as a factor of

preventing democratization by decreasing the level of democracy of the Russia's neighbours.

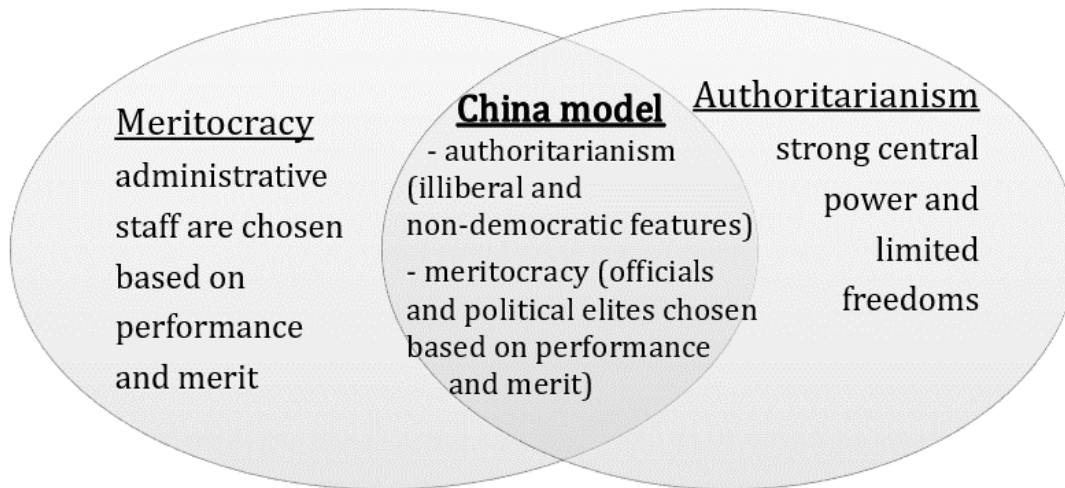
Overall, these studies are using region as the unit of analysis as they are exploring the diffusion process across a federal state (e.g. Russia) and, thus, the impact of diffusion is investigated at the level of regional institutions, and not on people's attitudes. In terms of mechanisms of diffusion, scholars (Obydenkova 2007, 2008; Lankina et al. 2016; Libman and Obydenkova 2014) have found strong empirical support for the role of economic linkages in enhancing or reducing levels of democracy, depending on the source of diffusion (E.g. EU or Russia). Libman and Obydenkova (2014) and Lankina et al. (2016) provide several arguments for why this might happen, such as: economic linkages are responsible for creating interdependence links between the actors involved in the diffusion process which might result in high switching costs for both sides (see the in-depth discussion from the Introductory chapter, pages 22, 27 and 32). This paper builds on these findings and extends the study of the process of authoritarian diffusion at the individual level by testing whether the presence of Chinese finance projects can lead to a demonstration process about how China model works in practice and, therefore implicitly affect peoples' support for liberal-democracy.

The study of the diffusion process should answer two questions: what is being diffusion and how it is being diffused. First, in terms of what is being diffused, the process of diffusion implies the transmission of authoritarian practices which are exemplified in the Chinese development model²¹, also known as the Beijing Consensus (Ramo 2004). It is regarded as a "success story" (de Rambures 2015, p. 4), "pro-growth authoritarianism" (Lai 2010, p. 4), an illiberal model (Zhao 2010), but also, as a competitive development model that transformed one of the poorest countries into a leading economy, in approximately two decades. The authoritarian model exemplified by China includes both non-democratic and illiberal aspects. But, compared to other authoritarian models, the Chinese model also includes a meritocratic feature by choosing administrative staff and political elites at least in part based on merit and performance (see Figure 17, page 76). As there is no

²¹ It is important to note that the Chinese government has not officially endorsed the China Model and has been reluctant to present it as a universal model that can be followed or replicated outside the Chinese borders, especially as such a position would go against its anti-hegemonic foreign philosophy.

question in the existing surveys that measures people’s attitudes toward meritocratic appointment, in this paper, I am only looking at the authoritarian aspect of the Chinese model, while the Paper 2 allows me to fill in the remaining gap, by including in the survey-experiment, a question regarding the appointment of politicians based on performance.

Figure 17. Distinction between meritocracy, authoritarianism and China model



On the one hand, the non-democratic aspect refers to the central role of the government in guiding the development process in all aspects of the society (Li 2015; Nie et al. 2017), particularly through the institution of one-party rule and a centralized economy. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) represents the force behind the successful high growth performance of the China model as it was responsible for coordinating the experimental reforms, first, tested in a smaller and controlled environment and, then, generalized, at the national level. The CCP is the most powerful institution of the Chinese political system who “pursued economic growth at all costs” (Zhao 2017, p. 2). This meant that the Chinese government assumed the decision-making and management role in the Chinese development process. In practice, this translated into overarching and uncontested power to decide the reforms to be implemented and the areas targeted. This is exercised through a top-down management structure, in which Chinese politicians assume the role of managers of the economy (Zhao 2017). Naughton (2010, p. 442) argued that the successful industrialization of China was possible due to extended state ownership of the uncompetitive sectors as well as a close supervision of the competition between private and public actors.

On the other hand, the illiberal aspect of the Chinese model involves a minimum emphasis on rule of law, civil liberties and political rights (Peerenboom 2007; Lai 2010); as well as a centralized autocratic political system characterized by no balance and checks or separation of powers (de Rambures 2015 p. 172). In order to implement the development reforms, the CCP had to maintain the stability of the political and social domains (Zhao 2010; de Rambures 2015). In particular, it was necessary to prevent any attempts to question the authority of the Chinese government by exerting total control not only over the economy, but also over the Chinese society. This was reflected in the use of strategies, such as the limitation of the individual rights and freedoms and the censure of the media to prevent public resentment or any catalyst of criticism against the Chinese government and its policies. In all, the CCP had a pragmatic approach to development by prioritizing reforms and innovation in the economic area combined with subordination of the social environment. It has done so because “economic growth is a crucial part of the Party’s legitimacy, and the pursuit of it repeatedly leads the Party to economic reform” (Chen and Naughton 2017, p. 20).

Second, the process of authoritarian diffusion from China to Sub-Saharan Africa might be happening through similar channels of diffusion, as have been previously found in the diffusion literature, such as prestige, accommodation, demonstration and learning (Rohrschneider 1996; Meseguer 2005; Fordham and Asal 2007; Mishler and Rose 2002, 2007; Leeson and Dean 2009; Gilardi 2010; Biesenbender and Tosun 2014; Møller et al. 2017). On the one hand, we might expect prestige and accommodation mechanisms²² to be observed at the institutional level as African elites have an important incentive to adopt Chinese authoritarian practices because they are associated with the top developing world economic power whose political decisions affect the whole of international society. This might also make African countries attractive for investment and trade cooperation by the Chinese government and businesses. On the other hand, we might expect authoritarian diffusion to happen at the individual level through the mechanisms of demonstration and learning as the Chinese finance projects, located in the proximity of African citizens constitute concrete lessons for the local

²² These mechanisms will be investigated in Paper 3, which looks at authoritarian diffusion at the institutional level.

population about how the Chinese model works in practice and offering the opportunity to directly experience what contributes to their successful implementation.

First, the citizens of the African states might adopt authoritarian attitudes and via what the diffusion literature has referred to as the demonstration mechanism mainly because it represents a way of accessing economic 'goods'. Møller et al. 2017 (p. 560) defined "demonstration effects as innovations adopted or events happening in one site that inspire and embolden actors in other societies to press for or shore up against similar developments". For most citizens of African countries who have experienced the failure of the Washington Consensus model (Van de Walle 2001; Carmody 2007; Bracking 2007), the Chinese model might represent a new chance of developing.

The authoritarian practices become visible to the public based on the practical examples of their successful implementation as part of the many Chinese-financed projects across Sub-Saharan African countries. These real-life demonstrations of the authoritarian aspect of the Chinese model permit the citizens of the African states to observe how the Chinese operate (e.g. fast results although poor human rights protection). Recent studies have shown that Chinese aid engagement in Africa is enhancing development (Liu and Tang 2017; Dong and Fan 2017), but introducing illiberal practices (Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b). For example, Chinese aid projects are found to increase local corruption (Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a) and reduce the engagement of trade unions (Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018b), but also enhance Chinese trade and ODI (Liu and Tang 2017; Dong and Fan 2017), local growth (Dreher et al. 2019; Xu et al. 2019), as well as improving child mortality and education (Martorano et al. 2020) across Sub-Saharan African countries. Others, such as Kishi and Raleigh (2016) investigated the relationship between aid and state repression and found that Chinese aid increases state violence against civilians in Africa. More recently, Huang and Cao (2019) found that, compare to Western aid, the Chinese aid increases the citizens' preference for technocrats or expert leadership in managing the economy. Overall, these studies show that China's presence in Africa is increasing development, as well as illiberal practices, and thus could potentially be demonstrating a link between the two.

A feature that individualize the Chinese aid projects in comparison with the Western ones is the fast rate of projects completion. This is related to the business approach of the Chinese government in understand aid as another way of economic engagement, meant to provide benefits for the parts involved. One example that showcases the speed of the Chinese projects is the construction of the Bui dam in Ghana. Ghana's population has been suffering from power shortage which could be solved by the construction of new power sources. In this context, the construction of the Bui hydroelectric Dam represented a necessity and an important point on the Ghanaian political elites' agenda. While being planned from the early 20th century and although it received support from Australia and the World Bank in 1978, the construction process was continuously postponed, until 2005, when the Chinese company Sinohydro offered to construct the dam and the EximBank to co-fund it. The construction process started right after the contract was signed in 2007 and it was finalized in 2013. While the project only lasted for 6 years, the process was not without complaints from Ghanaian workers about poor working conditions (Motey 2008).

This example demonstrates the trade-off inherent in the China model: quick results at the expense of civil rights protection. Specifically, the construction of Bui hydroelectric Dam which was constantly postponed for a period of 30 years even though it was a necessity for the Ghanaian population, was finalized in just 6 years by a Chinese contractor who used its own business practices and corporate culture. According to Han (2018), although Sinohydro provided the local unskilled workers with *on-the-job* trainings, constructed an onsite medical centre, organized cultural events and made donations to local communities, the workers organized multiple strikes, during the construction process to complain about low wages, the lack of a labour union and the risky working conditions. One of the explanations for these strikes, provided by Han (2018, p.171), was that the Sinohydro's management attempted at "unconsciously, exporting its Chinese manner, while neglecting adaptations to local legislation", meaning that although the Chinese managers are familiar with such problems, they are not used to facing such escalations. Similarly, Wissenbach and Wang (2017) found while interviewing Chinese managers working at the SGR project in Kenya that they have not experienced workers' strikes before. According to Williams et al. (2017, p. 4), in China, unions have been integrated in

the “management structures ... [by becoming] a ‘transmission belt’ for management, rather than an independent voice for workers”.

Drawing on the well-established demonstration effect mechanism in the diffusion literature, I argue that the demonstration effect of a Chinese project could happen during the period of and after a project is executed as, on the one hand, local residents, employed as workers could directly experience the authoritarian practices, specific to the China model, which are implemented by the Chinese management charged with supervising the projects, and on the other hand, after the project is completed as those living in the proximity of a project are the primary beneficiary of these economic goods provided through the completion of the project (an assumption I discuss below).

Seeing the demonstration of Chinese practices in this way may, I claim, then increase acceptance of the Chinese practices across the public from Sub-Saharan African states, is facilitated by economic needs as poor people prioritise economic over political goods. According to Poverty & Equity Databank and PovcalNet statistics²³, in 2015, approximately 42% of the population, from Sub-Saharan Africa, were living with 1.9 dollars a day. Moreover, the Afrobarometer survey data shows that people who experience food shortages prioritize basic necessities more than those who have never gone without food (36.7% versus 28.3%, see Figure 18 from page 81). Therefore, in the context in which over 410 million people are still living in poverty and dissatisfaction with democracy is increasing across the region (with 31% between 1999 and 2015, according to Figure 8, page 39), citizens from Sub-Saharan African countries might be susceptible to the demonstration effects of the Chinese finance projects, especially as Chinese aid is perceived to serve the “social well-being of the entire population” by promoting social and infrastructure projects (Deyassa 2019, p. 206). Furthermore, recent findings indicate that the presence of Chinese finance projects is correlated with a positive view vis-à-vis the contribution of Chinese aid in the African communities as they are associated with social and infrastructure projects that answer the daily needs, especially of disadvantaged people (Xu and Zhang 2019).

²³ Link: <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/region/SSF>, accessed 25.04.2020.

Figure 18. Essential characteristics of democracy by how often gone without food (Source: Afrobarometer round 5)

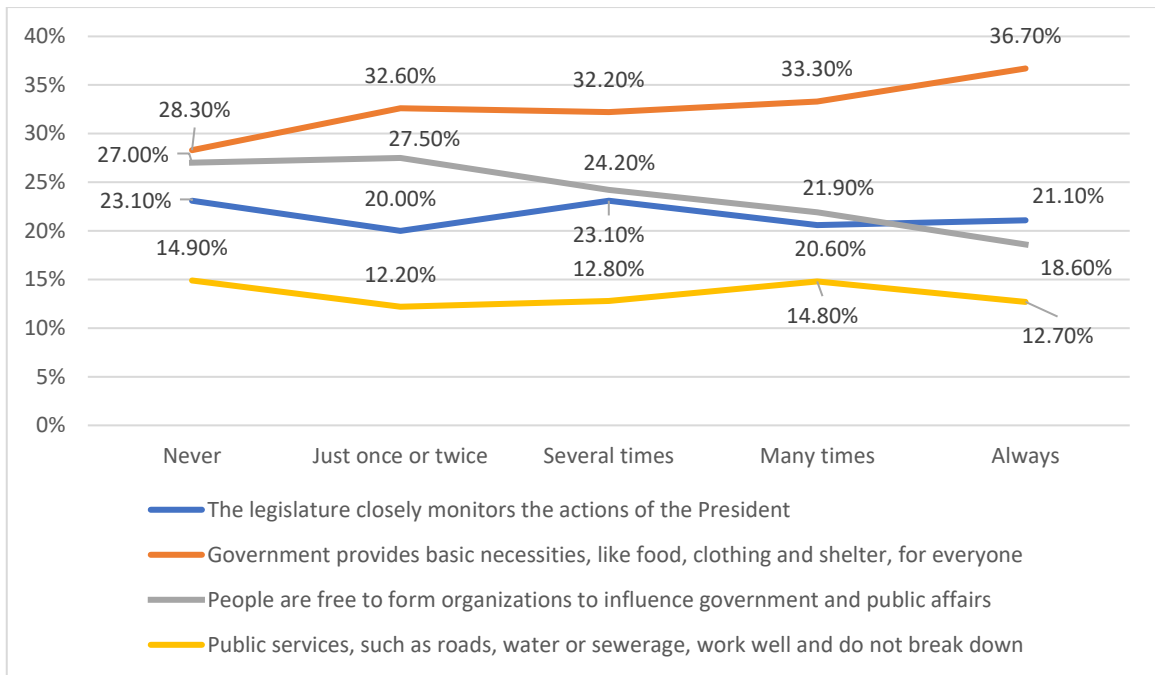


Figure 19. Distribution of Chinese aid projects by sector, with number of projects in brackets (Source: China Aid Data)

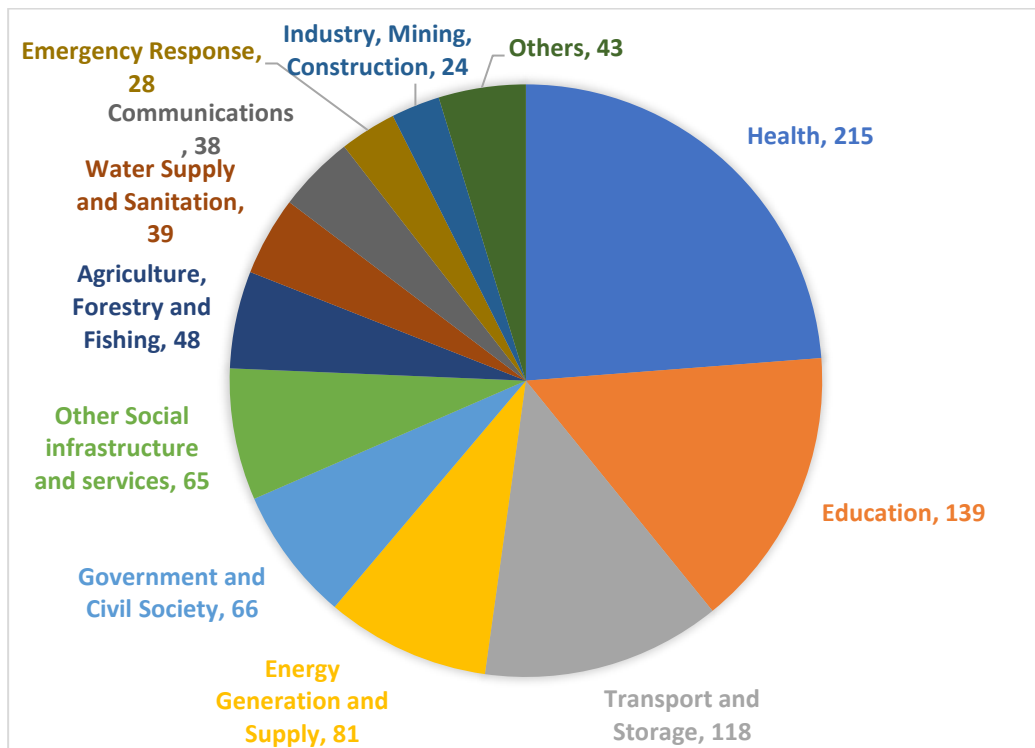


Figure 19 shows that Health, Education, Transport and Storage sectors account for over 52% of all Chinese finance projects and, this confirms the recent claims from the literature (e.g. Deyassa 2019; Xu and Zhang 2019) regarding the fact the Chinese aid targets social and infrastructure sectors. Although, there is a certain variation of different types of Chinese projects across Sub-Saharan African

countries, unfortunately, when disaggregated at ADM1, ADM2 and ADM 3 levels, the data is not enough to explore this relationship at subnational level.

My argument rests on two main assumptions. First, I assume that the Chinese companies use local labour to complete the projects, a topic that has been widely covered by the media and academia in the context of the labour practices employed by these companies across Sub-Saharan Africa countries (Alden and Davies 2006; Gill and Reilly 2007; Lee 2009; Bräutigam and Xiaoyang 2011; Corkin 2012; Mohan and Lampert 2013; Xiaoyang 2016). While the Chinese government does not provide exact numbers regarding the local workers employed in the Chinese projects sites, there are scholars, such as Xiaoyang (2016), who centralized information from official reports published by governments from Sub-Saharan Africa and presented approximate statistics. For example, in 2012, the Sino-African economic cooperation zone Chambishi from Zambia employed 7973 African employees and 1372 Chinese, while Nigeria's Ogun-Guangdong zone had 177 Chinese and 1619 African workers (Xiaoyang 2016, p. 109). Based on these statistics, we notice that although the ratio Chinese-African employees varies (1:7 for Chambishi and 1:9 for Ogun-Guangdong), the local workers outnumber the Chinese ones.

My second assumption is that the benefits of projects are felt locally. In the China aid dataset, there is no filtering option or variable that would indicate who are the direct beneficiary of a project. Similar to all the previous scholars who used this dataset for assessing the implications of Chinese finance projects at subnational level (Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Kish and Raleigh 2016; Dreher et al. 2016, 2018; Kilama 2016; Dong and Fan 2017; Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b), I have, initially, assumed that the location of the project is an indication of area and, implicitly, the local residents who are directly gaining from the completion of the project. For example, even if the construction of a dam could be rather considered a national good as some dams (such as the Bui hydroelectric Dam in Ghana) are meant to support the energy supply of the whole country and, not just specific regions, it is reasonable to assume that person living in the proximity of a construction site are more likely to be hired than someone else residing in the other areas of the country. Still, I agree that this assumption requires an in-depth content analysis of each project individually in order to provide clear and persuasive evidence in

support of this claim. For this reason, I acknowledge that, given the existing data, it is not possible to argue with certitude that all projects included in the analysis are providing benefits only for the local population, living in the proximity of the project.

To sum up, this paper is a test of the demonstration mechanism as we expect that the Chinese finance projects identified across Sub-Saharan African countries are demonstrating the authoritarian attitudes that characterize the Chinese model and are considered to have contributed to its high growth performance. Authoritarian diffusion also implies a learning process about what attitudes can contribute to economic growth (Lankina et al. 2016) and by evaluating the performance of new political systems (Fails 2009). Building on the scholarship findings (Stoker 2006; Doorenspleet 2012; Fuks et al. 2017) showing that dissatisfaction in developing democracies could be more harmful than good, we would expect that if people from Sub-Saharan African countries are dissatisfied democrats and hold utilitarian values, learning that the development success of another country is tied to being an autocracy, might further erode their support for democracy and increase their willingness to try other regime types. The learning mechanism of diffusion is tested in Paper 2 by conducting a survey-experiment.

This paper tests the main hypothesis that increased numbers of Chinese finance projects and/or having a Chinese project located closer to an Afrobarometer cluster will have a negative impact on the citizens' attitudes towards liberal democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries. Specifically, it will test whether authoritarian diffusion (both illiberal and non-democratic aspects) is happening at the individual level as a result of being in the proximity of Chinese finance projects.

H1: Increased exposure to Chinese finance projects will have a negative impact on people's attitudes towards liberal democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries.

Methodology and data

The hypotheses will be tested by using survey data from Afrobarometer round 5 and 6²⁴ (with respondents from 28 Sub-Saharan African countries²⁵) combined with geocoded data on the location of Chinese financed projects. By exploiting sub-national variation in the location of Chinese projects, and hence respondents' exposure to them, it will investigate whether the number of and proximity to Chinese financed projects is affecting people's attitudes towards liberal democracy by diffusing authoritarian attitudes which have been demonstrated to be economically successful as part of the Chinese development model. This hypothesis will be tested, using multilevel model specifications, such as Linear Mixed-Effects Models.

I capture the process of authoritarian diffusion, at the individual level, by testing the impact of the increased presence of Chinese finance projects (measured as counts and distance) on public attitudes towards liberal-democracy. Here, I argue that the Chinese finance projects are demonstrating autocratic practices associated with the China model, such as the fast economic gains at the expense of labour and environmental standards. As the number of projects increases and the distance from the project decreases, I expect the demonstration effects of the projects to become more visible and, implicitly, stronger. So, proximity and higher exposure constitute an effective treatment because local people become more accustomed with gaining economic benefits while being exposed to Chinese authoritarian practices, implemented by the management from the Chinese companies. Previous papers have provided empirical evidence to support this expectation that Chinese companies are affecting local practices and norms by transferring illiberal practices while adding that these companies might also create pressure for local companies to follow the same practices in order to be able to compete (Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b). Methodologically, counts and distance represent common ways of

²⁴ Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in more than 35 countries in Africa, across six rounds of surveys between 1999 and 2015. I use Rounds 5 and 6 as these were, at the most of this analysis, the most recent rounds completed and available in the Afrobarometer survey. The 7th round surveys were completed in 2018, but currently still at the processing stage.

²⁵ Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

measuring the presence of Chinese finance projects at the sub-national level (e.g. Kilama 2016; Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b).

The demonstration effect of a Chinese project could happen, for example, during the period a project is executed as local residents, employed as workers could directly experience the authoritarian practices, specific to the China model, which are implemented by the Chinese management in charged with supervising the projects. Examples of authoritarian practices that could be demonstrated by the Chinese companies include, on the one hand, non-democratic practices, such as top-down management that refers to the absolute and uncontested role of Chinese leaders in the decision making and organization process (which similar to the central role of the Chinese Communist party in the Chinese political system), and, on the other hand, illiberal practices, such as the imposition of strict rules and work ethics (e.g. strict breaks, lack of flexibility in accommodating the needs of the workers and discipline or expecting the employee to comply without questioning decision of the manager), and low regard for unions and their role in representing the interest of workers (in China unions are integrated in the management structure) (Chan 2013; Otoo et al. 2013; Geerts et al. 2014; Williams et al. 2017).

As people see the Chinese practices demonstrated, we expect to witness a diffusion, not of these practices themselves but of the attitudes associated with these practices (e.g. more tolerance for low human rights standards). To find which Chinese practices might be subject to the diffusion process, in the empirical analysis, I use both the aggregate composite measure (attitudes towards liberal-democratic practices) as well as the disaggregated components (e.g. attitudes towards democratic rule, civil liberties, rule of law and power constrains and division practices). Thus, the presence of the Chinese finance projects constitutes a treatment by representing a channel of diffusion through which Chinese practices are transmitted to people from Sub-Saharan African societies. I expect a process of authoritarian diffusion to happen as the Chinese finance projects identified across Sub-Saharan African countries are demonstrating the authoritarian practices that characterize the Chinese model and are considered to have contributed to its high growth performance. The increase acceptance of these practices across the public from Sub-Saharan African states could be facilitated by economic needs as poor

people (around 42% in 2015) prioritise economic goods, such as shelter and food aid, over political goods (with 30% more, according to Figure 18 from page 81).

a) Dependent variable

For my dependent variable, public attitudes towards liberal democracy, I will use questions from the Afrobarometer survey data, regarding attitudes towards different aspects of a liberal-democracy, such as questions that ask the respondents views on political competition, the relationship between the executive and legislature, civil liberties and political rights. Afrobarometer has been widely used by scholars, such as Bateson (2012); Mattes and Bratton (2007); Doorenspleet (2012); Moehler and Lindberg (2009) in investigating the determinants of the attitudes of citizens from Sub-Saharan African countries.

The dependent variable for this paper will constitute a measure of attitudes of the citizens of the Sub-Saharan African states towards liberal democracy. While there is no consensus between the scholars that have tried to measure the components of liberal-democracy and, in addition, there is no particular question in Afrobarometer that fully questions the respondents' opinion vis-à-vis liberal democracy, I create composites that measure different aspects of liberal-democracy. The decision to create a composite index for people attitudes towards liberal-democracy is motivated by recent concerns raised by the literature regarding the limitations and problems of measuring people's support for democracy through a simple direct question, such as asking agreement/disagreement regarding the statement "Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government". Scholars, such as Inglehart (2003), Schedler and Sarsfield (2007), Booth and Seligson (2009) have emphasized the need to shift from direct to indirect measures of support for democracy as standard questions can lead to over reporting in democratic support (Inglehart 2003; Kiewiet de Jonge 2016). According to Schedler and Sarsfield (2007, p. 637), support for democracy should include questions about institutions and principles to identify "democrats with adjectives' who support democracy in the abstract, while rejecting core principles of liberal democracy". Other such as Mattes and Bratton (2007) argue that it is not sufficient to express a preference for democracy in order to be a committed democrat, as it also requires rejecting alternative regimes. My paper will address

this measurement concern by creating a composite from 13 questions that measure public support for different liberal and democratic aspects, in particular elections, multipartism, power constraints and divisions, civil liberties and rule of law.

In general, the literature has looked at liberal-democracy as a bidimensional concept, composed of a liberal aspect combined with democratic rule. While there is a general understanding of democratic rule as being characterized by the popular accountability of the political elites through open, frequent and free elections (Zakaria 1997; Bollen 2009), the scholarship has provided both a minimalist and maximalist conception of the liberal aspect. On the one hand, Bollen (1993, 2009), described a minimalist liberalism based on the basic principle of freedom of expression and association. On the other hand, others, such as Zakaria (1997); Foweraker and Krznaric (2002), Chang et al. (2007), Starr (2007), Dixon (2008) and Rhoden (2015) extended Bollen's index by including a measure for rule of law and power constrains/division of power (separation of power and checks and balances). According to Starr (2007, p. 17), "liberalism has historically sought to protect individual rights through the rule of law and limits on unbridled power at home".

In this paper, I leverage the bidimensional understanding of liberal-democracy by differentiating between the democratic and the liberal aspects in order to test whether different aspects of democracy may be affected by authoritarian diffusion. For measuring individuals' attitudes towards the democratic aspect of liberal democracy, I create one subcomponent, called Democratic Rule, which includes questions about political rights (e.g. right to vote), popular accountability of politicians and necessity of free elections and competitive electoral systems. For the liberal aspect, I adopt a maximalist approach and create three composites: Civil liberties (the degree of government control on civil society's organizations and media freedom), Rule of law (the degree of independence, trust and legitimacy of the judicial branch) and Power constrains and division (effective checks and balances and separation of power between institutions).

The questions are taken from two consecutive rounds of the Afrobarometer survey (round 5 and round 6) and a full description of the questions is included in the Annexes B, Table 58 (pages 250-257). As the Afrobarometer surveys do not sample the same participants every round, by using rounds 5 and 6 of the

Afrobarometer does not result in a panel data but instead these represent two independent tests of the same hypothesis.

The following scheme synthesizes the questions used for the aggregation of each composite measuring people's attitudes towards liberal-democracy:

1) Democratic aspect

- Attitudes towards Democratic rule (Zakaria 1997; Bollen 2009)
 - Choose leaders through elections (Q34/Q32)²⁶
 - Multipartyism (Q35/Q33)
 - President term limit (Q41/Q39)
 - Government vertical accountability (Q33/Q31);

2) Liberal aspect

- Attitudes towards Civil liberties (Bollen 1993; Bollen and Paxton 2000; Foweraker and Krznaric 2002; Chang et al. 2007; Bollen 2009)
 - Government controls civil organizations (Q19/Q16)
 - Media freedom (Q20/Q17);
- Attitudes towards Rule of law (Foweraker and Krznaric 2002; Rhoden 2015; Chang et al. 2007)
 - Courts make binding decisions (Q48A/Q42A)
 - President accountable to courts (Q40/Q38);
 - Trust in the judiciary (Q59j/Q52j)
- Attitudes towards Power constrains and division (Rhoden 2015; Chang et al. 2007)
 - Parliament makes laws (Q39/Q37)
 - Horizontal accountability (Q36/Q34);
 - Opposition parties as watchdogs (Q37/Q35);
 - Media reporting on government (Q38/Q36).

First, the answers to these questions are rescaled on a 1-5 scale where 1 denotes the most illiberal/non-democratic answer and 5 is the most liberal/democratic answer. This is necessary in order for the answers to be comparable and to ease the creation of the index (for more information, see Annexes B, Table 58, pages 250-257). Then, I compute the different composites using

²⁶ In brackets, I include the question number from round 5 and respectively, 6.

Bayesian factor analysis (BFA), following the methodology of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) regarding the creation of the Global State of Democracy index (IDEA 2017, p. 16). Thus, I use the function `MCMCfactanal()` from the R package `MCMCpack` which computes the indices based on the Markov Chain Monte Carlo method with over 100 000 iterations and I check for convergence with the Heidelberger and Welch diagnostic (see Annexes C, Tables 59-70, pages 257 - 260). Finally, all the indices are normalized on a continuous scale from 0 to 1 where 0 is illiberal/non-democratic and 1 is liberal/democratic.

Below, I include the graphs of the distribution of the “Liberal democracy” index by round and aggregated at the level of cluster, district (ADM2) and region (ADM1), in order to offer a visualization of the variation of the variable. In Figure 20, we observe that, in round 5, at ADM1 (regional level), the Liberal Democracy composite varies between 0.0737 (Kayunga district, Uganda) and 0.64822 (River Nile region in Sudan), while, according to Figure 21, at ADM2 (district level), it varies between 0.04085 (Lake Victoria district in Tanzania) and 0.74884 (Maravia district in Mozambique). In round 6 (Figure 22), the Liberal Democracy composite varies at ADM1, between 0.4245 (GrandGedeh county in Liberia) and 0.8848 (Kiboga district from Uganda), while at ADM2 (Figure 23), it varies between 0.3179 (Warawa, Nigeria) and 0.9863 (Serenje district Zambia). Finally, at ADM3 (cluster²⁷ level), the Liberal Democracy composite varies across clusters between 0.01554 (cluster in Kromhoek, South Africa) and 0.77432 (cluster in Ramotse, South Africa) in round 5 (Figure 24), while, in round 6 (Figure 25), it varies between 0.2551 (cluster in Upper Gbillibo, Liberia) and 0.9863 (cluster in Lulimala, Zambia). The other graphs of each component of the Liberal-Democracy composite are included in the Annexes D, Figures 76 - 85 pages 261- 264.

²⁷ A cluster includes 4 households in South Africa and 8 households in the other countries. One person is interviewed per household.

Figure 20. Distribution of Liberal Democracy composite across regions/ADM1, round 5

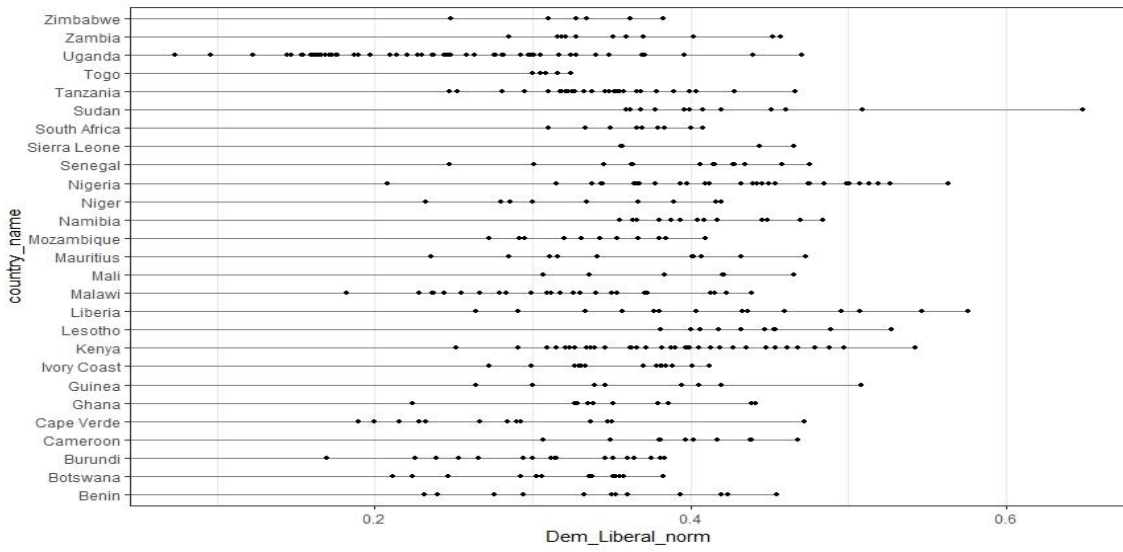


Figure 21. Distribution of Liberal Democracy composite across districts/ADM2, round 5

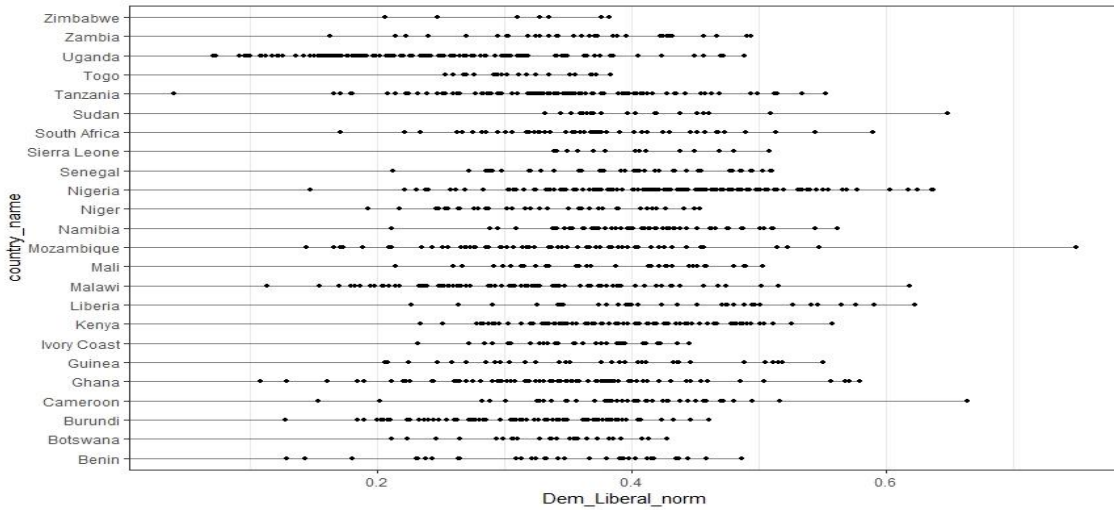


Figure 22. Distribution of Liberal Democracy composite across regions/ADM1, round 6

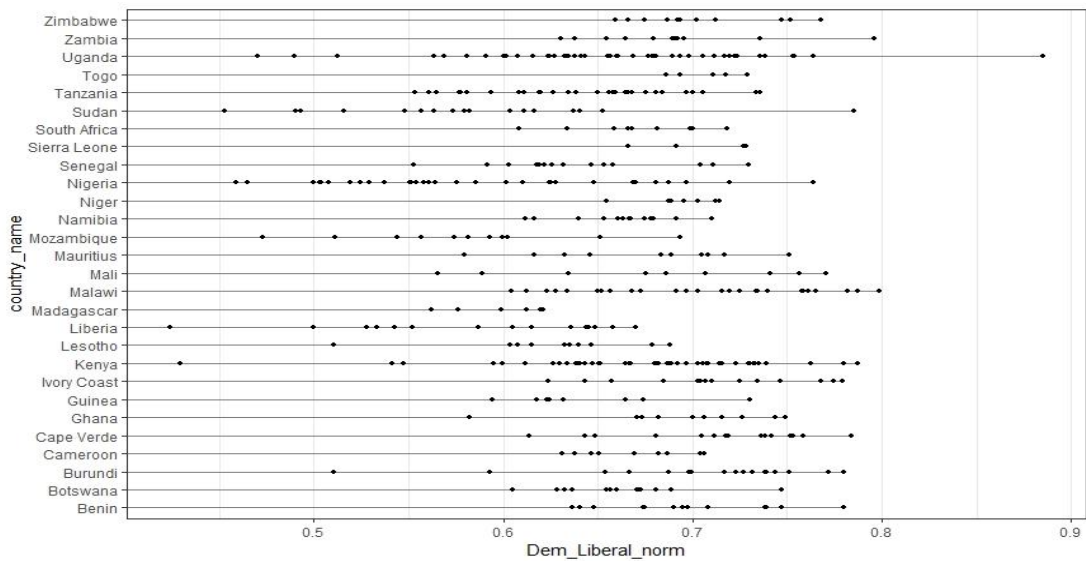


Figure 23. Distribution of Liberal Democracy composite across districts/ADM2, round 6

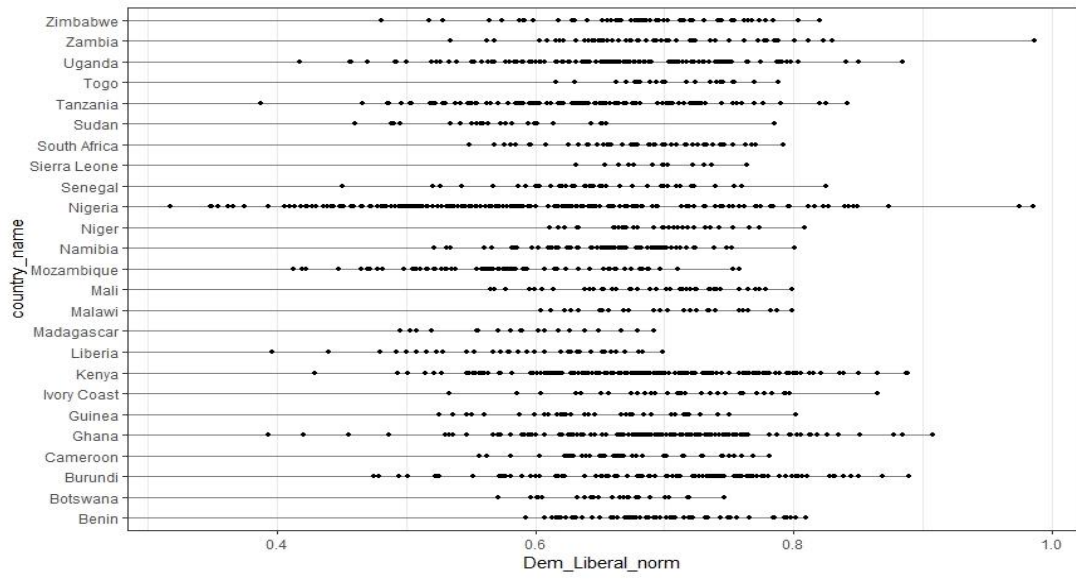


Figure 24. Distribution of Liberal Democracy composite across clusters in Round 5

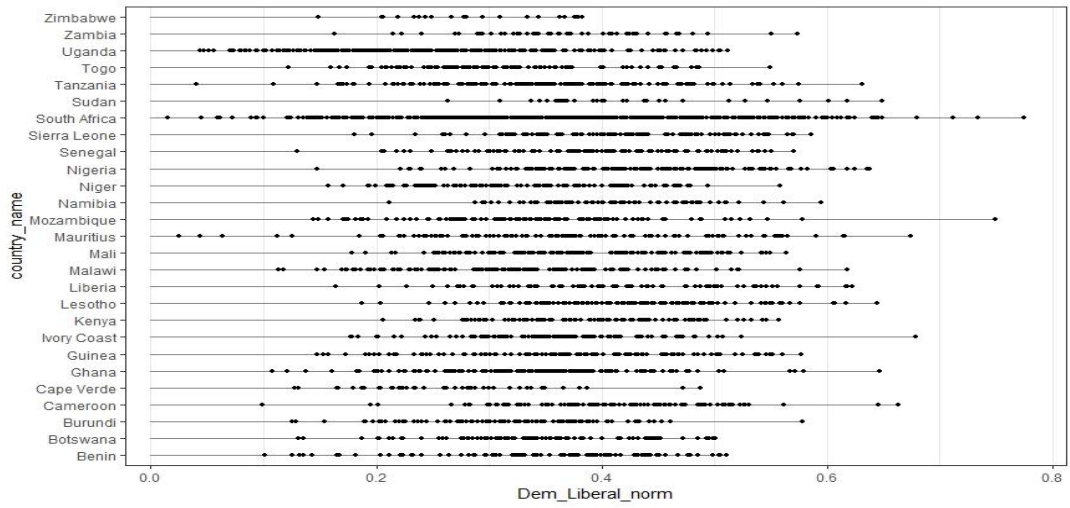
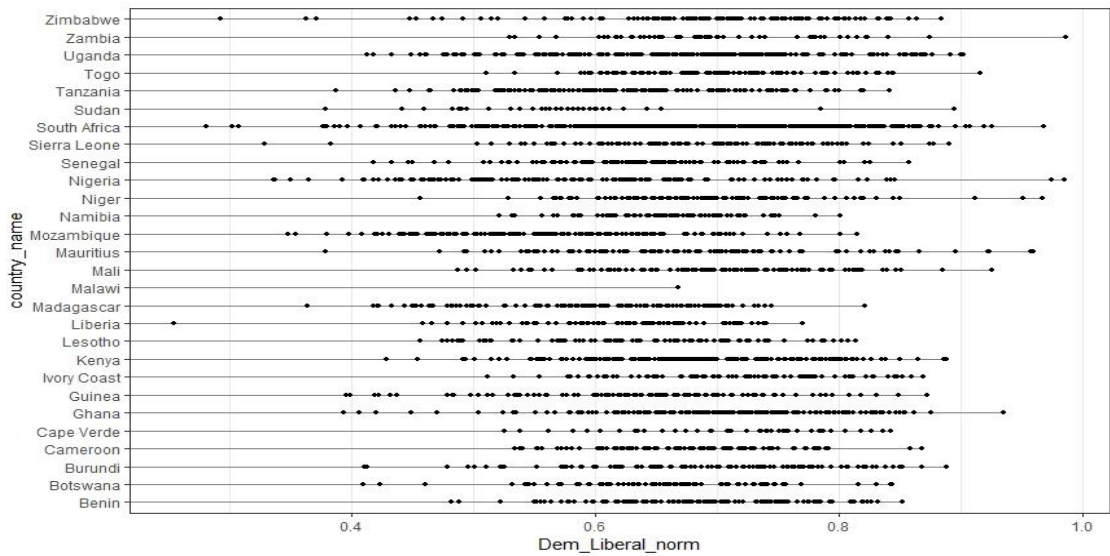


Figure 25. Distribution of Liberal Democracy composite across clusters in Round 6



b) Independent variable

The independent variable is measured in two ways: the number of Chinese financed projects located at three administrative levels and buffer areas (ADM1 or regional level, ADM2 or district level and 25km, 50km and 75km buffers), as well as distance from a Chinese project to the closest Afrobarometer cluster. These are common ways of measuring China's presence at the sub-national level (e.g. Kilama 2016; Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b). I use QGIS software (free-to-use and open data geographical information systems software) and Google Maps/Earth to geolocate and map the locations of Chinese projects. The maps with the distribution of the Afrobarometer clusters in round 5 and the Chinese projects across Sub-Saharan African countries, are included in the Annexes E (see Maps 3-8 from pages 265-270). These maps represent another way of visualizing the distribution and variation of the dependent variables (also available in Figures 20-25, pages 90-91) and independent variables (also available in Figures 26-35, pages 96-99).

Data availability has always been an issue in researching topics related to Chinese foreign engagement as the Chinese government has constantly refused to report their official data to international organizations or institutions, such as OECD-DAC. Still, the creation of the Chinese Aid database by Strange et al. (2017a) constituted an important step to overcoming this issue by providing free access to data on Chinese finance projects. Chinese Aid Data provides information about official projects, unofficial projects, military finance, suspended or cancelled projects and, recently, it has been extensively used by scholars (Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Kish and Raleigh 2016; Dreher et al. 2016, 2018; Kilama 2016; Dong and Fan 2017; Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b) to study the worldwide impact of Chinese aid. The China Aid dataset contains approximately 4300 Chinese projects, over the period 2000-2014, and distributed over six geographical regions (Dreher et al. 2016). I filter this dataset by recipient country (Sub-Saharan African countries) and precision of the location (from ADM1 to ADM5 or an even more precise location, such as a building).

To reduce measurement errors, I omit Chinese project locations that are wrongly geocoded, cancelled/suspended, repeated or have already been accounted for in other projects, as well as projects that cannot be confirmed as being Chinese

projects and are unlikely to be known by the population (e.g. debt rescheduling/forgiveness). I use and check the geocodes available on the China Aid Data website (the individual page of each project), in the AidData's Chinese Official Finance to Africa Dataset, 2000-2012, Version 1.1.1 and the Global Chinese Official Finance Dataset_v1.0 which contains additional Chinese finance projects, recorded until 2014 (published on October 2017). The projects that are not geocoded, but have a location clearly mentioned in the description or the location field, are checked using media sources and geocoded using Google Maps/Earth.

Before I discuss the variation graphs, I will address the concerns regarding the potential selection effect of the China Aid Data. The first potential source of this concern might be China Aid Data's collection and cleaning process leaving out certain projects in a non-random manner. Here, I discuss the different steps employed by the Aid Data research teams for gathering data and quality control. According to Strange et al. (2017b), after collecting data on projects from different official and media sources, the researchers use the following procedures to reduce the potential errors and biases in the newly collected data: flagging suspicious and duplicate projects, identifying umbrella or related projects, check any logical inconsistency and an extended review of the descriptive of each projects conducted by internal and external teams of researchers. The final dataset is released on the Aid Data website for feedback from users and to be used, for free, in research. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, I filter the projects dataset by the level of detail, remove duplicates, related, suspicious and cancelled projects or with wrong geocodes, as well as check for any new updates on the active projects²⁸. Based on the information presented here, I argue that it is unlikely that the process of data collection and cleaning of the China Aid Data might lead to a selection effect of the Chinese projects as the researchers from Aid Data teams have employed several quality control strategies to avoid biases in the data.

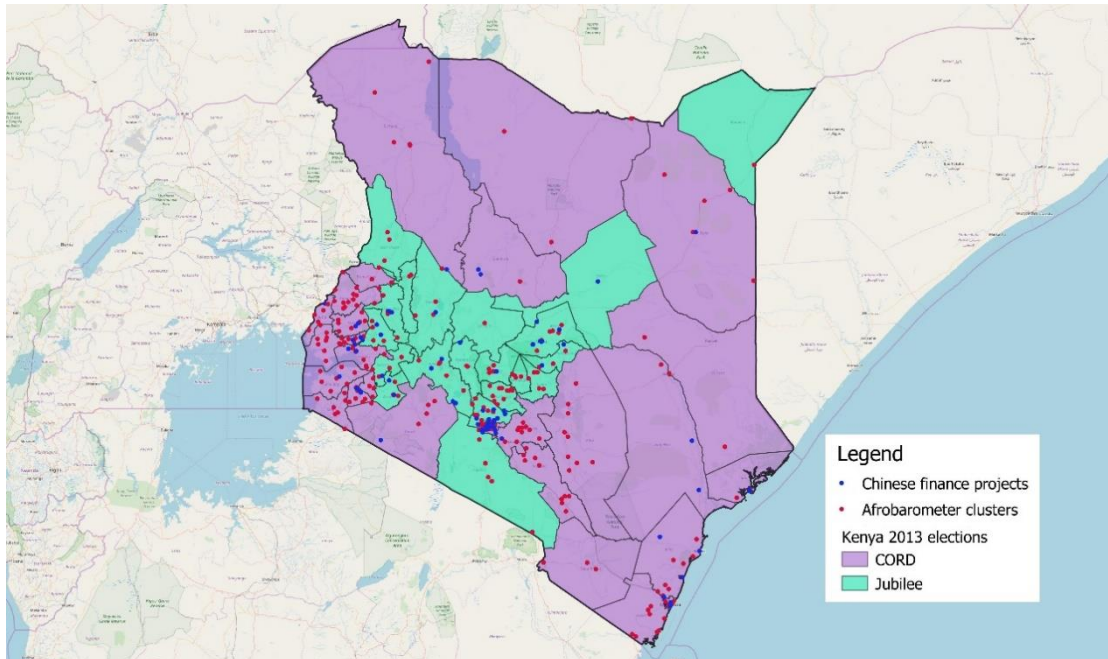
Another potential source of the selection effect concern might be the factors affecting the geographic distribution of projects. The scholarship that has investigates the determinants of Chinese aid engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa,

²⁸ At the moment of the data cleaning process, the China Aid Data researchers used to include the last updates on each project on a live database on the website. Currently (27.04.2020), this live database is no longer available on the website.

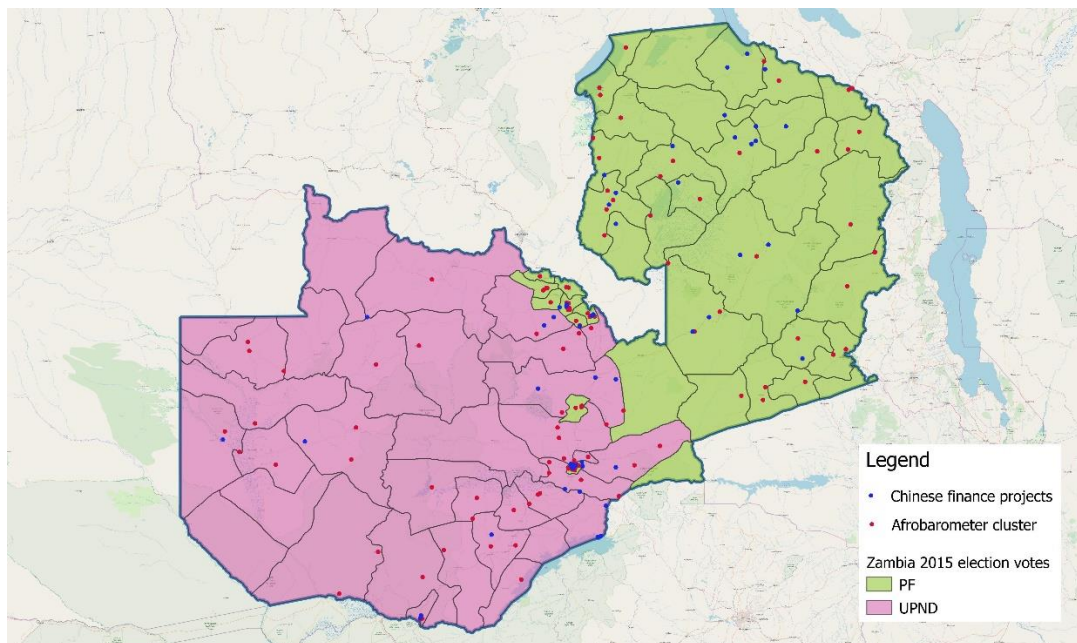
argued that Chinese foreign aid is mainly motivated by the economic needs of China, such as access to natural resources and markets (Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Tseng and Krog 2017; Dreher et al. 2018; Grieken et al. 2019). Dreher et al. (2018) found that Chinese foreign policy is another relevant determinant in understanding the distribution of the Chinese ODA, in particular, the recognition of Taiwan and membership in the UNSC. Still, several scholars (Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Tseng and Krog 2017; Dreher et al. 2018) have reported that there are no reasons to support the rogue donor hypothesis as Chinese aid is not found to be linked to the quality of domestic institutions from the recipient country.

Last, I discuss the concerns that Chinese projects might be deliberately redirected to the regions populated with the incumbent parties' supporters. These concerns are based on the findings of Dreher et al. (2016) who argued that the birthplace of political leaders from Sub-Saharan African countries receives more Chinese aid than the rest. To address this issue, I compare the geographic distribution of the Chinese finance projects across incumbent versus opposition regions from two Sub-Saharan African countries, Kenya and Zambia. The main reason for choosing these two countries is data availability as not all Sub-Saharan African countries provide online information regarding the regional voting and, for this reason, a systematic investigation of across all countries is not possible. On the one hand, in Map 1 below, we observe that, in Kenya, the majority of the Chinese finance projects (over 66%) are located in the regions with CORD supporters, which is the opposition party. On the other hand, in Zambia, Map 2 shows that the Chinese projects are mostly in PF regions (77%), which has been the incumbent party since 2011. This comparison indicates that the Chinese finance projects do not seem distributed, in particular, to regions where the incumbent supporters live; but we would need more information in order to be able to generalize this observation to the whole Sub-Saharan Africa.

Map 1. Distribution of Chinese finance projects across regions supporting the incumbent and opposition party (Kenya)



Map 2. Distribution of Chinese finance projects across regions supporting the incumbent and opposition party (Zambia)



Based on this discussion, I cannot rule out the likelihood that the distribution of the Chinese projects is not random as these seem to be determined by features of the projects' location (e.g. ground resources, market potential, and recognition of Taiwan). This might lead to a potential unobserved bias related to the location of the Chinese projects which I address empirically by including random effects (for ADM1, ADM2 and cluster) in the multilevel longitudinal models. The random effects

account for the high variation existent across clusters, adm1 and adm2 level units. The inclusion of fixed effects makes the models rank deficient which means that the predictions of these models could be biased.

The following graphs present the distribution of my independent variable, aggregated at the level of cluster, district and region in order to offer a visualization of the variation of the variable. First, when the independent variable is measured as counts of Chinese projects, it is aggregated at the level of cluster, district and region. At regional level, the independent variable (IV) measured as counts, varies between 0 and 35 projects for Round 5 (Figure 26) and 0 to 37 projects for Round 6 (Figure 27). At the district level, the IV varies between 0 and 30 Chinese projects for Round 5 (Figure 28), as well as, 0 and 32 Chinese projects for Round 6 (Figure 29).

Figure 26. Distribution of the IV measured as counts at ADM1/regional level, Round 5

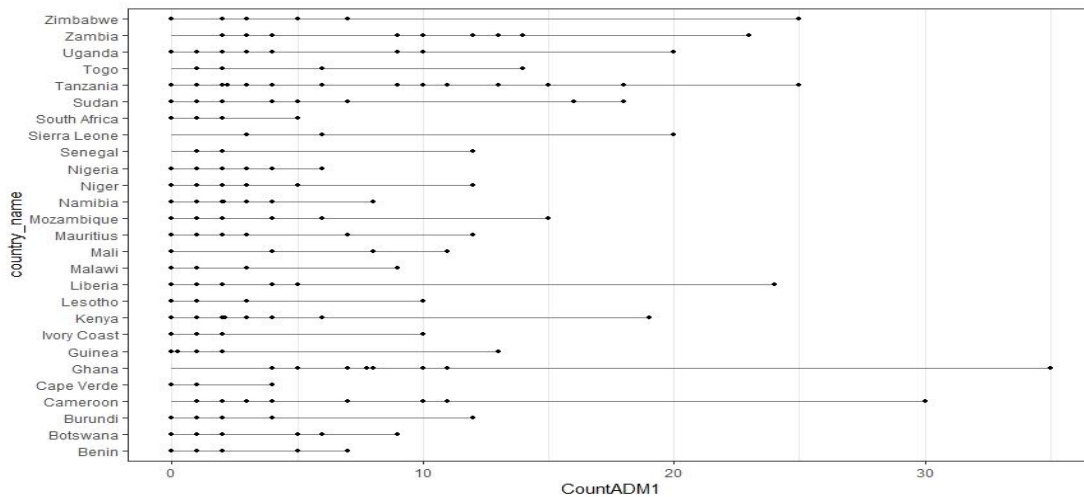


Figure 27. Distribution of the IV measured as counts at ADM1/regional level, Round 6

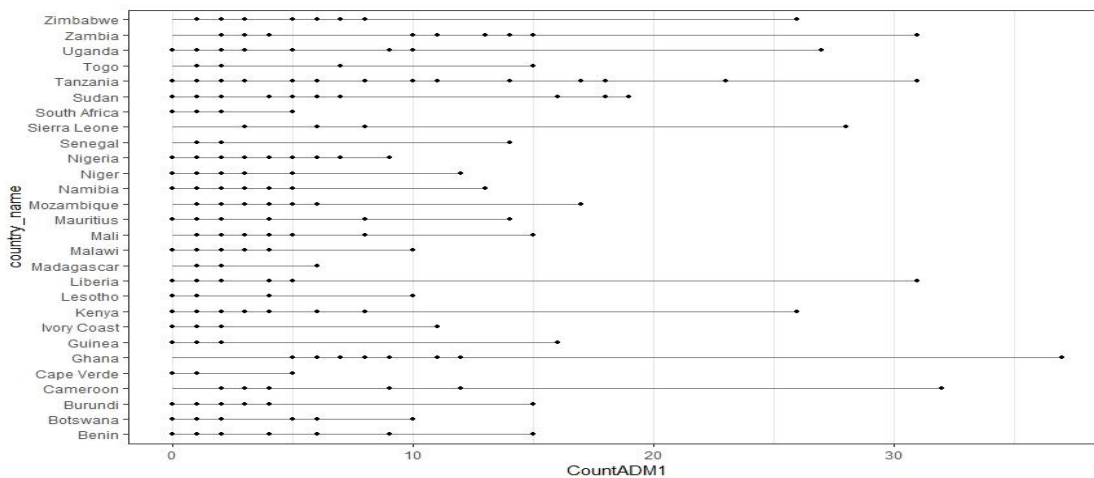


Figure 28. Distribution of the IV measured as counts at ADM2/district level, Round 5

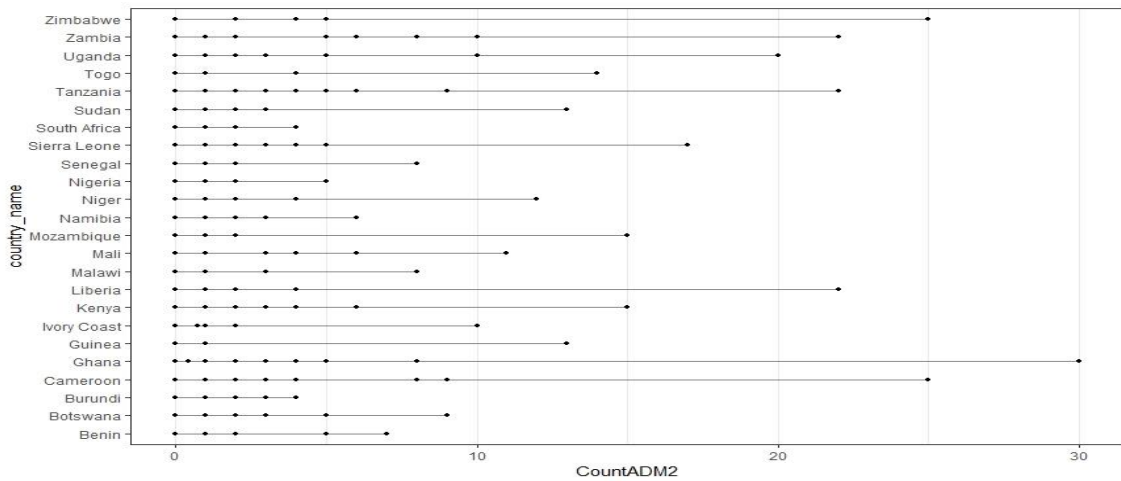
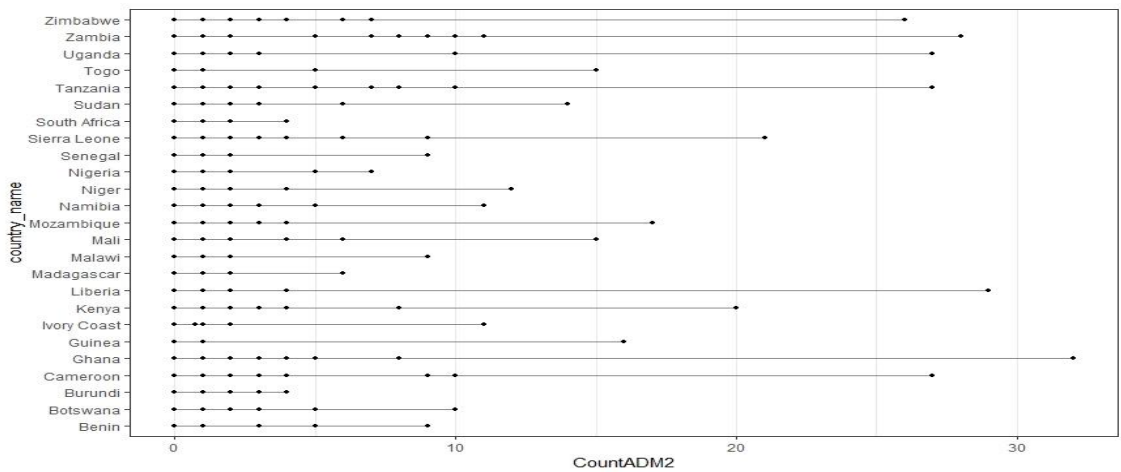


Figure 29. Distribution of the IV measured as counts at ADM2/district level, Round 6



At the cluster level, for Round 5, the IV measured as counts of Chinese projects varies between 0 and 32 projects for the 25km (Figure 30) and the 50km buffer areas (Figure 31) and 0 and 36 Chinese projects for the 75km buffer area (Figure 32). For Round 6, the distribution of counts of Chinese projects varies between 0 and 34 projects for the 25km buffer area (Figure 33), 0 and 38 projects for the 50km buffer area (Figure 34) and 0 to 45 for the 75km buffer area (Figure 35).

Figure 30. Distribution of the IV measured as counts at a 25 km buffer area around the cluster, Round 5

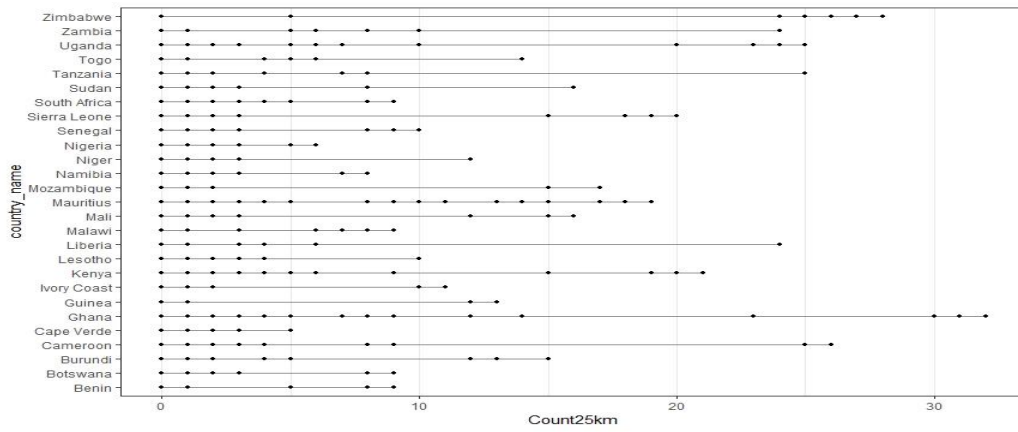


Figure 31. Distribution of the IV measured as counts in a 50 km buffer area around the cluster, Round 5

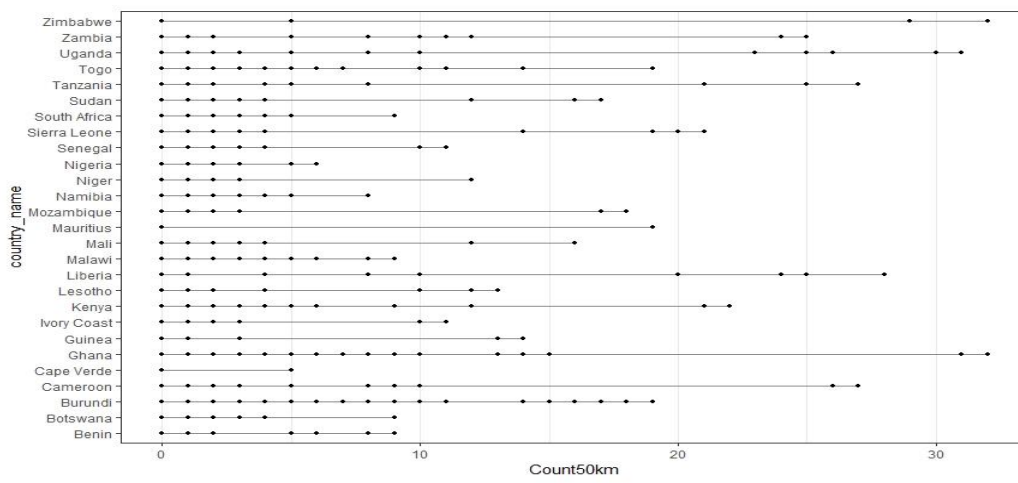


Figure 32. Distribution of the IV measured as counts in a 75 km buffer area around the cluster, Round 5

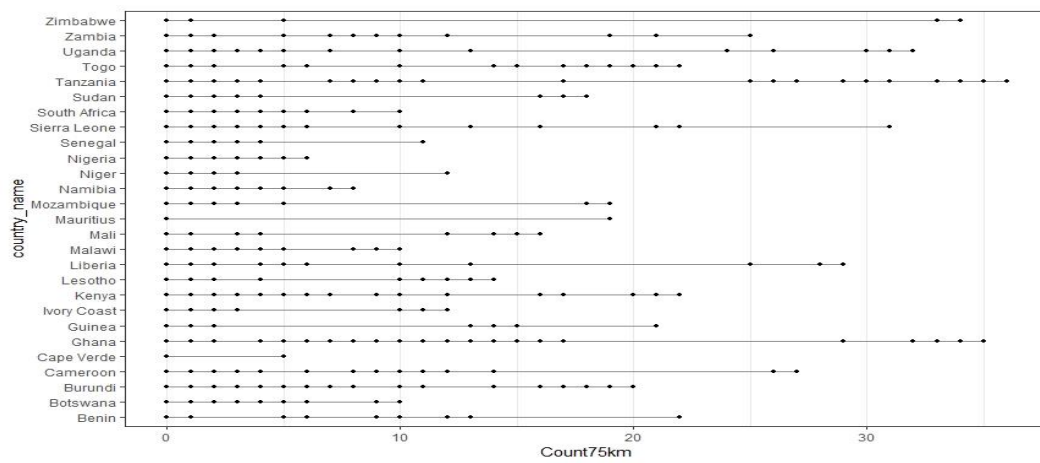


Figure 33. Distribution of the IV measured as counts in a 25 km buffer area around the cluster, Round 6

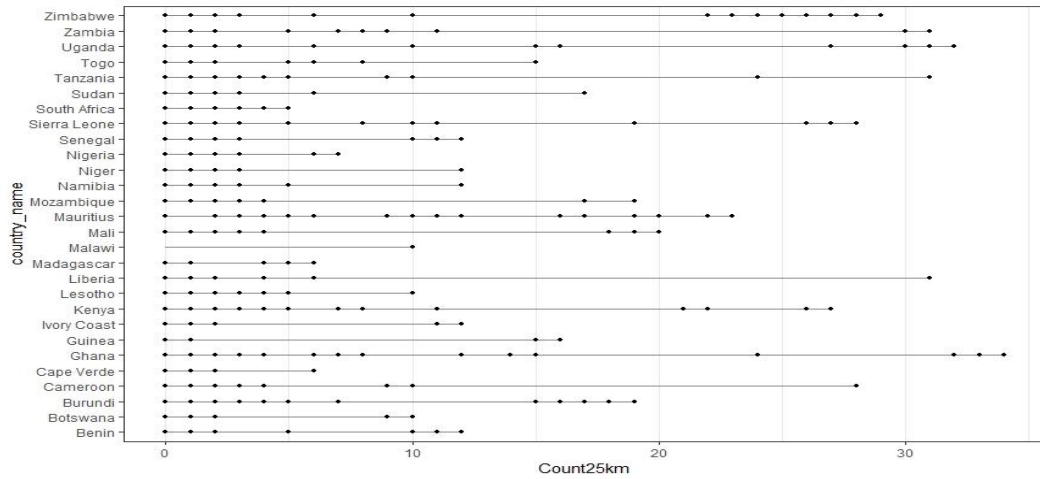


Figure 34. Distribution of the IV measured as counts in a 50 km buffer area around the cluster, Round 6

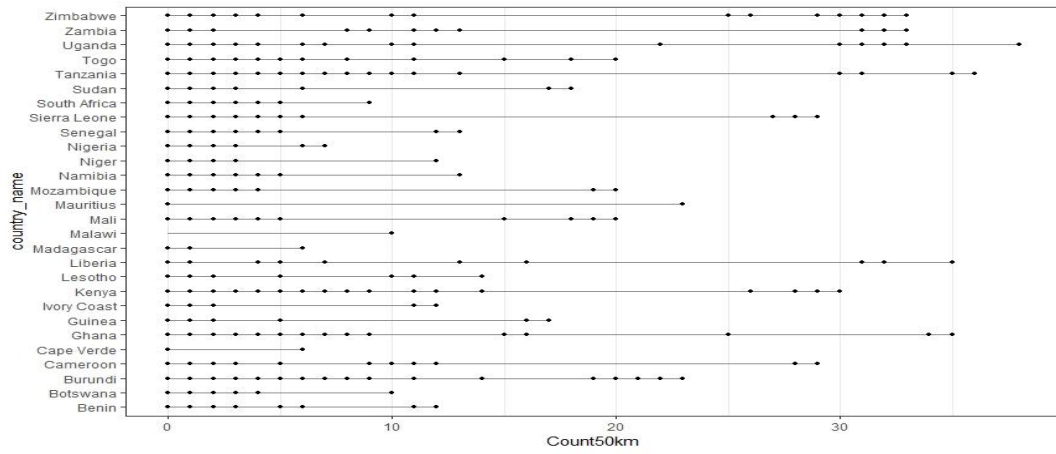
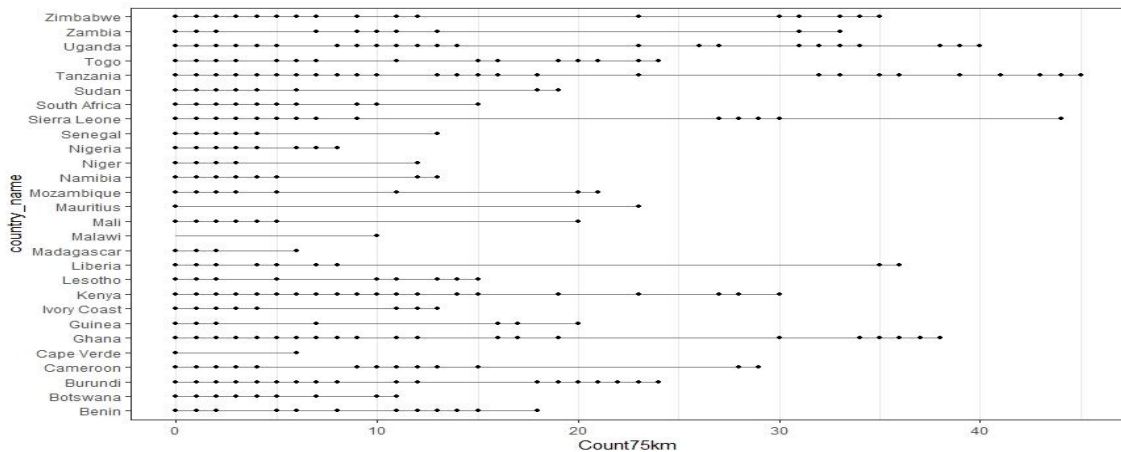


Figure 35. Distribution of the IV measured as counts in a 75 km buffer area around the cluster, Round 6



Second, when the independent is measured as distance from the cluster to the closest project, the variable is aggregated at the cluster level. For Round 5, the distance variable varies between 0 and 701.08km (Figure 36), while for Round 6, it varies between 0 and 602.83km (Figure 37). While there is a high variation in the

distance variable, almost three quarters (75%) of the Chinese projects data from each round are located at a distance which is under 75km and almost 45% of Chinese projects in the dataset are in the 25 km buffer areas around the Afrobarometer clusters (see Table 8 below).

Table 8. Percentage of Chinese projects located at 25km, 50km and 75km for Round 5 and 6

	Percentage of Chinese projects located at 25km (distance < 25km)	Percentage of Chinese projects located at 50km (distance < 50km)	Percentage of Chinese projects located at 75km (distance < 75km)
Round 5	43.36408%	62.51065%	73.76746%
Round 6	44.81582%	63.11472%	74.80164%

Figure 36. Distribution of the IV measured as distance from the cluster to the closest Chinese project, Round 5

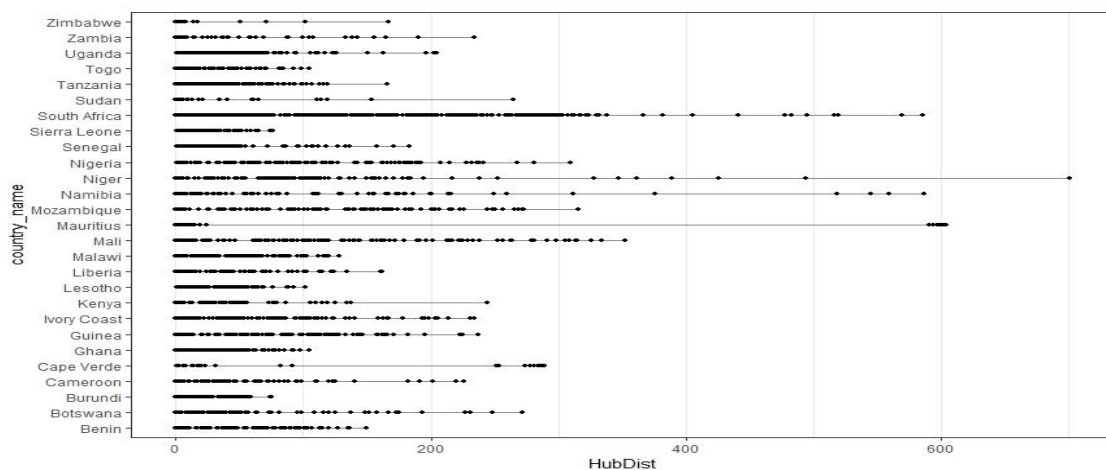
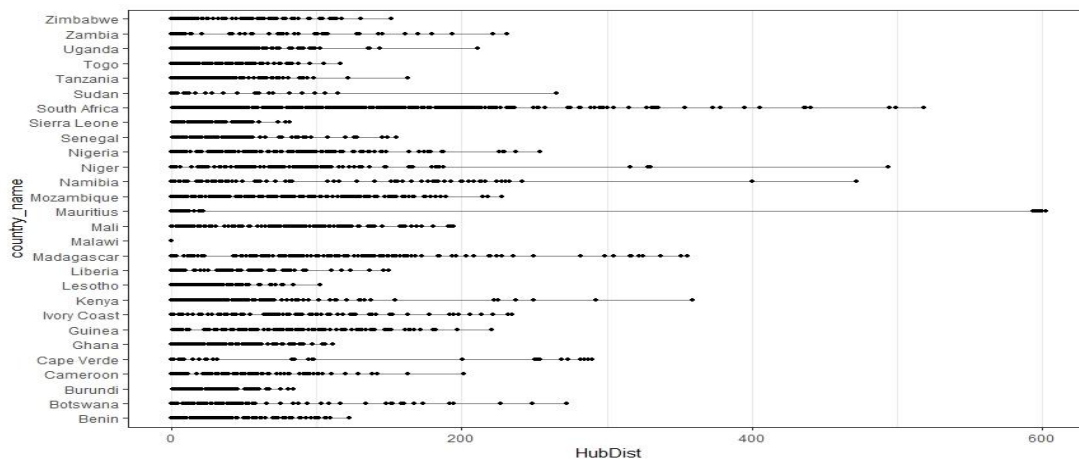


Figure 37. Distribution of the IV measured as distance from the cluster to the closest Chinese project, Round 6



c) Methods

To investigate the process of authoritarian diffusion at individual level in Africa, I will test the impact of Chinese finance projects on public attitudes toward liberal democracy through different statistical multilevel model specifications, such as Linear Mixed-Effects Models. The scholarship has mainly investigated Chinese Aid data and/or Afrobarometer data mainly through multilevel modelling (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Mattes and Bratton 2007; Huang et al. 2008; Moehler and Lindberg 2009; Fernandez and Kuenzi 2010; Magalhães 2014; Kriekhaus et al. 2014; Cho 2014; Konte 2016). Multilevel modelling is recommended for this type of data as the dependent and independent variables are measured at different levels. I will use the following control variables that have been previously used in the literature:

- Gender of respondent (Q101) (Konte and Klasen 2016);
- Age of the respondent (Q1) (Donovan and Karp 2006; Kriekhaus et al. 2014);
- Education of respondent (Q97) (Evans and Rose 2007; 2012);
- Government performance (Q65A/Q66A) (Bratton and Mattes 2001 and Mattes and Bratton 2007);
- Public safety (Q9A) (Fernandez and Kuenzi 2010);
- Employment (Q96) (Andersen 2012; Shafiq 2010).

The formula for the Linear Mixed-Effects Models, with continuous dependent variable, adapted from Barr et al. (2013):

$$\begin{aligned} Composite_{rl} = & \beta_0 + L_{0l} + \beta_1 Counts_l / Distance_l + \beta_2 Gender_l + \beta_3 Age_l \\ & + \beta_4 Education_l + \beta_5 Government Performance_l \\ & + \beta_6 Public Safety_l + \beta_7 Employment_l + e_{rl}, \end{aligned}$$

where r is the Afrobarometer respondent, L is the Afrobarometer cluster, district or regional random effect and Counts or Distance is the independent variable.

Analysis

In this section, I will discuss the results of the multilevel models which include the independent variable measured, first, as distance from a Chinese project to the closest Afrobarometer cluster and, second, as the number of Chinese financed projects located at different buffer areas around the respondents' cluster (25km,

50km and 75km) and 1st level and 2nd level administrative divisions. The dependent variable is measured by the Liberal-Democracy composite, as well as by its components: Democratic rule and Liberal composite (which is an aggregate of Civil liberties, Rule of Law and Power constrains and divisions subcomponents). Overall, the combination of 6 independent variables and 7 dependent variables results into 72 different multilevel models.

The results are shown in Tables 9-12 (pages 103-106) and indicate that there is no strong evidence that authoritarian diffusion might be happening at the individual level. This conclusion is warranted given that:

- a) There is a high percentage of non-significant coefficients (47%) which means that in 34 models, there is no significant effect of the proximity to and counts of Chinese projects on attitudes towards liberal-democracy. At the same time, in 28% of the models (highlighted in red), the direction of effect is contradicting my initial expectations, while in only 25% of models (indicated in blue), the independent variable has the expected significant effect.

Table 9. All multilevel models using round 5 data (part 1)

	Liberal-Democracy	Democracy rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law	Liberal-Democracy	Democracy rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law	Liberal-Democracy	Democracy rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law
(Intercept)	0.32 (0.01)***	0.70 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.39 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.69 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.35 (0.01)***	0.38 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.69 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.35 (0.01)***	0.38 (0.01)***
Distance	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)				-0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)**						
Counts 25km								0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)		-0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)**						
Counts 50km																		
Female	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)**	0.03 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)**	0.03 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)**	0.03 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***
Government performance	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***
Safety	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	
Employment	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***
AIC	-9814.52	-10938.99	3549.34	5575.30	-8625.57	1003.08	-9817.21	-10915.15	3544.02	5569.80	-8636.64	1016.56	-9817.79	-10913.10	3544.60	5570.67	-8631.18	1017.70
BIC	-9733.04	-10857.52	3630.82	5656.77	-8544.10	1084.56	-9735.74	-10833.67	3625.50	5651.28	-8555.16	1098.04	-9736.31	-10831.62	3626.07	5652.14	-8549.71	1099.17
Log Likelihood	4917.26	5479.50	-1764.67	-2777.65	4322.79	-491.54	4918.61	5467.57	-1762.01	-2774.90	4328.32	-498.28	4918.89	5466.55	-1762.30	-2775.33	4325.59	-498.85
Num. obs.	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527
Num. groups: cluster	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441
Var. cluster (intercept)	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Var. Residual	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.06

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Table 10. All multilevel models using round 5 data (part 2)

	Democracy	rule	composite	liberties	constrains	law	Democracy	Democratic rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law	Liberal Democracy	Democratic rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law
(Intercept)	0.33 (0.01)***	0.69 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.35 (0.01)***	0.38 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.69 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.35 (0.01)***	0.36 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.69 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.35 (0.01)***	0.36 (0.01)***
Counts 75km	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Counts ADM2																		
Counts ADM1																		
Female	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***
Government performance	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***
Safety	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)
Employment	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)**	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)
AIC	-9821.00	-10925.49	3544.36	5570.77	-8643.10	1017.90	-9484.54	-10853.94	3053.21	4943.94	-8262.53	482.74	-10853.53	-11964.35	2579.24	4626.15	-9700.45	95.92
BIC	-9739.52	-10844.01	3625.83	5652.25	-8561.63	1099.37	-9403.84	-10773.24	3133.92	5024.65	-8181.83	563.45	-10772.05	-11882.88	2660.71	4707.62	-9618.97	177.39
Log Likelihood	4920.50	5472.74	-1762.18	-2775.39	4331.55	-498.95	4752.27	5436.97	-1516.61	-2461.97	4141.27	-231.37	5436.76	5992.18	-1279.62	-2303.07	4860.22	-37.96
Num. obs.	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	23641	23641	23641	23641	23641	23641	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527	25527
Num. groups: cluster	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441	3441												
Var. cluster (intercept)	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.06
Var. Residual ADM2	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.06	1286	1286	1286	1286	1286	1286						
Var. ADM2 (intercept)																		
Num. groups: ADM1																		
Var. ADM1 (intercept)																		

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Table 11. All multilevel models using round 6 data (part 1)

	Liberal-Democracy	Democratic rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law	Liberal Democracy	Democratic rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law
(Intercept)	0.67 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.30 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***
Distance	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***
Counts 25km							0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***
Counts 50km																
Female	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***
Government performance	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.08 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.08 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.08 (0.00)***
Safety	0.00 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)**	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)**	0.02 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)**	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)**	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)**	0.02 (0.00)***
Employment	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
AIC	-12059.08	-9587.80	1024.65	13231.67	-9587.80	9797.67	-12062.84	-9587.99	1021.46	13232.29	-9587.99	9772.33	-12065.27	13231.81	-9592.07	9779.97
BIC	-11977.76	-9506.48	1105.97	13312.99	-9506.48	9878.99	-11981.52	-9506.67	1102.78	13313.61	-9506.67	9853.65	-11983.95	13313.13	-9510.75	9861.29
Log Likelihood	6039.54	4803.90	-502.32	-6605.84	4803.90	-4888.84	6041.42	4804.00	-500.73	-6606.14	4804.00	-4876.16	6042.64	-6605.91	4806.03	-4879.98
Num. obs.	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134
Num. groups: cluster	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.01
Var: Residual	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.09	0.04	0.08

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Table 12. All multilevel models using round 6 (part 2)

	Liberal Democracy	Democratic rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law	Liberal Democracy	Democratic rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law	Liberal Democracy	Democratic rule	Liberal composite	Civil liberties	Power constrains	Rule of law
(Intercept)	0.66 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.65 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.36 (0.01)***	0.36 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.35 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.35 (0.01)***	0.35 (0.01)***	0.34 (0.01)***	0.38 (0.01)***
Counts 75km	0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Counts ADM2																		
Counts ADM1																		
Female	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	-0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*
Education	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***
Government performance	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.08 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.08 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.07 (0.00)***
Safety	0.00 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)**	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)**	0.02 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)**	0.00 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)**	0.00 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)***
Employment	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*
AIC	-12070.46	-9600.98	1021.18	13227.54	-9600.98	9783.50	-14046.80	-11073.71	1400.26	16111.77	-11073.71	11292.99	-16201.49	-12889.51	401.55	16540.20	-12889.51	11842.28
BIC	-11989.14	-9519.66	1102.50	13308.86	-9519.66	9864.82	-13963.54	-10990.45	1483.52	16195.03	-10990.45	11376.25	-16117.28	-12805.30	485.75	16624.41	-12805.30	11926.49
Log Likelihood	6045.23	4810.49	-500.59	-6603.77	4810.49	-4881.75	7033.40	5546.86	-690.13	-8045.88	5546.86	-5636.49	8110.75	6454.75	-190.77	-8260.10	6454.75	-5911.14
Nnum. obs.	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	25134	30507	30507	30507	30507	30507	30507	33550	33550	33550	33550	33550	33550
Nnum. groups: cluster	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461	3461												
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01												
Var: Residual ADM2	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.04	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.04	0.08
Nnum. groups: ADM1							1585	1585	1585	1585	1585	1585						
Var: ADM1 (Intercept)							0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

b) The direction/significance of the effect changes across the measurements and rounds which indicates no consistency in the results

One example of change in direction is presented in Tables 13 and 14. While for round 5, I found a significant negative impact of counts of Chinese finance projects in a buffer area of 75 km from the Afrobarometer cluster on Africans citizens' attitudes towards liberal-democracy. In round 6, on the other hand, these results do not hold, and I reject four hypotheses due to the coefficient having an opposite sign than the one expected.

Table 13. Multilevel models with the IV measured as counts and distance and Liberal-Democracy as DV (round 5)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.32 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.33 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***	0.32 (0.01)***
Distance	0.00 (0.00)					
Counts 25km		-0.00 (0.00)				
Counts 50km			-0.00 (0.00)			
Counts 75km				-0.00 (0.00)*		
Counts ADM2					0.00 (0.00)	
Counts ADM1						0.00 (0.00)
Female	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***
Government Performance	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***
Safety	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Employment	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)**
AIC	-9814.52	-9817.21	-9817.79	-9821.00	-9484.54	-10853.53
BIC	-9733.04	-9735.74	-9736.31	-9739.52	-9403.84	-10772.05
Log Likelihood	4917.26	4918.61	4918.89	4920.50	4752.27	5436.76
Num. obs.	25527	25527	25527	25527	23641	25527
Num. groups: cluster	3441	3441	3441	3441		
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01		
Var: Residual	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
Num. groups: ADM2					1286	
Var: ADM2 (Intercept)					0.01	
Num. groups: ADM1						417
Var: ADM1 (Intercept)						0.01

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Table 14. Multilevel models with the IV measured as counts and distance and Liberal-Democracy as DV (round 6)

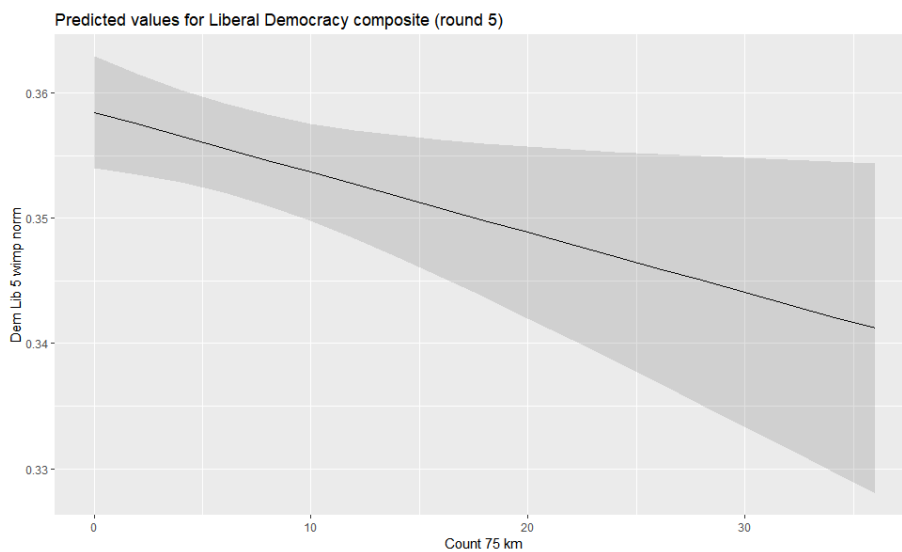
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.67 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***	0.65 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***
Distance	-0.00 (0.00)***					
Counts 25km		0.00 (0.00)***				
Counts 50km			0.00 (0.00)***			
Counts 75km				0.00 (0.00)***		
Counts ADM2					0.00 (0.00)	
Counts ADM1						0.00 (0.00)
Female	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***
Government Performance	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***
Safety	0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Employment	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
AIC	-12059.08	-12062.84	-12065.27	-12070.46	-14046.80	-16201.49
BIC	-11977.76	-11981.52	-11983.95	-11989.14	-13963.54	-16117.28
Log Likelihood	6039.54	6041.42	6042.64	6045.23	7033.40	8110.75
Num. obs.	25134	25134	25134	25134	30507	33550
Num. groups: cluster	3461	3461	3461	3461		
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Var: Residual	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04
Num. groups: ADM2					1585	
Var: ADM2 (Intercept)					0.00	
Num. groups: ADM1						428
Var: ADM1 (Intercept)						0.00

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

c) Even if in 18 models, I find a significant effect with the expected direction, the magnitude of the effect is small

In Figure 38, I plot the marginal effect of the counts of Chinese projects in a buffer area of 75km from the Afrobarometer cluster on the peoples' attitudes towards Liberal-Democracy. The plot below shows that the effect is small, considering that an increase of approximately 20 Chinese finance projects in the 75 km buffer determines a decrease in peoples' attitudes towards liberal-democracy composite of 0.01, in the context in which the composite is normalised on a continuous scale from 0 to 1.

Figure 38. Marginal effects plot of counts of Chinese finance projects at 75km on Liberal-Democracy (Table 13, model 4, Afrobarometer data round 5)



Additional analysis

As the results reported above are mixed, to further explore the impact of Chinese projects on Africans' attitudes towards liberal-democracy, I conduct additional analysis by splitting the data into subsets to assess whether being part of China's special economic zones (SEZs) makes a difference in effect. The China SEZs are unique economic areas across Sub-Saharan African countries in which the Chinese companies and business can experiment with different investment programmes, in an attempt to replicate the success of the SEZs located in China. The second strategy is to explore this relationship, country by country, as an attempt to assess whether country-level specific factors might matter. I conduct all the models for each of the 28 countries in my dataset, in both rounds which results in almost 2000 models. Overall, there is very weak evidence for diffusion even after an assessment of over 2000 individual models.

a) SEZ countries: Mauritius, Nigeria and Zambia

The Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are areas inside a country with concentrated economic and industrial activities, which are subject to preferential laws and regulations and are meant to attract investments and facilitate economic growth. The Chinese SEZ are different than the typical SEZs established across Africa by the national government as they represent enclaves created at the initiative of the Chinese government and are administrated by Chinese companies. Initially, Chinese SEZ were meant to serve as an experimental space for Chinese investment programmes, following the success of SEZs in China (Dannenberg et al. 2013; Tao and Yuan 2016; Kim 2017). Currently, there are 6 African countries with Chinese SEZs: 2 in North Africa (Egypt and Algeria) and 4 in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Mauritius, Nigeria and Zambia). According to Dannenberg et al. (2013, p. 8), the Chinese government's reasoning behind choosing the locations of Chinese SEZs varies from country to country: competitive and highly developed markets (e.g. Mauritius); economic growth and resource seeking (e.g. Ethiopia, Zambia and Nigeria). Following the most recent literature (Bräutigam and Xiaoyang 2011; Santos António and Ma 2015), we identify six Chinese SEZs functional across Sub-Saharan Africa as: Jiangsu Oriental Industrial Park (Ethiopia), Jinfei Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone (Mauritius), two Nonferrous Metal Mining Group Industrial Zones, one in Chambishi and one in Lusaka (Zambia), Ogun State Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone and Lekki Free Trade Zone in Lagos State (Nigeria).

As the Chinese SEZs are agglomerations of economic activities of enterprises originated from China, which foster technology transfer and become centres of learning (Bräutigam and Tang 2014; Zeng 2016), we would expect people living in these areas to be more accustomed with Chinese practices and to experience the benefits of such interactions. Based on this reasoning, the effect of Chinese finance projects might be stronger in the countries that host Chinese SEZs compared to the other. To test this hypothesis²⁹, I will split the data into two subsets: one with countries that have Chinese SEZs and another with countries that do not have any Chinese SEZs. Out of the four Sub-Saharan African countries that have Chinese SEZ, Ethiopia was not

²⁹ As the Chinese SEZ are areas (represented as polygons on the map) and not specific locations (e.g. building, school etc. which are represented as points on the map), it is not possible to calculate the distances.

surveyed in the Afrobarometer round 5 and 6, thus, the subset of SEZ countries includes just Mauritius, Zambia and Nigeria and accounts for 2892 respondents in round 5 and 4071 respondents in round 6.

The results of the multilevel models are reported in Tables 15 and 16. They indicate that, in round 5, there is a significant and negative effect of counts of Chinese projects on peoples' attitudes towards liberal-democracy from the three SEZ countries: Nigeria, Mauritius and Zambia. At the same time, in the subset without the SEZ countries, the effect is no longer visible, indicating that having a SEZ region could make a difference. Still the effect does not hold when conducting the same analysis with the round 6 data (Annexes F page 271).

Table 15. Multilevel model with "Liberal Democracy" composite as DV (round 5 SEZ)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.45 (0.02)***	0.46 (0.02)***	0.46 (0.02)***	0.46 (0.02)***	0.47 (0.03)***	0.43 (0.02)***
Distance	0.00 (0.00)					
Counts 25km		-0.00 (0.00)***				
Counts 50km			-0.00 (0.00)***			
Counts 75km				-0.00 (0.00)***		
Counts District					-0.00 (0.00)	
Counts Regional						-0.01 (0.00)*
Gender	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)*	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)***
Government Performance	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.01)**	0.02 (0.00)***
Safety	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)
Employment	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)
AIC	-1402.19	-1418.02	-1424.41	-1424.75	-797.53	-1427.03
BIC	-1342.67	-1358.49	-1364.89	-1365.22	-741.95	-1367.51
Log Likelihood	711.10	719.01	722.21	722.37	408.76	723.51
Num. obs.	2842	2842	2842	2842	1916	2842
Num. groups: cluster	325	325	325	325		
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01		
Var: Residual	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Num. groups: ID_district					171	
Var: ID_district (Intercept)					0.01	
Num. groups: ID_region						56
Var: ID_region (Intercept)						0.00

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Table 16. Multilevel model with "Liberal Democracy" composite as DV (round 5 without SEZ)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.31 (0.01)***	0.31 (0.01)***	0.31 (0.01)***	0.31 (0.01)***	0.31 (0.01)***	0.30 (0.01)***
Distance	0.00 (0.00)					
Counts 25km		-0.00 (0.00)				
Counts 50km			-0.00 (0.00)			
Counts 75km				-0.00 (0.00)		
Counts District					0.00 (0.00)	
Counts Regional						0.00 (0.00)**
Gender	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***
Government Performance	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***
Safety	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)*
Employment	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**
AIC	-8443.12	-8447.49	-8447.25	-8447.91	-8707.06	-9389.04
BIC	-8362.82	-8367.20	-8366.95	-8367.61	-8627.20	-9308.75
Log Likelihood	4231.56	4233.75	4233.62	4233.95	4363.53	4704.52
Num. obs.	22685	22685	22685	22685	21725	22685
Num. groups: geoname_id	3116	3116	3116	3116		
Var: geoname_id (Intercept)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01		
Var: Residual	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
Num. groups: ID_district					1115	
Var: ID_district (Intercept)					0.01	
Num. groups: ID_region						361
Var: ID_region (Intercept)						0.01

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

b) Country by country models

Another way of looking at the impact of the Chinese projects on public attitudes towards liberal democracy is to conduct the analysis country by country in order to account for possible country-level factors. Even after assessing the results of approximately 2000 models, I find no strong support for the hypothesis that authoritarian diffusion might be happening due the presence of Chinese finance projects. This conclusion is warranted as there is no consistency in the results, even after grouping the countries based on being the top receivers of Chinese trade, having considerable amounts of resources and the rest of the countries that are not included in the previous categories. First, as top receiver of the Chinese trade (South Africa, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Benin, Liberia, Mauritius and Tanzania), there is more media coverage so a higher exposure and more opportunities for demonstration to happen. But the empirical results do not support this hypothesis as the effect of the Chinese aid project is not more visible in the top receiver countries of the Chinese trade. For example, Benin (see Table 17 below) is one of the few countries that experience a decrease in support for liberal democracy in the presence of the Chinese projects, but this effect is not robust throughout the different measurements of the independent variable.

Table 17. Multilevel model with all measures for the IV and "Liberal-Democracy" composite as DV (Benin, Round 5)

	Benin: Liberal-Democracy, Round 5					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.28 (0.04)***	0.32 (0.04)***	0.33 (0.04)***	0.34 (0.04)***	0.31 (0.04)***	0.28 (0.04)***
Distance	0.00 (0.00)*					
Gender	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Government Performance	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Safety	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)*	0.01 (0.01)*	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Employment	-0.03 (0.01)**	-0.03 (0.01)**	-0.03 (0.01)**	-0.03 (0.01)**	-0.03 (0.01)***	-0.03 (0.01)*
Counts 25km		-0.00 (0.00)				
Counts 50km			-0.01 (0.00)**			
Counts 75km				-0.01 (0.00)***		
Counts District					0.00 (0.01)	
Counts Regional						0.00 (0.01)
AIC	-378.51	-380.90	-386.69	-387.91	-420.69	-426.75
BIC	-331.57	-333.96	-339.75	-340.96	-373.75	-379.80
Log Likelihood	199.26	200.45	203.35	203.95	220.35	223.38
Num. obs.	808	808	808	808	808	808
Num. groups: cluster	101	101	101	101		
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Var: Residual	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Num. groups: ID_district					33	
Var: ID_district (Intercept)					0.01	
Num. groups: ID_region						12
Var: ID_region (Intercept)						0.01

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Second, the countries that are rich in natural resources (e.g. Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Niger, Zambia, Mozambique, Guinea, Ghana and Botswana) also offer an inconclusive picture of the impact of Chinese finance projects on public attitudes towards liberal-democracy. Most of these countries (e.g. Botswana, Niger, Kenya and Guinea) display mixed results, but there are also countries, such as Namibia (Table 18), where, in general, the liberal-democratic attitudes are strengthened by the presence of Chinese projects, while in countries like Guinea, they are negatively affected (Table 19).

Table 18. Multilevel model with all measurements for the IV and "Liberal-Democracy" as DV (Namibia, Round 6)

Namibia: Liberal-democracy, round 6						
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.65 (0.03)***	0.62 (0.03)***	0.62 (0.03)***	0.62 (0.03)***	0.63 (0.03)***	0.63 (0.03)***
Distance	-0.00 (0.00)					
Counts 25km		0.00 (0.00)**				
Counts 50km			0.00 (0.00)***			
Counts 75km				0.00 (0.00)**		
Counts District					0.00 (0.00)	
Counts Regional						0.00 (0.00)**
Gender	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)
Government Performance	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Safety	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Employment	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)*
AIC	-617.34	-628.59	-629.28	-628.19	-640.29	-716.54
BIC	-568.93	-580.18	-580.87	-579.78	-591.48	-666.66
Log Likelihood	318.67	324.30	324.64	324.10	330.15	368.27
Num. obs.	936	936	936	936	974	1084
Num. groups: cluster	80	80	80	80		
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Var: Residual	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Num. groups: ID_district					68	
Var: ID_district (Intercept)					0.00	
Num. groups: ID_region						13
Var: ID_region (Intercept)						0.00

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Table 19. Multilevel model with all measurements for the IV and "Liberal-Democracy" as DV (Guinea, Round 6)

Guinea: Liberal-democracy, Round 6						
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.81 (0.04)***	0.81 (0.04)***	0.82 (0.04)***	0.82 (0.04)***	0.79 (0.04)***	0.79 (0.04)***
Distance	-0.00 (0.00)					
Counts 25km		-0.00 (0.00)*				
Counts 50km			-0.00 (0.00)**			
Counts 75km				-0.00 (0.00)**		
Counts District					-0.00 (0.00)	
Counts Regional						-0.00 (0.00)
Gender	-0.03 (0.01)*	-0.03 (0.01)*	-0.03 (0.01)*	-0.03 (0.01)*	-0.03 (0.01)*	-0.03 (0.01)*
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Education	0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*
Government Performance	-0.01 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)**	-0.02 (0.01)**	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)*
Safety	-0.03 (0.01)***	-0.03 (0.01)***	-0.03 (0.01)***	-0.03 (0.01)***	-0.02 (0.01)***	-0.02 (0.01)***
Employment	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
AIC	-274.56	-283.10	-285.39	-285.51	-342.22	-346.36
BIC	-227.34	-235.87	-238.17	-238.28	-293.81	-297.79
Log Likelihood	147.28	151.55	152.70	152.75	181.11	183.18
Num. obs.	831	831	831	831	935	950
Num. groups: cluster	117	117	117	117		
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Var: Residual	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
Num. groups: ID_district					33	
Var: ID_district (Intercept)					0.00	
Num. groups: ID_region						8
Var: ID_region (Intercept)						0.00

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Last, other Sub-Saharan African countries that are not included in the previous two categories (Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Lesotho, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Uganda) also do not offer any additional information. For example, in countries such as Cameroon, an example of country at the limit between being considered an autocracy or a non-consolidated democracy with an average score of -4 in Polity IV data, over the past 2 decades, the presence of Chinese projects is enhancing peoples' support for different aspects of liberal democracy (E.g. Rule of Law in Round 5). At the same time, in countries such as Cape Verde, which is regarded to be a consolidated democracy by Polity IV with an average score of 9.6 in the same period, peoples' attitudes toward liberal-democracy are affected by both the proximity to a Chinese project and their increasing number (Table 20).

Table 20. Multilevel model with all measures for IV and "Liberal-Democracy" composite as DV (Cape Verde, Round 5)

Cape Verde: Liberal-Democracy, round 5					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	0.25 (0.04)***	0.32 (0.04)***	0.34 (0.04)***	0.34 (0.04)***	0.31 (0.04)***
Distance	0.00 (0.00)***				
Counts 25km		-0.02 (0.00)***			
Counts 50km			-0.02 (0.00)***		
Counts 75km				-0.02 (0.00)***	
Counts Regional					-0.01 (0.01)
Gender	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)**
Government Performance	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Safety	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Employment	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
AIC	-432.43	-440.24	-443.27	-443.27	-432.54
BIC	-390.79	-398.61	-401.64	-401.64	-390.91
Log Likelihood	226.21	230.12	231.64	231.64	226.27
Num. obs.	475	475	475	475	475
Num. groups: cluster	45	45	45	45	
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Var: Residual	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Num. groups: ID_region					13
Var: ID_region (Intercept)					0.00

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

In conclusion, the additional analysis included in this section do not provide any conclusive evidence regarding the role of Chinese SEZs in enhancing the effect of the Chinese economic engagement or that country-specific factors might affect the results. While, the counts of the Chinese finance projects, in round 5, are found to negatively affect peoples' attitudes towards liberal-democracy from the SEZs countries sample; the effect is not robust when conducting the same analysis with the round 6 data. Lastly, the results of over 2000 models do not indicate patterns that might be due to the country specific factors.

Discussion of the results

The results presented in the previous sections indicate that there is no consistently strong evidence to support the hypothesis that authoritarian diffusion might be happening at the individual level due to the presence of Chinese finance projects. In the following paragraphs I will discuss the empirical and theoretical potential reasons that might explain these non-results: issues with the data; the projects not clearly demonstrating the features of the China model; and even when these Chinese practices are demonstrated, the possibility that these are not being presented in such a way that can be distinguished from those of the West. First, I suggest that although there may be issues with the data, this dataset was used in peer-reviews published papers (Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Kilama 2016; Dong and Fan 2017; Kish and Raleigh 2016; Dreher et al. 2016, 2018; Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a; 2018b) and the results are consistent with the findings of the subsequent chapters.

Then, I then consider the remaining theoretical explanations which are related and not mutually exclusive as both indicate potential issues of communication and problems in accessing complete information regarding the China model. On the one hand, in the spirit of the principle-agent dilemma, the increasing distance between Chinese government and the Chinese companies that are implementing aid projects abroad, leads to less information about China model being transmitted to the local population. This is because the Chinese officials have less control over the activity of these companies (Gill and Reilly 2007; Breslin 2013; Zhang and Smith 2017) while the Chinese companies are acting like rational capitalist actors that are more interested in maximizing their economic benefits rather than properly implementing the aid projects and demonstrating how the China model works in practice. On the other hand, Rounds and Huang (2017) argued that the differences in labour practices of Chinese and American companies active in Africa, are not due to the country of origin, but because of differences in the characteristics and types of companies. In this case, the successful implementation of Chinese aid projects might not result in a clear demonstration of the China model. This implies, again, that the process of the authoritarian diffusion of the Chinese practices might not happen as the information about the China model is not properly conveyed to the public from Sub-Saharan African states.

a) Issues with the data

The first potential explanations for why we do not find strong evidence of authoritarian diffusion refers to the possibility of measurement error related to the data as well as the need for more disaggregated data. First, the China Aid Data constitute one of first attempts to create a dataset of Chinese projects worldwide, useful to empirically investigate the impact of Chinese engagement globally. As this dataset was created using media sources, it has not avoided criticism from scholars for issues of accuracy and overestimation (Kitano and Harada 2016).

Still, to my knowledge, this is the only available data that offers information about the location of the Chinese projects across Africa. This is relevant in the context in which neither the Chinese government nor any international institution or organization (e.g. OECD-DAC) provide any disaggregated data regarding the Chinese projects. As previously mentioned, this data has been extensively used by scholars in peer-review published papers (Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b; Kilama 2016; Dong and Fan 2017; Kish and Raleigh 2016; Dreher et al. 2016, 2018 and Fuchs and Dreher 2015). Also, according to Marina Rudyak, the editor of the China Aid Blog, in the official statements, the representatives of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) did not clearly assessed the China Aid Data as being wrong but just indicated that the data might not differentiate between the different type of Chinese aid (China Aid Blog 2017).

Second, while the creators of this dataset aim to offer as many details as possible about the projects (e.g. amount, type of project, date of start and end etc.) not all projects are available with the same amount of details. This means that it is very difficult to assess whether the diffusion is dependent on the type of project. For example, one might argue that the different types of projects could have different types of effect (e.g. building a school versus a road). Still there is no previous research indicating that the Chinese companies are displaying different practices depending on the sector of the project.

Last, the lack of clear information indicating the direct beneficiary of the project might represent an explanation for the non-results. In the discussion of my theoretical mechanism, from pages 78-83, I assume that people living in the proximity of the Chinese projects are those mainly benefitting from the completion of the project. Still, I acknowledge that there is not enough data available to clearly differentiate between

projects that provide national or local goods and, and in-depth content analysis of each project individually would be required in order to provide clear and persuasive evidence in support of this claim. For this reason, I acknowledge that, given the existing data, it is not possible to argue with certitude that all projects included in the analysis are providing benefits only for the local population, living in the proximity of the project. Thus, it might be possible that this could represent a reason for the non-results.

Overall, while there may be issues with the China Aid data, this dataset has recently received an increased academic recognition by being used in peer-review research papers (see for example Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018a, 2018b and Dreher et al. 2016, 2018). Moreover, the China project dataset was created by Aid Data³⁰ which a research lab at William & Mary research university, received funding from well-known funders in aid research (e.g. USAID and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) and has dozens of partners and research affiliates across the world (including academics, economists, researchers or political scientists).

b) The projects might not demonstrate clearly the features of the Chinese model: diffusion at a distance?

Another potential explanations for why we might not observe authoritarian diffusion at the individual level, could be that the Chinese finance projects might not be demonstrating the Chinese model entirely. As discussed in the theory section, the Chinese authoritarian model is a particular model, which includes illiberal and non-democratic elements. At the same time, the Chinese companies responsible for implementing the finance projects do not represent an exact replica of the Chinese political model, but just examples of Chinese management and commercial practices. For this reason, the citizens of African states living in the proximity of Chinese companies might be exposed to certain workplace practices (e.g. top-down management and strict breaks) that are valid solely in the work environment and might not affect their daily life. Additionally, we have no information regarding people's prior knowledge of the China model and with the current data; it is not possible to assess whether citizens of Sub-Saharan African countries make connections between the China model and the Chinese finance projects.

³⁰ See the Aid Data website for more details: <https://www.aiddata.org/about>.

Scholars have argued that the relationship between the Chinese government and the Chinese companies implementing the Chinese finance projects follows a principal-agent logic (Gill and Reilly 2007; Yi-Chong 2014; Zhang and Smith 2017; Jones and Zou 2017). This means that the government is delegating all the responsibilities related to the implementation of the project to the Chinese companies and expects these companies to fulfil them accordingly. At the same time, the Chinese authorities have limited strings (e.g. reduced number of bureaucrats) to control the activities of the over 30000 Chinese companies that have activities abroad (Jones and Zou 2017, p. 743). In particular, MOFCOM or the Chinese Ministry of Commerce is the only institution that sends representative to each Chinese embassy in order to oversee the implementation of the Chinese projects (Zhang and Smith 2017), while their role is predominantly to observe and send information back to China.

In this context, it is possible that geographical distance creates further distance between the Chinese government and the companies as it becomes more difficult for the Chinese bureaucrats to monitor and control the activity of the Chinese companies while the latter might not feel accountable to follow the directions given by their principals (Breslin 2013; Gill and Reilly 2007). While acting as agents of the government, the Chinese companies are expected to adhere to the interests of the Chinese foreign policy. But the increasing distance can make it difficult for the Chinese bureaucrats to assess to what degree the activity of the Chinese companies abroad is indeed following the indications received from Beijing.

Another aspect that needs to be considered regarding the Chinese companies overseas is that they do not act as a monolith but are characterized by diversity and competition (Huliaras 2012; Yi-Chong 2014). This is due to the huge number of private and state-owned companies that can compete nationally for the right to implement Chinese finance projects in other countries. While the private companies are less regulated than the state-owned ones, the latter ones can originate from different regions across China and benefit from the support of the regional government. In this context, they become agents of the regional and not the central government which constitutes an additional reason to question the loyalty of these companies towards the government and the uniformity with which the model might be demonstrated. In line with this claim, scholars, such as Breslin (2013) and Zhang and Smith (2017), argued that the Chinese companies acting abroad are more interested in their own gains rather

than successful implementation of the aid projects. In this context, these Chinese companies become real life examples of the Western capitalism and not of the China model. This implies that rather than being mediators, the Chinese companies become barriers to the process of diffusion of Chinese practices by choosing to follow their own economic interest. In this case, the local population of African countries has access to limited information about the China model as the Chinese practices are not entirely demonstrated which, implicitly, affects may create a barrier to the authoritarian diffusion process.

c) **Even the aspects that are demonstrated, are not done so clearly in a way that distinguishes the Chinese from Western companies**

Another potential explanation for the non-results comes from the recent research that has shed light into the labour practices of Chinese employers in Africa, indicating that there is no much of a difference between the way the Chinese companies treat their employees from Sub-Saharan African countries compared to Western companies (Rounds and Huang 2017).

Since China has started to engage intensively in Africa, there have been increasing concerns expressed by both media and scholarship regarding the bad treatment (e.g. low wages, poor working conditions and aggression) suffered by African labours at the hand of Chinese employers (Lee 2009; Brooks 2010; Smith 2012). However, recently, scholars, such as Xiaoyang (2016), have argued that we should be more cautious while assessing these individual experiences as they present only partially the story of Chinese labour practices in Africa. They add that the existing data reports from international institutions, such as the World Bank, counter these claims by showing that the average salary in the Chinese company from Ethiopia is 85 US dollars which is 13% above the average national wage of 75 US dollars (Geiger and Goh 2012, p.12). More recently, Rounds and Huang (2017) has compared the labour practices of Chinese and Western companies in Kenya and found that a lot of differences are determined by the features of the company and not its country of origin. For example, while exploring the issue of informality, they found that the practice of not signing contracts with employee is related to the size of the company and their resources as start-ups, both American and Chinese tend to mobilize less resources in order to satisfy employees' demands. Another criticism of the Chinese business

practices refers to the lack of nominations of Kenyans in executive and decision-making positions. Still, Rounds and Huang (2017) found that this practice is not particular to Chinese companies as it is found also in the American enterprises.

Overall, the discussion about the similarities between the labour practices of American and Chinese companies indicates that the China model might not be clearly demonstrated abroad through the activities of the Chinese companies as the practices they presented are found to be no different than those used by the American counterpart.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated the process of authoritarian diffusion at the individual level by testing whether the presence or counts of Chinese financed projects is affecting people's attitudes towards liberal democracy by diffusing authoritarian attitudes which have been proven to be economically successful as part of the Chinese development model. It tests the hypothesis that the Chinese finance projects identified across Sub-Saharan African countries could be demonstrating the authoritarian practices that characterize the Chinese model (e.g. through the process of their implementation) and are considered to have contributed to its high growth performance.

The dependent variable was operationalized using survey data from Afrobarometer round 5 and 6 (with respondents from 28 Sub-Saharan African countries) to create a complex Liberal-Democracy composite using Bayesian factor analysis and Markov Chain Monte Carlo method with over 100 000 iterations. I combined this with geocoded data on the location of Chinese financed projects. Thus, the independent variable is measured in two way: as distance from a Chinese project to the closest Afrobarometer cluster and, as the number of Chinese financed projects located at different buffer areas around the respondents' cluster (25km, 50km and 75km) and 1st level and 2nd level administrative divisions.

Overall, the results of the multilevel models are mixed and inconclusive, indicating that there is no strong evidence that authoritarian diffusion might be happening. This claim is supported by the fact that there is a high percentage of non-significance (47%), the direction/significance of the effect changes across the measurements and rounds and even when the expected significant effect is found, its

magnitude is small. The additional analyses do not uncover any specific pattern that might explain these results. For example, the presence of the Chinese special economic zone (SEZ) is relevant when looking at the Round 5 data, but these findings do not hold when using the Round 6 data.

I discuss the possible explanations, from a theoretical and empirical point of view, that might explain these non-results: data issue; the projects not clearly demonstrating the features of the China model and even when these Chinese practices are demonstrated, these are not presented in such a way that can be distinguished from the those of the West. While there may be some issues with the data, this dataset has been used in peer-reviewed papers. Then, I argue that both theoretical explanations are plausible as they are related and not mutually exclusive. They both indicate that the Chinese model might not be demonstrated effectively due to issues in communicating complete information about the authoritarian practices which are part of the Chinese authoritarian model. In this context, further investigation is needed to find out whether diffusion might happen if the informational gap is filled in. For this reason, in Paper 2, I conduct a survey-experiment which tests whether learning specific information about aspects of the China model which have contributed to its high growth performance, might determine a change in people's attitudes towards liberal-democracy.

Overall, this paper contributes to the study of authoritarian diffusion at the individual level by testing whether real life demonstrations of authoritarian practices might lead to diffusion. It suggests that increasing geographical distance between the diffuser (China) and the receiver (citizens of Sub-Saharan African countries) could lead to the creation of information gaps that act as barriers to the process of diffusion.

Paper 2: Authoritarian diffusion through learning: evidence from a survey-experiment in Kenya

Abstract

The increasing economic engagement of China in Sub-Saharan Africa has raised concerns regarding its potential impact on public attitudes towards liberal democracy as China now offers an alternative development model to Western liberal democracy.

This paper will try to answer the following questions: Is authoritarian diffusion more likely to happen at individual level in Sub-Saharan Africa through the learning mechanism? What is the impact of learning about an authoritarian development model on peoples' attitudes towards liberal democracy? These questions will be addressed by conducting a survey-experiment in Kenya, a typical African country that has encountered challenges in consolidating its democratic regime and has experienced an increase in Chinese economic engagement. It argues that if African citizens hold materialist and utilitarian values, learning about the authoritarian development model, represented by China, may negatively affect their attitudes towards liberal democracy. This is, especially, important in the context in which, Africans are expressing dissatisfaction with democracy.

The findings provide support for one of the hypotheses as having received the treatment negatively affects the respondents' attitudes toward electoral selection of politicians. This means that as respondents receive information about particular features of the Chinese model that led to the high growth performance, they are showing a higher preference than those who did not had access to this information, for choosing the politicians through a performance-based appointment rather than through an electoral process. While I do not find diffusion on any other aspects of a liberal-democracy, this indicate that what is being diffused is something citizens from Sub-Saharan African countries have not experienced yet, meritocracy.

Overall, this paper extends the study of authoritarian diffusion of Chinese attitudes, at the individual level, in the developing countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, by using a survey-experiment to test the learning mechanism of diffusion. It suggests that the process of diffusion through learning could be affected by the cultural distance between the actors of diffusion.

Introduction

Over the past three years, many reports have indicated a decrease in the popular support and satisfaction with the performance of democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries (Okuru and Armah-Attoh 2016; Mattes and Bratton 2016; Lekalake 2016; Bratton et al. 2017; Isbell 2017a; Isbell and Seabo 2018; Darga 2018; Kibirige 2018). Even consolidated democracies, such as Botswana and South Africa, although constantly rated by Polity IV with a score of 8 and, respectively 9 out of 10, in the past decade, have recorded a decrease in support for and satisfaction with democracy ranging between 3-20% (Lekalake 2016; Darga 2018). While the scholarship has widely emphasized on the importance of high support for democracy for the health and survival of a liberal-democracy (Welzel 2006; Mattes and Bratton 2007 and Foa and Mounk 2016), in the context of the democratic reversal trend, scholars, such as Stoker (2006) and Diamond (2008) have reiterated their warning regarding the implications of increasing dissatisfaction with democracy that might lead to disengagement with politics and distrust in political institutions, which are implicitly harmful for a democratic regime. At the same time, the rise of authoritarian powers has challenged the legitimacy of liberal-democracy as an international norm, considering that countries such as China, are offering alternative authoritarian models of development that have been economically performant.

Generally speaking, citizens of Sub-Saharan African countries have expressed positive appreciations of China and its model of development, a view that is also shared by the political elite from these countries (Hanauer and Morris 2014). According to the results of the 6th round of the Afrobarometer survey, almost 25% of respondents from Sub-Saharan African countries choose the Chinese model as an inspiration for the development of their own country while 31.8% prefer the western model embodied by the US (see Figure 16, page 60 from the Introduction chapter). Even if the appeal of West remains strong, China is also seen positively. But what has not been explored is whether the positive image of China in Africa is leading to a learning process, happening at the individual level, regarding the characteristics of the authoritarian model, represented by China, which have contributed to its high growth performance and which might negatively affect Sub-Saharan Africans' attitudes towards liberal democracy.

This paper builds on the findings from Paper 1 which showed that the authoritarian practices of the China model might not have been demonstrated through Chinese projects as geographical distance can lead to the creation of informational gaps between the actors of diffusion. It further extends the investigation of authoritarian diffusion, at the individual level by examining if, when citizens are exposed to more complete information, diffusion might happen.

It tries to answer the following questions: Is authoritarian diffusion more likely to happen at the individual level in Sub-Saharan Africa through the learning mechanism? What is the impact of learning about an authoritarian development model on peoples' attitudes towards liberal democracy? These questions will be addressed by conducting a survey-experiment in Kenya, a typical African country that has encountered challenges in consolidating its democratic regime and has experienced an increase in the Chinese economic engagement. We would expect that as African citizens hold materialist and utilitarian values, learning about the authoritarian development model, represented by China, will negatively affect their attitudes towards liberal democracy. This is, especially, important in the context in which, Africans are expressing dissatisfaction with democracy.

Based on the results of the ordinal logistic models, I found support for one of the hypotheses as having received specific information about the China model negatively affects the respondents' preference for using elections to select politicians. Specifically, on a scale from 1 (non-democratic) to 9 (democratic), odds of choosing a score of 2 or higher versus a score of 1 are more than 31% lower for the respondents from than treatment group than those in the control group. These results imply that the treatment group shows a higher preference than the control group for choosing the politicians through a performance-based appointment rather than through an electoral process and indicate that what is being diffused is not authoritarianism per se, but something Africans have not experienced yet; meritocracy.

The paper contributes to our understanding of authoritarian diffusion in developing countries by providing the first test of the learning mechanism through an experimental design. It suggests that cultural distance between actors of diffusion can inhibit the learning process of authoritarian practices. It adds to the literature on China in Africa by investigating whether learning about the China model affects individual attitudes towards liberal-democracy.

Literature review

This paper contributes to the literature on support for democracy in Africa by looking at the impact of alternative explanations, such as the role of competing authoritarian models and, to the literature on authoritarian diffusion, by testing empirically, the learning mechanism of diffusion to find out whether learning about the characteristics of an authoritarian model of development affects people's attitudes towards liberal democracy.

An extended review of the literature on support for democracy has been included in Paper 1, pages 71-73. In general, scholars have found that both institutional level determinants, such as government performance and economic inequalities (Evans and Whitefield 1995; Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Andersen 2012; Kriekhaus et al. 2014; Magalhães 2014) and individual level factors, like education, age, income, social learning and political knowledge (Gibson et al. 1992; Donovan and Karp 2006; Shafiq 2010; Miklikowska and Hurme 2011; Memoli 2011; Andersen 2012; Kriekhaus et al. 2014; Cho 2014) matter in understanding individual support for liberal-democracy. In the African context, the scholarship has claimed that, in addition to the previous mentioned determinants (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Mattes and Bratton 2007; Evans and Rose 2007, 2012; Moehler and Lindberg 2009; Fernandez and Kuenzi 2010; Doorenspleet 2012; Konte and Klasen 2016; Konte 2016), support for democracy is also affected by variables specific to the developing regions, such as remittances and public safety (Fernandez and Kuenzi 2010; Konte 2016). But this literature has not investigated the impact of alternative explanations, such as the influence of external authoritarian models, on peoples' support for democracy.

The diffusion literature has addressed the issue of external influence on regime type. It has mainly looked at geographic and temporal transmission of democratic practices and norms (Weyland 2005; Obydenkova 2007), while authoritarian diffusion is an emerging research area, especially in the context of the recent trend of democratic rollback (Ambrosio 2010, 2018; Lankina et al. 2016). As discussed in Paper 1, page 74, more recently, there has been an increased in studies looking to explain the rise of illiberal in the context of the proximity and increasing prestige of authoritarian powers at global level (Boyle 2016; Buzogány 2017; de la Torre 2017 and Krastev 2018). While these studies set a new direction of research in understanding regime change and

diffusion by emphasizing on particular aspects of authoritarianism (e.g. illiberalism), further research is needed in order to test their claims empirically.

Then, the diffusion literature has observed that the process of diffusion is happening through a series of mechanisms, such as socialization, learning, demonstration effect, neighbourhood effect and prestige (Doorenspleet 2004; Cederman and Gleditsch 2004; Gleditsch and Ward 2006; Fordham and Asal 2007; Greenhill 2010). Learning constitutes one of the most widely discussed mechanism of diffusion (Bennett and Howlett 1992; Mishler and Rose 2002; Meseguer 2005, 2006; Simmons et al. 2006; Graham et al. 2012), implying a voluntary act from the side of the learner (Meseguer 2005). It has been investigated empirically through a variety of methods, such as agent-based modelling and computer simulation (Adam 2015) and game-theoretic model (Volden et al. 2008). Scholars have argued that political learning can happen through access to epistemic communities (Haas 1992). Their role is to decrease the level of uncertainty vis-à-vis the object of diffusion by bringing together experts sharing similar normative beliefs and by updating existing knowledge and beliefs based on observed results or the experience of others and through Bayesian or rational learning (Elkins et al. 2006; Meseguer 2006, 2009).

A characteristic of this scholarship is the focus on understanding the learning process at the elite level and how it transfers into policy change (Bank and Edel 2015; Bamert et al. 2015). Recently, the literature has investigated the process of authoritarian learning by looking at authoritarian elites' survival methods in moments of contestation (Hall and Ambrosio 2017), but also at the diffusion of protest across the public, especially, in the context of the Arab Spring and the Colour Revolutions (Weyland 2012; Hale 2013; Bank and Edel 2015; Bamert et al. 2015). For example, Bamert et al. (2015) find that the cross-national diffusion of successful protest during the Arab Spring happened through a process of bounded learning, meaning that people's actions are influenced by cognitive shortcuts (e.g. people react when observing a successful protest) and not by full rationality (e.g. they are not waiting to find out the end results of the observed protest). Still, an interesting finding of this paper refers to the fact that geographic proximity, as well as political and democratic similarities are not affecting the learning process. These results question the traditional understanding of the concept of diffusion which sees diffusion as a process happening geographically, mainly through an influence from neighbours and

facilitated by the existing similarities between the actors so that the adoption of new attitudes, norms and practices does not require fundamental revisions to the initial systems (Rohrschneider 1999). In this context, Bamert et al. (2015) is breakthrough paper in the literature of diffusion as it lays the foundation of new directions in the study of the diffusion process, by showing that diffusion at a distance might be possible.

A particular example of authoritarian learning is exemplified by the attempts of the Chinese communist party in resisting the democratization pressure by applying reforms inspired from the success of Singapore, an exceptional model of successful economic development in an authoritarian regime. According to Ortmann and Thompson (2014, p. 435), the Chinese elites learnt three types of good governance reforms (“fighting corruption, increasing professionalization, and improving responsiveness”), meant to secure the stability of the one-party political system.

As the literature on diffusion has mainly looked at political learning as a process experienced by the elite, it has not systematically studied whether the learning process happens at the mass level. Moreover, scholars, such as Gilardi (2010) have acknowledged the difficulty in testing empirically the mechanisms of diffusion, while Hall and Ambrosio (2017) have emphasized the need to extend the analysis of the learning mechanism to other geographical areas. In addition to this, it is important to understand whether and how democracies, especially from the developing world can learn from economically successfully authoritarian countries.

This paper contributes to the literature on support for democracy and authoritarian diffusion by looking at whether diffusion of authoritarian attitudes is happening at the individual level, through a learning process. To test it, it conducts a survey-experiment with a nationally representative sample of Kenyan respondents. Overall, it tests whether learning about the characteristics of an authoritarian development model which contributed to its high growth affects public attitudes towards liberal-democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries.

Theory

The process of diffusion can be defined as a complex process that involves the transmission of attitudes and practices between individuals, groups of people or countries (Welsh 1984). In any study of the diffusion process, it is important to discuss

the attitudes and practices are being diffused and through which mechanism is diffusion happening.

Firstly, we need to establish what information about an authoritarian development model might impact on African respondents' attitudes towards liberal-democracy. Generally speaking, the process of authoritarian diffusion implies the transmission of authoritarian attitudes which arguably are best exemplified today by China. As argued in Paper 1, pages 75-6, China is regarded by scholars as a "success story" (de Rambures 2015, p. 4), an example of "pro-growth authoritarianism" (Lai 2010, p. 4), an illiberal model (Zhao 2010), but it has also presented an alternative model that transformed a country that had a poverty rate of 94% in 1980 into a major economic power (Wu 2016a; World Bank 2018). The Chinese authoritarian model includes both non-democratic and illiberal aspects. For example, in terms of non-democratic elements, the China model is characterized by a centralized top-down government that has the merit of leading the development process (Li 2015; Nie et al. 2017) while the illiberal aspect refers to low protection of civil liberties and political rights, reduced rule of law and no separation of powers between institutions (Peerenboom 2007; Lai 2010; de Rambures 2015).

Compared to the other characteristics mentioned, meritocracy is a particular feature of the Chinese model that makes it distinct from many if not most authoritarian regimes. China has a long history of choosing government officials based on virtuous talents or moral character (Xiao and Li 2013). This meant that people, regardless of their background, could be appointed to governmental positions by passing the official tests or by demonstrating an honest and filial character.

Recent studies, such as Liu (2018), found that such traits still matter until today as personal competence and loyalty for the regime are seen to positively affect selection for entry level political positions. The official examinations are perceived as an opportunity for social mobility for people with different social status. Nowadays, there are two major examinations that follow the same meritocratic logic: the university entrance and the national civil service examination. Like the previous imperial examination, both are highly competitive assessments and provide access to governmental positions and opportunities for advancement on the social scale (Xiao and Li 2013). There are numerous studies (Chen et al. 2005; Li and Zhou 2005; Choi 2012; Shih et al. 2012; Landry et al. 2018) that have investigated empirically the impact

of performance on appointment or promotion decisions for different governmental positions. Chen et al. (2005, p. 424) finds that the central government's decisions regarding the leader turnovers are influenced by the evaluation of the relative performance, meaning that they take into consideration both the individual performance as well as the "provincial benchmark set by the immediate predecessor". Also, Li and Zhou (2005, p. 1756) observed that the average economic performance of a tenure increases the possibility of promotion by 33% and decreases the possibility of turnover by 30%. While investigating the role of political factions within the party, Choi (2012) found that the impact of economic performance (measured as GDP) on promotions of provincial secretaries does not depend on factional links. While economic performance is observed to be positively correlated with promotion of party secretaries and government executives at county level (Landry et al. 2018); the promotion of mayors is influenced by the performance in the social policy areas (Zuo 2015). Finally, according to Shih et al. (2012), educational qualifications represents a strong predictor of elite ranking in Chinese Communist Party.

Meritocracy in the China model differs from meritocracy in the Western democracy. As presented in the previous paragraphs, meritocracy represents a core principle for choosing the administrative staff and political elites in the Chinese political system. According to Xiao and Li (2013), the particularity of the Chinese system is that there is no difference between civil service staff and political elites, as those who pass the official examinations are assigned and promoted to positions inside the government that include both administrative and political functions. In Western democracy, on the contrary, there is a clear distinction between the process of recruiting civil service officials and politicians. While the civil service staff is typically selected through meritocratic competitions; the politicians are appointed through a free and fair electoral process based on the votes received from the electorate.

Secondly, in this case, diffusion might happen if learning about the particularities of the Chinese authoritarian model that are related to the high growth performance of China, is determining the citizens of African states to change their attitudes towards liberal democracy. Learning has been typically defined in the diffusion literature as a "change in beliefs or change in one's confidence in existing beliefs" (Simmons et al. 2006, 798). I argue that, if African societies are predominantly materialist and assess the performance of institutions in terms of material

performance, we would expect citizens from Sub-Saharan African countries to reduce their support for liberal-democracy as they learn about a competitive and economically successful authoritarian development model (China) due to rational and utilitarian reasoning.

The literature on Postmaterialist values has argued that economic development determines a change in values from materialistic (e.g. survival based) to post-materialistic (e.g. freedom, tolerance) (Inglehart and Abramson 1999). According to Inglehart (1997, p. 210), “postmaterialists view democracy as something that is intrinsically desirable”. This indicates that people sharing postmaterialist views have a diffuse or intrinsic type of support for democracy as they appreciate the values and norms embodied by a democracy and do not see democracy as a mean to achieve wellbeing (which represents the instrumental or specific type of support for democracy). Thus, implicitly, in Sub-Saharan Africa, a region which has struggled for decades to achieve economic development, we would expect that if people are materialists and if they learn about the China model then they might change their views.

We can find support for the claim that citizens of African countries are materialistic from both the empirical evidence and the scholarly debate. First, descriptive statistics from the cross-national surveys conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa suggest that most Africans hold utilitarian, materialistic views. The Afrobarometer Round 5’s results show that approximately 40% of Sub-Saharan African respondents consider unemployment, poverty and management of the economy as the main national concern; while only 0.65% look at democracy and political rights as a major national problem (Afrobarometer Data, all countries, round 5 2011/2013). This suggests that people are still concerned with economic security (materialist values) more than they are with freedoms and liberties (postmaterialist values). Also, when asked about the essential characteristics of democracy, 30% of the respondents consider that the government should provide “basic necessities, like food, clothing and shelter, for everyone” and 24% expect to “receive aid from government, such as food parcels, when they are in need” (Afrobarometer Data, all countries, round 5 2011/2013).

Second, the scholarship has also provided support for the predilection of materialistic values in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although, the majority of the studies that

have investigated post-materialist value change have used data from the developed world (Abramson and Inglehart 1987; Clarke and Dutt 1991; Bean and Papdakis 1994; Abramson et al. 1997; Davis and Davenport 1999; Inglehart and Abramson 1999; Burroughs et al. 2002; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2004; Promislo et al. 2017), due to a reduced coverage of the developing world in the World Values surveys (used to measure postmaterialist values), Sub-Saharan African countries have been described as the area where the “most traditional and materialistic publics live in” (Inglehart et al. 2003, p.156). South Africa has been used as a case study in the debate of the postmaterialist values measurements, used by scholars such as Muller (2004) and Lategan (2016) to argue for the inclusion of a pre-materialist band as the original postmaterialist explanation is not applicable in this area. Additionally, other scholars have investigated the postmaterialist theory in the African context, indirectly, by looking to explain the importance of traditional and religious values (Norris and Inglehart 2004; Basáñez and Inglehart 2015; Inglehart 2018) and the determinants of significant reduced tolerance for homosexuality at individual and elite level (Ireland 2013; Biruk 2014).

To sum up, the process of diffusion of authoritarian practices, specific to the China model, might happen through learning, a diffusion mechanism that although has been widely theorized in the literature (Heydemann and Leenders 2011; Weyland 2012; Hale 2013; Heydemann 2013. Bank and Edel 2015; Hall and Ambrosio 2017), scholars have encounter difficulties in measuring and conducting empirical investigations (Levy 1994; Rohrschneider 1996; Gilardi 2010). Simmons et al. (2006, 798) define learning as “change in beliefs or change in one’s confidence in existing beliefs”.

We would expect citizens from Sub-Saharan African countries to reduce their support for liberal-democracy as they learn about a competitive and economically successful authoritarian development model (China) due to rational and utilitarian reasoning. Specifically, this could happen as African societies display predominantly materialist values and assess the performance of institutions in terms of economic performance. The hypothesis is supported with findings from the literature and cross-national surveys. Scholars, such as Inglehart et al. (2003, p.156), described the Sub-Saharan African region as the area where the “most traditional and materialistic publics live in”. Also, the Afrobarometer survey indicates that, in Round 5 (2011-2013),

40% of respondents show more concern for economic than political goods (unemployment and poverty versus rights and freedoms) and 30% have an instrumental view of democracy, by perceiving it as a way to achieve basic needs (e.g. food and shelter).

As China has been a more intensive presence in Sub-Saharan Africa from the early 2000, the citizens of African states have witnessed a series of completed projects, managed and funded by the Chinese in their own countries. Still, as discussed in Paper 1, geographical distance could lead to the informational gaps that might affect the demonstration effect of the Chinese projects. Therefore, this paper further extends the investigation of authoritarian diffusion at individual level by testing whether diffusion might happen if this informational gaps are filled.

Methodology and data

This paper aims to answer the following questions: Is authoritarian diffusion more likely to happen at individual level in Sub-Saharan Africa through a learning process? What is the impact of learning about the authoritarian model, exemplified by China on peoples' attitudes towards liberal democracy? These questions will be investigated through a survey-experiment, conducted with a nationally representative sample of 400 respondents from Kenya, which will be divided into a treatment and a control group. The treatment includes factual information about the performance of the Chinese model in reducing poverty, using data from the World Bank database, as well as descriptive information regarding the main characteristics of its regime. The dependent variable is measured through six statements that refer to different aspects of liberal-democracy, such as attitudes towards multipartism, elections, civil liberties, rule of law, power constrains and divisions.

Overall, the diffusion process is captured through a survey-experiment that involves exposing African respondents to information about Chinese attitudes and assess whether this negatively affects their attitudes towards liberal-democracy. First, the Chinese attitudes that the Kenyan respondents are treated to are included in the six statements of the treatment: non-democratic rule (one-party system), illiberal features (e.g. reduced civil liberties and no checks and balances between institutions) and meritocratic aspects (performance-based appointment) (see pages 137-8 for a detailed presentation of the treatment). Theoretically, I expect the treatment to

facilitate the process of diffusion as the respondents learn about a competitive and economically successful authoritarian development model (China) due to rational and utilitarian reasoning, in particular, because African societies display predominantly materialist values and assess the performance of institutions in terms of economic performance. To capture whether the treatment led to a process of diffusion, I compare the attitudes of the respondents from the treatment and the control groups towards six liberal-democratic attitudes: multipartism, elections, civil liberties, rule of law, power constrains and divisions practices.

a) Kenya as a representative country of Sub-Saharan Africa

The survey-experiment will be conducted in Kenya, which constitutes a typical case of a Sub-Saharan African country which has encountered difficulties in consolidating its democratic regime. Kenya is a presidential democracy and experienced a long period of one-party rule under the leaderships of Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi. In 1992, although the government started holding multiparty elections due to under external pressure, the incumbent Moi, representative of the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) was declared the winner in two consecutive elections (1992 and 1997). As his nomination was questioned, based on accusations of electoral fraud; this led to internal fights within KANU and had a substantial impact on the Kenyan economy (Steeves 1999). After the retirement of Moi, a new nominate from KANU, Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner in the 2002 presidential elections, and his almost 5 years rule, have been considered to be “the longest period of sustained economic growth in its history” (Møller 2012, p. 256), by attracting multiples external investors, including China (Siringi 2018; Møller 2012), increasing the GDP growth rate to 7.1% and decreasing the poverty rates by 10% (Chege 2008, p. 26).

Nevertheless, his re-election in 2007, was widely disputed as Kibaki was accused of rigging the election’s results by the opposition. The events soon degenerated into post-election violence, a political crisis and eventually the adoption of a new constitution (Ajulu 1998; Steeves 1999). This led Freedom House to decrease the 2008 rating for political rights by 1 point and conclude that “Kenya is not an electoral democracy” (Freedom House 2008). The solution for the crisis was a power-sharing government coalition between the two candidates under UN mediation. After the new constitution was adopted through referendum in 2010, new general elections were held in 2013 and Uhuru Kenyatta, from Jubilee Party, was declared a winner.

Although in the most recent elections, in August 2017, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission confirmed Uhuru Kenyatta's win for a second presidential term, the Supreme Court invalidated the results. With the opposition boycotting the re-run, Kenyatta won again the new election. Overall, like many other Sub-Saharan African countries, Kenya has struggled, in general terms (e.g. separation of powers, elections and civil liberties), in consolidating a liberal-democratic regime.

As previously mentioned, the Sino-Kenyan cooperation has become more intensive since the beginning of 2000 when Mwai Kibaki became president, but the bilateral relations date back to 1963, when the first diplomatic connections were established (Chege 2008). It has been argued that China invests mainly in resource rich countries, but Kenya is a counter-example as it is a country whose economy is based on agricultural outputs and not resource extraction (Fiott 2010; Møller 2012). This is important to note as Kenya is not a country affected by the resource curse. Moreover, numerous reports (UNCTAD 2008, 2012; Fiott 2010) have indicated that European companies are still dominant in the Kenyan market and the increasing Sino-Kenyan cooperation did not affect the relations between Kenya and the West (e.g. EU) (Řehák 2016). Other scholars have emphasized that cooperation with China is viewed positively in Kenya (Patroba 2012), especially due to faster achievements (e.g. road projects completed) compared to the efficiency of the Western companies (Fiott 2010, p. 10).

The official statistics from the Afrobarometer and SAIS China Africa Research Initiative (Johns Hopkins University) also provide support for the claim that Kenya is a representative country of Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of support for democracy and Chinese economic engagement. According to the Afrobarometer statistics, from 2003 until 2014, the overall support for democracy in Kenya has been constantly decreasing by approximately 15% while the satisfaction with democracy, by approximately 25%. In the Figures 39 and 40 from pages 134, we can observe that, in 2003, both the satisfaction with and support for democracy in Kenya has been higher with more than 15 units than the Sub-Saharan Africa's average; while after 10 years, it decreases to only slightly lower level than the regional average.

Figure 39. Evolution of support for democracy in Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa's average (Source: Afrobarometer Data, rounds 2-6)

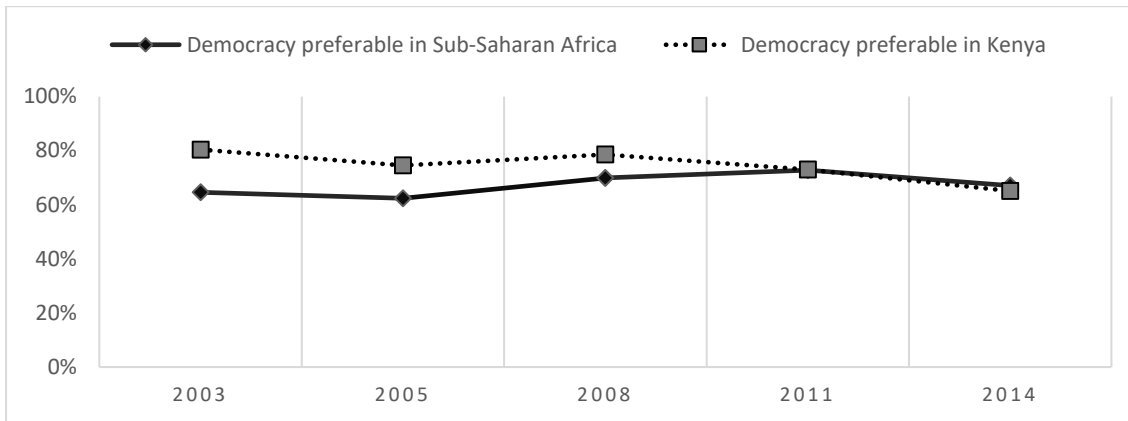
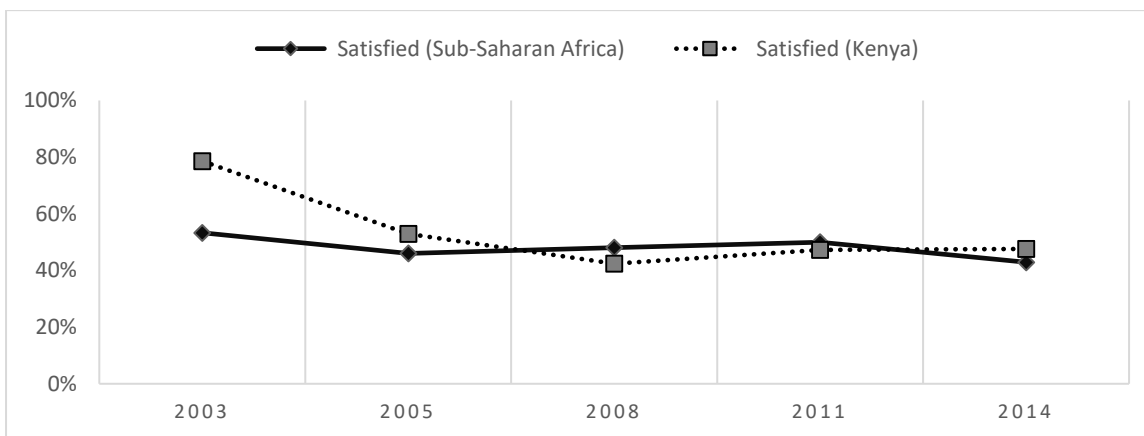
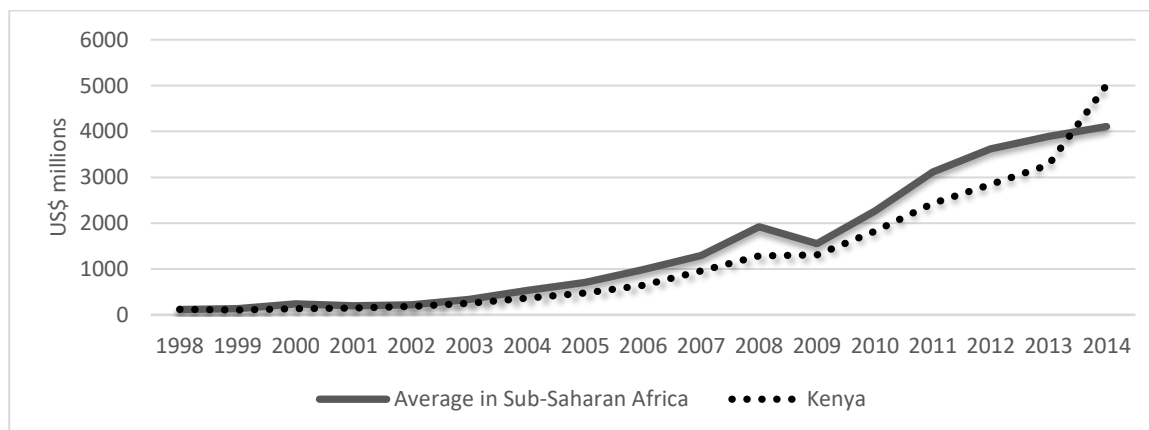


Figure 40. Evolution of satisfaction with democracy in Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa's average (Source: Afrobarometer Data, rounds 2-6)



Additionally, Chinese economic engagement in Kenya has substantially increased over the past 20 years; which reflects the overall trend of the Sub-Saharan African region. In Figure 41 below, we notice that the Chinese trade engagement with Kenya has tracked the Sub-Saharan Africa's average closely, although since 2014, it has surpassed the regional average with approximately 900 million US dollars.

Figure 41. China's trade engagement with Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa's average (Source: SAIS- CARI)



The popular perceptions of the Chinese engagement also mirror the overall positive trend from the region. The Kenyan participants in the 6th round of the Afrobarometer (conducted in 2014) have a positive view vis-à-vis the increased engagement of China in their country in a proportion of approximately 76%; while 67.4% consider that China is doing a good job in meeting the country's needs. Compared to the Sub-Saharan Africa's average, the views of Kenyan respondents towards China are with 11% more favourable. In terms of models of development, the US continues to represent the first choice for Kenyans and, on average at regional level. While being a second choice, the Chinese model of development is considered to be the best model to follow by a quarter of respondents from Kenya and, generally in Sub-Saharan Africa. Also, in Figure 43, we observe that there is a very small difference of 0.2% in favour of the US, in the context of nominating the country with the most influence in Kenya, while, based on the average perceptions at regional level, China is leading the US with 4%.

Figure 42. Perceptions of China in Sub-Saharan Africa versus Kenya (Source: Afrobarometer, round 6)

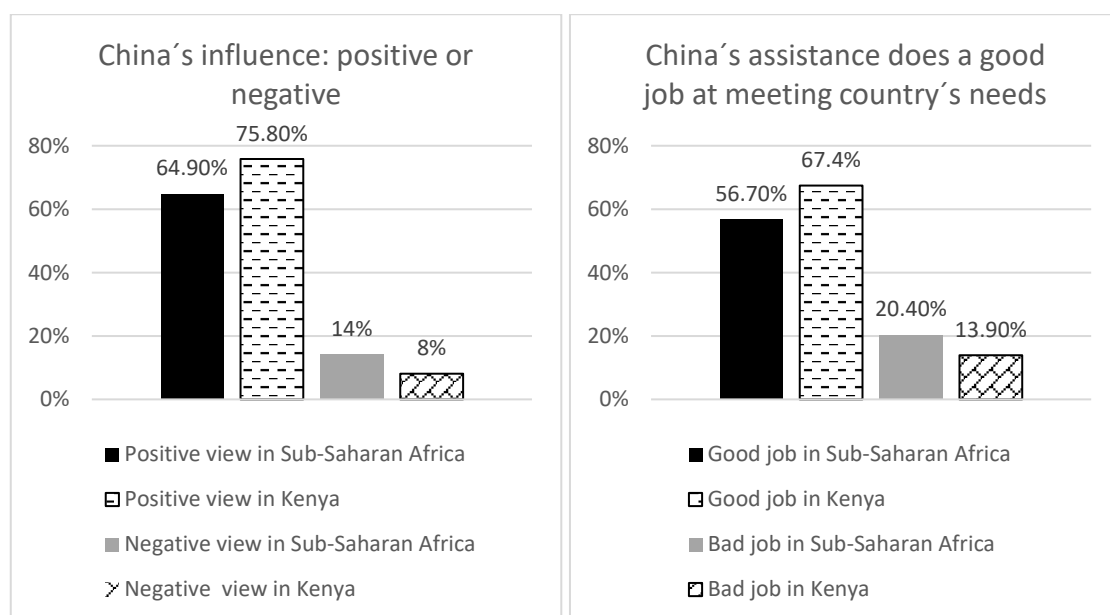
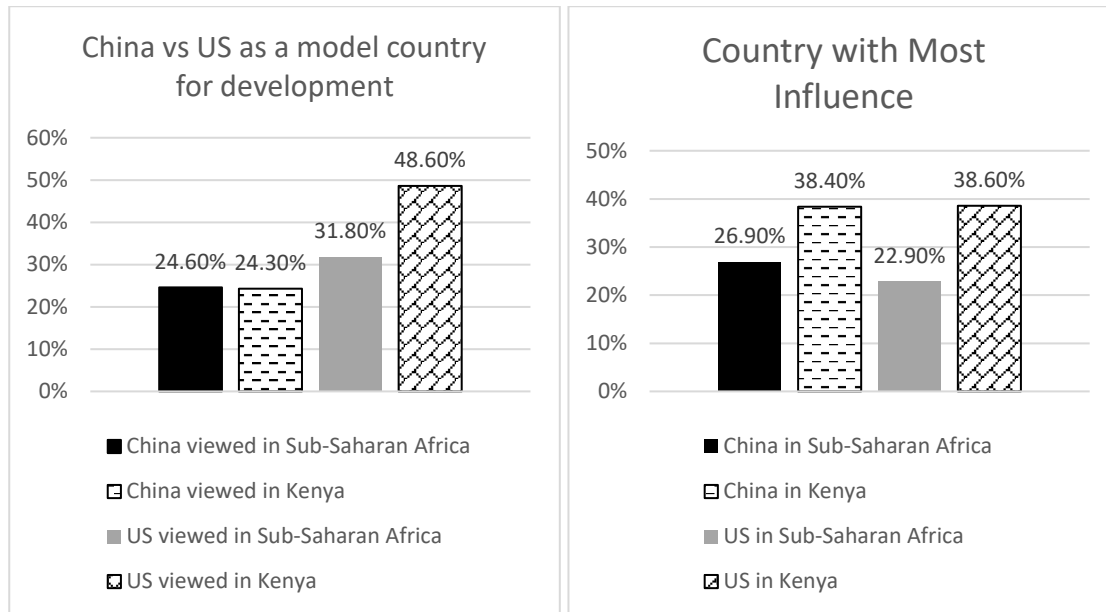


Figure 43. Perceptions of development models and external influence in Sub-Saharan Africa versus Kenya (Source: Afrobarometer, round 6)



Finally, Kenya is a country with English as an official language, which allows me to avoid potential errors due to a translation process. It has a higher literacy rate of 78.73% for the adult population (UNESCO 2014) and the language of instruction in primary and secondary schools is English. These facts are important for avoiding a biased sample.

In conclusion, Kenya is a typical Sub-Saharan African country, in terms of the key variables that matter for this study: it has encountered difficulties in consolidating its democratic regime and has experienced increased Chinese economic engagement without being a resource-rich country. The target population is represented by any adult, living in Kenya. The survey-experiment was conducted through a mobile polling platform, GeoPoll³¹. In this context, I used a quota sampling based on gender, age and first-order administrative division.

b) Dependent variable

The dependent variable is attitudes towards liberal-democracy. Recently, there has been increasing criticism in the literature on support for democracy regarding the need to shift from a direct measure of peoples’ support for democracy (e.g. Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government) which is too abstract and leads to overreporting (Inglehart 2003; Kiewiet de Jonge 2016) to indirect measures of support

³¹ More details about GeoPoll and their coverage will be provided in distinct section, pages 142-144.

for aspects of democracy, such as civil liberties and political participation (Inglehart 2003; Schedler and Sarsfield 2007; Booth and Seligson 2009). Following these recent developments, I include several statements that measure peoples' attitudes towards different aspects of liberal-democracy. I use a 9-point answer scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 9 is strongly agree, to avoid skewed responses. The questions are modelled on existing survey questions from Afrobarometer, Asian Barometer and Latin Barometer as these questions have been pre-tested and validated.

The following statements are used:

- Measure for attitudes towards multipartism: Multiple political parties should be allowed to stand for election and hold office. (Source: Asian Barometer, waves 2-4, pp. 14-19);
- Measure for attitudes towards elections: Political leaders are chosen on the basis on their capability even without election. (Source: Asian Barometer (wave 4, p. 11) and Afrobarometer round 5/6 (Q34/Q32));
- Measure for attitudes towards civil liberties: It is better to live in a society with order although some freedoms would be limited. (Source: Latino Barometer 2009, Q18);
- Measure for attitudes towards rule of law: The President must respect the courts' decision even if he thinks they are wrong. (Source: Afrobarometer Round 5/6 - Q40/Q38);
- Measure for attitudes towards power constrains and divisions: The government should be constantly monitored even if it disrupts its activity. (Source: Asian Barometer wave 2, pp. 20).

c) Treatment

The 400 participants in the survey-experiment have been randomly assigned to a treatment or a control group. The treatment constitutes of a series of statements regarding different aspects of the Chinese model that have contributed to the process of economic development. The information presented is not hypothetical, but it is based on facts and official statistics from the World Bank (2018, 2019) and the scholarship (de Rambures 2015; Zhao 2017)³², which are meant to avoid misleading the participants and implicitly prevents deception (Druckman et al. 2011). Thus, the

³² An in-depth discussion of the illiberal and non-democratic features of the China model and how these contributed to growth is included in Paper 1, pages 75-77.

first two statements from the treatment presents the performance of the Chinese model in substantially reducing the poverty rate: "China developed a unique development model and reduced its poverty rate. In 1981, 88% of Chinese lived on 2\$/day while in 2012, only 6.5% are still very poor". The aim of including these statistics in the experiment is to offer enough information to the participants in the survey-experiment, so that they can understand how successful the Chinese model is in providing development. Subsequently, each of the following four statements which are included in the treatment, emphasizes specific authoritarian aspects of the Chinese model that have been employed towards achieving its developmental goals. For example, the non-democratic aspect of the Chinese model (see Li 2015; Nie et al. 2017; Zhao 2017), is captured by describing the implications of having a one-party system in term of continuity ("The Chinese model has achieved high growth performance through a single party which offered continuity of developmental policies.") and performance-based appointment ("In the Chinese model, the politicians are appointed based on performance and not through elections"). The remaining two statements refer to the illiberal aspect of the Chinese model (see Peerenboom 2007; Lai 2010; de Rambures 2015), such as reduced civil liberties ("By limiting individual freedoms and rights, the Chinese government has exerted control over its population and offered a stable social environment.") and no checks and balance between institutions ("The Chinese model achieves high growth through a centralised government whose work is outside the influence of other institutions, such as Parliament.").

An important issue to address here is related to the treatment representativeness in regard to how China and its regime is presented in the real world. We know from the scholarship that the media representations of China in Africa are not neutral (e.g. Sautman and Hairong 2014), and this might lead to people not learning about the China model in the real world. Thus, we might expect that, when they are presented with more objective information about the China model, which what my treatment is intended to be, the learning process might happen. I acknowledge that there are limitations in employing this type of treatment as we cannot properly assessing what is the impact of this neutral frame of the treatment compared to a positive or a negative frame as the people from Sub-Saharan African states are used to.

First, I argue that the representations of China and its model across media from African states are biased as the residents are presented, on the one hand with a more

negative image, promoted by third party news outlets (BBC, CNN) (Sautman and Hairong 2014; Zhang et al 2016) and, on the other hand, with a more positive frame, endorsed by the Chinese media (CCTV) (Zhang et al 2016; Marsh 2016). In spite of the increasing presence of Chinese TV stations and publications in societies from Sub-Saharan African countries, several scholars have argued that it is still too early to be concerned with the potential soft power effect of the Chinese media outlets as the African public express a low general awareness vis-à-vis the activity of Chinese TV programs and publications in African societies while the appeal of Western media remains strong (Zhang and Mwangi 2016; Jiang et al. 2016; Wasserman 2016, 2018). In Kenya, for example, almost 66% of respondents didn't know that Kenya was the only African country hosting the headquarters of Xinhua News Agency, China Radio International (CIR), CCTV and China Daily (Zhang and Mwangi. 2016, pp. 73-74). One of the potential explanations for this could be the higher subscription costs, making the Chinese TV channels to be mainly accessible, in South Africa for example, by the upper-middle class (Wu 2016b). In addition to this, by the time the Chinese media outlets has entered the African media market, the Western media had already a long-standing presence and appreciation in the area.

Even if the reach of the Chinese narrative is limited across Sub-Saharan Africa and thus, the ability of Chinese government to exert soft power through its own media representations, scholars have found that there is a cautious and positive appreciation of China and the Chinese engagement across citizens from African countries (Sautman and Hairong 2009; Hanusch 2012; Wang and Elliot 2014; Wasserman 2018). The survey data from the Afrobarometer round 6 confirms this observation as 65% of respondents from 28 Sub-Saharan African states indicate that they share positive perception of Chinese economic and political influence in their countries (see Figure 11, page 47). In particular, this positive view of the Sino-African engagement is rooted in the excitement regarding the potential economic benefits and prospective for development (Nassanga and Makara 2016; Liu and Liu 2019).

Thus, previous findings indicate that the representation of China in Africa in the media are not neutral but people from Sub-Saharan African countries may not be learning about the China model from the media given their generally positive views in a Western-dominated media context that is usually negative. In this context, I expect that learning might happen if they are presented with more objective information

about the China model, which what my treatment is intended to be. I argue that the treatment, while not able to present a fully nuanced picture of the pros and cons of the China model given the space limitations, is relatively objective as it is based on the scholars' debate regarding the features of the China model that contributed to its high growth performance (Peerenboom 2007; Chen and Goodman 2012; de Rambures 2015 and Li 2015). As mentioned on page 75, the concept of the "China Model" has not been officially endorsed by the Chinese officials, who claimed that each country must find its own path in achieving economic development (Li et al. 2009; Li 2015). Several scholars, such as Peerenboom (2007), Chen and Goodman (2012), de Rambures (2015) and Li (2015), argued that the economic performance of the China Model is due to the crucial and central role of the government in leading the development process through successive reforms (e.g. industrialization and urbanization). Others have liked the meritocratic appointment practice of government officials to an economic performance of institutions at different administrative levels (Li and Zhou 2005; Choi 2012; Landry et al. 2018).

In the treatment, I mention two drawbacks of the China model: no check and balanced between institutions (e.g. the activity of the government is outside the control of other institutions) and limited individual freedoms and rights. These were included as they were instrumented by the government to control the population and prevent the interference of other political actors, part of the Chinese political system, in the work of the government. Still, I acknowledge that these policies have negative impact on the Chinese society and that the way in which they were presented in the treatment was meant to emphasize their role in supporting the policies of the China model. I also admit that there are other drawbacks of the China model that I have not included in the treatment (e.g. elitism created due to meritocratic appointment; unidirectional or no feedback between political institutions, lack of political and social debate, environmental damage etc.) due to limited funding available for this survey-experiment, but I agree that, under other circumstances, a more extended treatment would have been informative and meaningful.

By using official statistics and academic arguments, the treatment is meant to offer an objective view on the China Model as it is a one-shot survey-experiment. Nevertheless, there are limitations in conducting a one-shot survey-experiment with a neutral treatment as the researcher cannot control for the potential effect of a neutral

frame without comparing it with the effect of a positive and a negative frame. Although the decision to have a one single treatment group is determined by limited funding that was available at that time, I acknowledge that this could impact the results and including two additional treatment groups, with a positive and a negative frame, would have represented a solution to address this issue. For example, although I do not find effects in the case of the drawbacks of the China model (e.g. reduced liberties, no horizontal accountability of the government), it would have been interesting to see whether when framed in a negative way (e.g. victims and abuses) this might affect or strengthen the respondents' attitudes towards liberal-democracy. Nevertheless, I used experts' review to check the quality of the treatment before the conducting the survey-experiment.

d) Quality check

Before conducting the mobile survey-experiment, I checked the quality of the questionnaire and the reliability of the treatment through an experts' review (Presser et al. 2014), meaning that I have sent the questionnaire to academics who have previous experience in conducting surveys/survey-experiments to request their feedback. Based on the feedback received from the experts, I did the following updates.

First, I changed the initial strategy of measuring my dependent variable twice (before and after the treatment) and adopted a traditional survey-experiment structure with a treatment and a control group. In this way, I avoid confusing the participants by repeating the questions that measure attitudes towards liberal-democracy, twice in the same questionnaire.

Then, I included additional questions about attitudes toward China, in section A, to measure the degree to which the respondent can identify an example of Chinese projects from their country ("Which of the following projects has been funded by the Chinese? 1)Amala River Narok Road; 2)Garissa-Wajir Road; 3)Mombasa-Nairobi SGR; 4)Don't know"). This extra question allows me to identify participants that have previous knowledge of Chinese engagement in Kenya.

Third, I added questions that check the quality of the treatment and introduced them to all participants included in the treatment and the control group as this will allow me to assess their knowledge about the Chinese political model.

Further, I changed the answer scale from a 5-point Likert to a 9-point scale to increase the variation and avoid skewed answers. A larger answer scale helps to avoid

skewed responses; provide more accuracy (Cook and Beckman 2009) and reliability (Preston and Colman 2000).

Fifth, I introduced a question about materialist/postmaterialist values, inspired from the Inglehart's scale and asking the respondents to choose between two materialist options ("Maintain order" and "Fight raising prices") and two postmaterialist options ("Give people a voice in important government decisions" and "Protect freedom of speech"). As I assume that respondents are materialists, this question will allow me to test this assumption and split the sample into materialists and postmaterialists as well as controlling for such values.

Lastly, I reworded in reverse two out of five dependent variable statements (from "Politicians should be chosen through elections and not appointed by the ruling party" to "Political leaders are chosen on the basis on their capability even without election" and from "It is better to live in a disorderly society where all freedoms are protected" to "It is better to live in a society with order although some freedoms would be limited"). This represents an additional checking method that allows a respondent with full liberal-democratic values to not always have to pick the "strongly agree" option.

e) Platform selection

The survey-experiment will be conducted through GeoPoll, a subdivision of Mobile Accord, Inc. (MAI). There are different criteria for choosing this platform, such as accessibility, area coverage, security and quality of the data.

First, in terms of accessibility, considering that most African countries are still developing, the access to Internet is low (31.2%) compared to the rest of the world (55.8%) (Internet World Stats 2017). To overcome this limitation, GeoPoll offers the opportunity to contact citizens of African countries through the mobile platform as the penetration of mobile subscriptions accounts for 81% of the population (Ericsson 2017, p. 5). In Kenya, there are 86.1 mobile subscriptions per 100 people in 2017 (World Bank 2018), which is slightly over the regional mean. Still, as the process of registration on the GeoPoll platform is voluntary, meaning that the interested person has to create his own account, this might translate into a potential selection effect. The selection effect refers to the fact that certain categories of people (e.g. highly educated respondents) might be more represented than others (e.g. less educated people). There are several studies that have acknowledged the difficulties of online and mobile

surveys in reaching less educated people (Singer et al. 2000; L'Engle et al. 2018; Hargittai and Karaoglu, 2018). A potential solution to this issue would be to use a quota sampling based on the level of education, but such a decision implied a substantial increase in the quote of the survey-experiment, which, unfortunately, surpassed the limit of the research expenses budget.

Then, regarding area coverage, the GeoPoll network includes 240 million users (GeoPoll 2018) from different Asian and African countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the GeoPoll coverage includes 23 countries, such as Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. According to the GeoPoll Panel Book (2018, p. 11), GeoPoll is present in Kenya since 2014 and has over 8.6 million users registered in its database, representing approximately 22% of the mobile population and 18% of the overall country's population.

Finally, in terms of security and quality of the data, the people based in the countries covered by GeoPoll can sign up voluntary on the GeoPoll website or the GeoPoll app to become prospective respondents in surveys conducted through the GeoPoll platform. Registered respondents receive invitations to take surveys and they have the option to accept or refuse participating in these surveys. According to the GeoPoll's privacy policy, the company employs several data protection practices, such as not requesting personal identifiable information, never sharing the mobile numbers of the respondents and using anonymous unique GeoPoll ID (GID) to store respondent information and generate respondent's data. In this way, the researcher cannot directly contact the respondents and it is impossible to individually identify them based on their answers to the questions. The quality of the data is ensured through different mechanisms of verification of incompatible responses, "unusual survey response patterns, drop-offs on specific questions or potential skews in the data" (GeoPoll FAQs 2018).

f) Survey-experiment motivation

Surveys-experiments are important for understanding the nature and the process of public opinion making (Barabas and Jerit 2010). They permit causal inferences through the inclusion of an experiment and by isolating other factors through control. Compared to standard surveys, survey-experiments are known for having a high

external and internal validity and can be conducted in an online environment, which reduces substantially the costs.

Regardless of the many benefits in conducting survey-experiments, they have also several limitations that need to be clearly addressed and minimized. First, solving the issue of mutual causation is fundamental in order to make current causal inferences. To address this, I include several questions that measure knowledge and personal bias towards Chinese model, such as: “Do you have previous experience of working in or with a Chinese company?” and “Do you see China’s influence in your country as positive or negative?”. They allow me to control for respondents’ pre-treatment bias towards China.

Second, maximizing the internal and/or external validity is the ultimate goal of any researcher conducting a survey-experiment. But, in most of the cases, it is extremely difficult to have a high degree of both internal and external validity; and thus, researchers consider the implications of a trade-off between the two (Druckman et al. 2011, p. 42). Usually, the aim should be the maximization of the internal validity of the design even with the costs of a lower generalizability of the results (Nelson et al. 1997; Druckman et al. 2011). In my survey-experiment, I prioritize higher internal validity, meaning that I use different techniques to check the quality of the treatment and control for external factors. This choice is translated into a larger number of questions, but also implicitly, a lower number of respondents that can be reached.

Finally, the lack of attention of the respondent to the indications and the survey questions constitute a threat to the reliability of the survey data. A well-known solution to this issue is the instructional manipulation check technique or IMC, which was developed by Oppenheimer et al. (2009) and tested by other researchers, such as Maniaci and Rogge (2014). This technique involves the introduction of a question unrelated to the topic of the survey and an indication to the participant regarding the answer expected to choose in order to demonstrate attention. In my survey-experiment, I include a typical question about leisure activities that is neither sensitive, nor related to the topic of survey-experiment (“Which of the following sport activities do you prefer?”) and I provide an indication in which I tell the participant to demonstrate its attention by replying with the indicated option.

Data Analysis

The survey-experiment was conducted through the GeoPoll mobile platform in the period December 7th -11th 2018. I used quota sampling based on age, gender and location (region or first administrative level division) so that my treatment and control groups are representative of the overall distribution of the Kenyan population. To calculate the sample quotas, I used the official data from last national census, conducted in 2009 and available online on the website of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2010). The sampled respondents have been randomly distributed between the treatment and control groups. The following tables presents the sampling quota goals and the actual distribution of the sampled respondents between the treatment and the control group. The production statistics report (which includes information regarding the total number of surveys sent, completes, ineligibility etc.) is included in the Annexes I (Table 73, page 275).

Table 21. Sample quotas by age

Quotas by Age			Treatment group		Control group	
Age Group	# Goal	% Goal	#Sampled	%Sampled	#Sampled	%Sampled
18-24	122	30.40%	61	31%	61	31%
25-34	107	26.70%	54	27%	54	27%
35-44	69	17.30%	35	18%	35	18%
45-54	45	11.30%	22	11%	22	11%
55+	57	14.30%	28	14%	28	14%
Total	400	100%	200	100%	200	100%

Table 22. Sample quotas by gender

Quotas by Gender			Treatment group		Control group	
Gender	# Goal	% Goal	#Sampled	%Sampled	#Sampled	%Sampled
Female	196	48.90%	98	49%	98	49%
Male	204	51.10%	102	51%	102	51%
Total	400	100%	200	100%	200	100%

Table 23. Sample quotas by location (ADM1)

Quotas by Location			Treatment group		Control group	
Region	# Goal	% Goal	#Sampled	%Sampled	#Sampled	%Sampled
Central	45	11.30%	11	6%	16	8%
Coast	34	8.60%	21	11%	17	9%
Eastern	59	14.70%	33	17%	31	16%
Nairobi	32	8.10%	20	10%	22	11%
North Eastern	24	6.00%	1	1%	11	6%
Nyanza	57	14.10%	32	16%	29	15%
Rift Valley	104	26.00%	56	28%	54	27%
Western	45	11.20%	26	13%	20	10%
Total	400	100%	200	100%	200	100%

The results of the IMC question that tested the attention of the respondent to the question indicate that approximately 80% of the respondents in each group are closely reading the questions. Based on the answers to this question (Table 24), I remove the 17.5% of the respondents from the Control group and 21% respondents from the Treatment group who didn't demonstrate attention during the survey-experiment. Therefore, the data is reduced from 400 to 323 respondents, out of which 158 are in the treatment group and 165 are in control group.

Table 24. Descriptive statistics of Control and Treatment groups (IMC)

	Control group		Treatment group	
	N	% of total	N	% of total
To ensure you are reading the questions, please reply with number '4' to:				
Which activities do you prefer?				
Cycling	5	2.50%	11	5.50%
Walking	17	8.50%	17	8.50%
Swimming	6	3.00%	5	2.50%
Reading	165	82.50%	158	79.00%
Other	7	3.50%	9	4.50%

a) Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics indicate that the sample is representative of the population based on the three quotas (age, gender and location) and the treatment and the control groups are similar in terms of interest in politics, view of government performance, employment, perceptions and knowledge of China. However, there are several potential issues that are interconnected: the survey-experiment sample is more educated, postmaterialist, pro-government and less positive about China. While these might affect the generalizability of the results in regard to the whole population, at the same time, it provides an opportunity to find out whether diffusion is happening in the proto-elite, which reflect the makeup of the more educated people.

The survey sample is representative of population through the three types of quotas (age, gender and location) which were presented in the Tables 21-23 (pages 145-146) and, overall, it is characterized by a majority of young adults (almost 60% aged between 18 and 34) who are located in the top three most populated³³ provinces in Kenya (Rift Valley, Nyanza and Eastern). The treatment and the control groups are similar on these variables, age, gender and first administrative level location.

The treatment and the control group are also similar in terms of interest in politics, view of government performance, employment, perceptions and knowledge of China, but the survey-experiment sample as a whole differs from national averages in terms of levels of education and political affiliation, the implications of which are discussed below. In terms of interest in politics, the survey-experiment sample shares a higher interest in politics with 10% more than average of the Afrobarometer sample. In Table 25, 38% respondents from the Control group and 42% from the Treatment group indicate that they are very interested in politics. Moreover, 41% respondents from the Control group and 38% from the Treatment group have a positive view on the performance of the government in handling the economy. But, the survey-experiment sample's overall positive assessment of the government performance is different from the generally negative view which dominates the Afrobarometer round 6 sample. This suggests that there are no significant differences between the control and treatment group in terms of interest in politics or view of the government but that the sample as

³³ According to the 2009 Census results (a summary is available here: <https://www.knbs.or.ke/population/>), the top three most populated regions are: Rift Valley (10 millions), Eastern (5.7 millions) and Nyanza (5.4 millions).

a whole is more interested in politics and more positive toward government than other surveys have found Kenyans to be. These observations raise concerns regarding potential issues with the generalizability of the results.

Table 25. Descriptive statistics of Control and Treatment groups (interest in politics and government performance)

	Control group		Treatment group		Afrobarometer
	N	% of total	N	% of total	Round 6 Kenya
How interested you are in politics and public affairs?					
Not interested	13	7.88%	12	7.60%	22.2%
A bit interested	41	24.85%	39	24.7%	22.7%
Slightly interested	47	28.48%	39	24.7%	25.8%
Very interested	63	38.18%	66	41.90%	28.3%
Don't know	1	0.61%	2	1.2%	0.9%
How would you rate the performance of the current government in handling the economy?					
Very bad	15	9.09%	16	10.13%	31.7%
Bad	25	15.15%	28	17.72%	25.4%
Neutral	57	34.55%	53	33.54	
Good	50	30.30%	54	34.18%	35.4%
Very good	17	10.30%	6	3.80%	6.6%
Don't know	1	0.61%	1	0.63%	0.8%

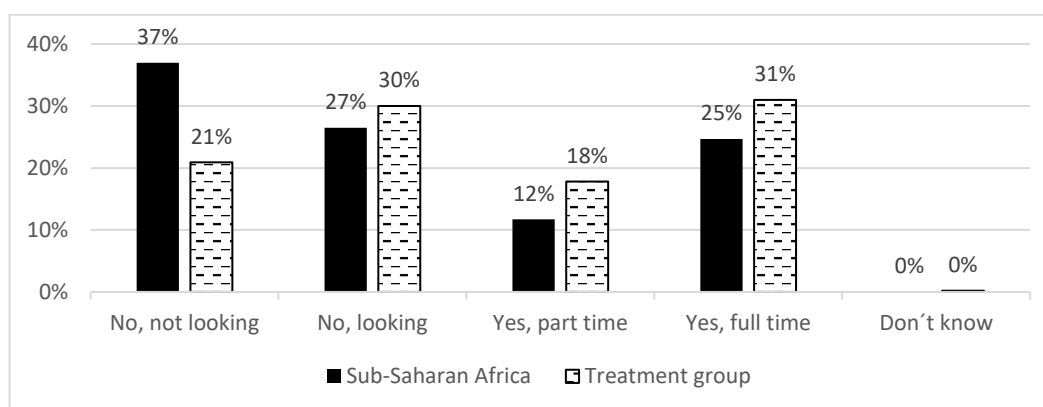
The two groups are similar in terms of the employment situation as 44% respondents from the control group and 43% from the treatment group are unemployed. I compare these results with the data available in the round 7 of the Afrobarometer 2016/2018 (Figure 44 from page 149) and find that a majority of the respondents are unemployed, 67% at the regional level (Sub-Saharan Africa) and 51% at country level in Kenya; suggesting that the survey sample is better off than the national and regional average.

Table 26. Descriptive statistics of Control and Treatment groups (employment)

	Control group		Treatment group	
	N	% of total	N	% of total
What is your current employment status?				

Employed	45	27.27%	41	25.95%
Homemaker	13	7.88%	13	8.23%
Student	28	16.97%	26	16.46%
Unable to work/Retired	7	4.24%	10	6.33%
Unemployed	72	43.64%	68	43.04%

Figure 44. Employment status at regional level (Sub-Saharan Africa) and in Kenya (Source: Afrobarometer round 7)



In terms of perceptions of China, there is an overall positive view of Chinese engagement in Kenya (approx. 47%), although the majority of the respondents do not have experience of working in a Chinese company (81% in the Control group and 82% in the Treatment group). This last observation is fundamental for determining the potential bias of the respondents towards China and therefore, the low level of experience working for Chinese companies indicates that it is less likely that their answers are influenced by predetermined perceptions of China based on previous working experience. The positive views regarding Chinese influence in Kenya are confirmed based on the Afrobarometer round 6 sample; but the Afrobarometer's respondents are, generally, more positive (76%) than the survey-experiment sample (47%) (see Figure 42 page 135).

Nevertheless, the respondents are knowledgeable of the Chinese projects from their country as 85% in the control group and 84% in the treatment group were able to correctly identify "Mombasa-Nairobi SGR" project as being Chinese funded. Still, both groups indicate opposition to a Chinese project that creates jobs but does not cooperate with labour unions with a majority of 66% in the control group and 75% in the treatment group. There is a difference of 9% between the two groups which makes the respondents from the treatment group slightly more liberal than the control group as they are less willing to trade certain civil rights and freedoms (e.g. labour protection)

in order to have access to more jobs on the market. Rather than providing a bias in favour of the finding diffusion effects, this sets a higher test of the theory.

Table 27. Descriptive statistics of Control and Treatment groups (questions about China and Chinese influence)

	Control group		Treatment group	
	N	% of total	N	% of total
Do you see China's influence in your country as positive or negative?				
Very negative	22	13.33%	23	14.56%
Somewhat negative	34	20.61%	28	17.72%
Neutral	32	19.39%	32	20.25%
Somewhat positive	49	29.70%	45	28.48%
Very positive	28	16.97%	30	18.99%
Do you have a previous experience of working in or with a Chinese company?				
No	134	81.21%	130	82.28%
Yes	31	18.79%	28	17.72%
Which of the following projects has been funded by the Chinese?				
Mombasa-Nairobi SGR	140	84.85%	133	84.18%
Amala River Narok Road	5	3.03%	1	0.63%
Garissa-Wajir Road	6	3.64%	6	3.80%
Don't know	14	8.48%	18	11.39%
Would you support a Chinese project that creates jobs but doesn't cooperate with labour union?				
Strongly oppose	61	36.97%	71	44.94%
Oppose	48	29.09%	47	29.75%
Neutral	20	12.12%	20	12.66%
Support	22	13.33%	18	11.39%
Strongly support	14	8.48%	2	1.27%

The survey-experiment also includes two questions about the Chinese system which are meant to check the treatment effect at the end of the survey. They show that the respondents in a treatment group are two times more knowledgeable about the Chinese system than those in the control group. This indicates that the respondents in the treatment group have read the treatment and the treatment is effective at least until the end of the survey.

Table 28. Descriptive statistics of Control and Treatment groups (questions about the Chinese system)

	Control group		Treatment group	
	N	% of total	N	% of total
The Chinese political system includes:				
One political party	47	28.48%	82	51.90%
Multiple political parties	36	21.82%	35	22.15%
Don't know	82	49.70%	41	25.95%
The members of Chinese government are chosen based on:				
Own capabilities/merits	51	30.91%	99	62.66%
Elected by the people	44	26.67%	28	17.72%
Don't know	70	42.42%	31	19.62%

There are two sources of bias in the sample that constitute a particular challenge for the generalizability of the results: a high percentage of people voting for the incumbent party Jubilee in the last presidential election and a majority of respondents having a high level of education and displaying post-materialistic views.

Based on Table 29, we observe that overall there is a higher than average number of government voters in the sample, and significant difference between the proportion of government supporters in the treatment and control groups. A majority of the respondents from the both groups mentioned that they voted for Jubilee in the 2017 presidential elections (65.45% in the Control group and 53.16% in the Treatment group), higher overall than the national result. This suggests a potential bias towards government supporters in the sample as a whole and particularly in the control group.

Table 29. Descriptive statistics of Control and Treatment groups (party voted)

	Control group		Treatment group	
	N	% of total	N	% of total
Who did you vote for in the 2017 general elections?				
Jubilee	108	65.45%	84	53.16%
CORD	46	27.88%	55	34.81%
Someone else	4	2.42%	3	1.90%
Didn't vote	7	4.24%	16	10.13%

Another potential issue is that, contrary to the assumption in my theory and the scholarship, a majority from both groups have postmaterialist views with 60% of the respondents from the control group and 57% of the respondents from the treatment

group, choosing to “give people a voice in important government decisions” or “protecting freedom of speech” rather than opting the materialist options, such “maintaining order [in society]” and “fight raising prices”. One potential explanation could be that half of the respondents from both groups have high level of education with 60% of the respondents in the control group and 62% in the treatment group, having completed either a post-secondary or a university degree. This observation indicates that, in terms of the level of education, my survey sample is not representative of the overall Kenyan population as most of the Kenyans typically have only primary level education³⁴. But this is also crucial in the context of the diffusion theory, as an individual who has a high level of education, holds postmaterialist views and a generally positive perception of the government’s performance might be less open towards potential political alternatives and thus, this might decrease the effectiveness of the diffusion process. While this bias limits the generalizability of my results, it does not bias the sample in favour of finding diffusion effects. On the contrary, this means that this sample provides an even harder test of the theory of diffusion.

Table 30. Descriptive statistics of Control and Treatment groups (materialism vs postmaterialism values and education)

	Control group		Treatment group	
	N	% of total	N	% of total
Which one is the most important?				
Materialist views:	66	40%	68	43.04%
- Fight raising prices	21	12.73%	18	11.39%
- Maintain order	45	27.27%	50	31.65%
Postmaterialist views	99	60%	90	56.96%
- Give people a voice in important government decisions	80	48.48%	72	45.57%
- Protect freedom of speech	19	11.52%	18	11.39%
What is your highest level of education?				
Non-formal education	2	1.21%	3	1.90%
Primary school	15	9.09%	15	9.49%
Secondary school	49	29.70%	42	26.58%
Post-secondary	45	27.27%	40	25.32%

³⁴ According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2009 Census, page 22, 51% of the respondents have a primary level of education as their highest level of education.

University degree	54	32.73%	58	36.71%
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Overall, the two groups are similar on most key variables and, although, there are some issues, these are not fatal for my theory or question the reliability of the data; but set an even harder test of the diffusion theory.

b) Dependent variable: attitudes towards democracy

This paper investigates whether learning about the Chinese model affects the respondents' attitudes towards different aspects of liberal-democracy, such as multipartism, elections, civil liberties, rule of law and power constrains and divisions.

In general, the responses are skewed at the extremes (strongly disagree vs strongly agree) indicating that the majority of the respondents have very strong liberal-democratic or authoritarian attitudes. One potential explanation for this is that, compared to the questions that included all the potential answers from the scale and their meaning (e.g. 1.Strongly oppose; 2.Oppose; 3.Neutral; 4.Support and 5.Strongly support), in the case of the dependent variable agreement statements, the respondent was asked simply to indicate the degree of agreement by rating on scale from 1 to 9, where 1 is strongly disagree and 9 is strongly agree.

Simply looking at the descriptive statistics (Figure 45), in the case of the Agreement 1 which measures the respondents' attitudes towards a multiparty system, the treatment group display slightly higher democratic attitudes with 9% than the control group indicating the treatment might have strengthened their democratic views which is contrary to my initial expectations.

Figure 45. Control and Treatment groups' attitudes towards multipartism

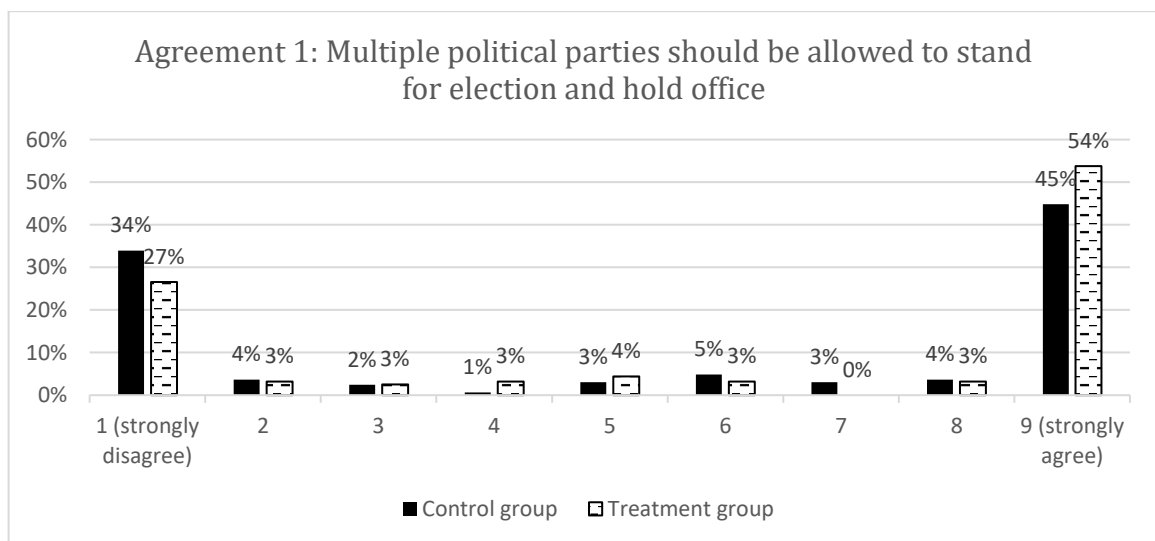


Figure 46 presents the differences between the treatment and the control group in attitudes towards the selection of politicians through elections. In this case, the scale was inverted so that a respondent with democratic views would be expected to disagree with the statement that “Political leaders are chosen on the basis of their capability even without election”. It shows that 46% of the respondents from the Control group prefer to choose the political leaders through elections while 32% on the basis of their capability. Also, 42% of the respondents from the treatment group lean towards leaders being appointed based on their capabilities and 39% based on elections. These observations provide support for my initial expectation that learning about the particular elements of the Chinese political model that contributed to its high growth performance might weaken the treatment group’s respondents’ attitudes towards elections, in comparison with the attitudes of the control group.

Figure 46. Control and Treatment groups' attitudes towards elections

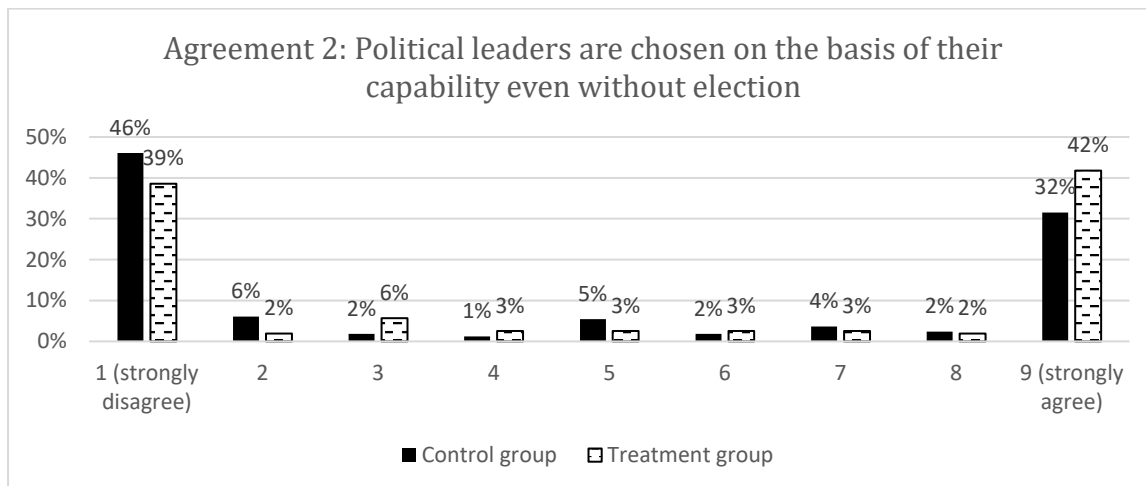
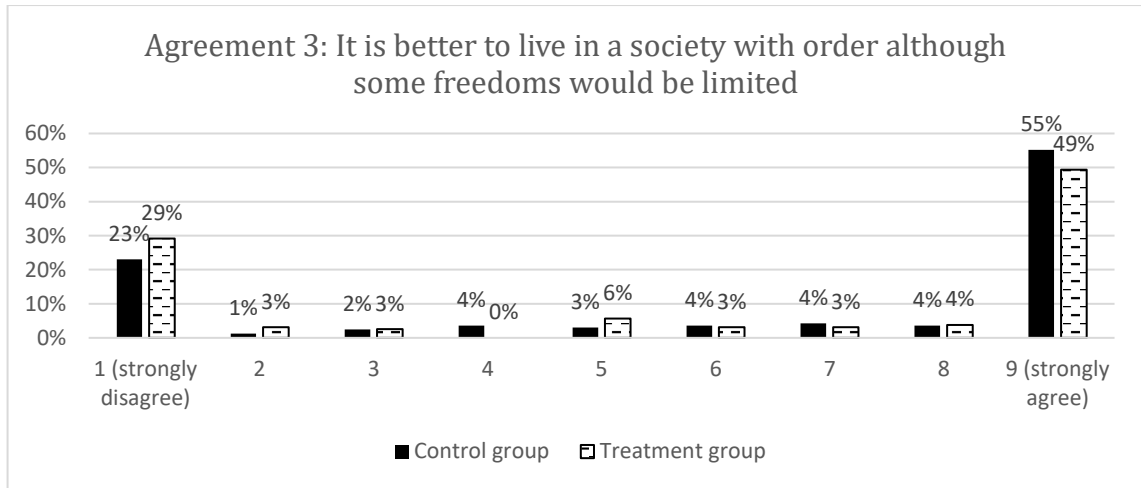


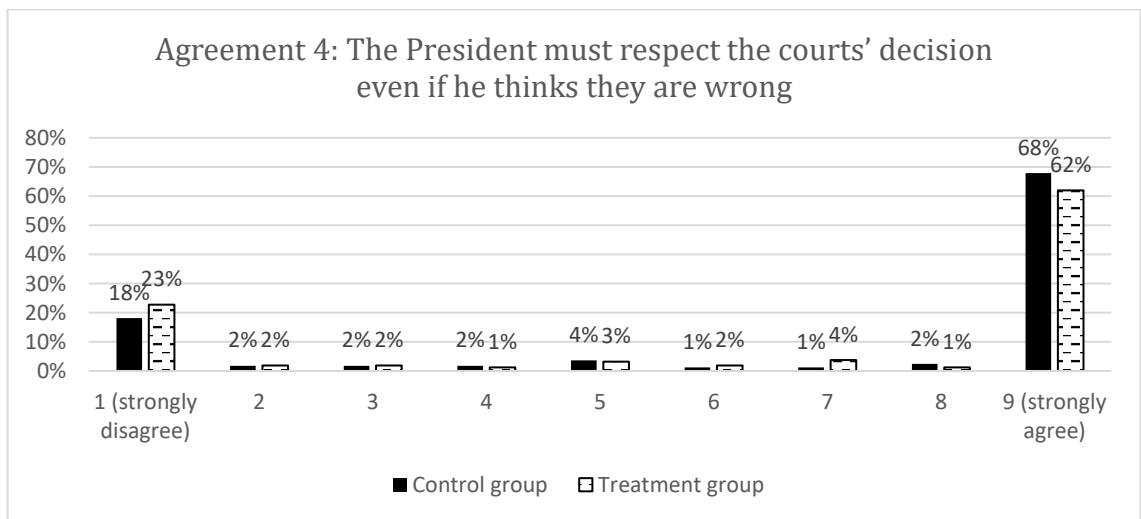
Figure 47 shows the attitudes of the control and treatment group towards the civil liberties aspect of a liberal democracy. Like the Agreement 2 case, the scale was inverted, meaning that a respondent with liberal views would disagree with the statement that “It is better to live in a society with order although some freedom would be limited”. The data indicates that a majority of 55% of the respondents from the control group and 49% from the treatment group are displaying illiberal views by preferring a “society with order” even with the cost of having certain civil liberties reduced. Still, the respondents that didn’t receive the treatment are 6% more illiberal than those which received the treatment, which is contradictory to my initial expectations.

Figure 47. Control and Treatment groups' attitudes towards civil liberties



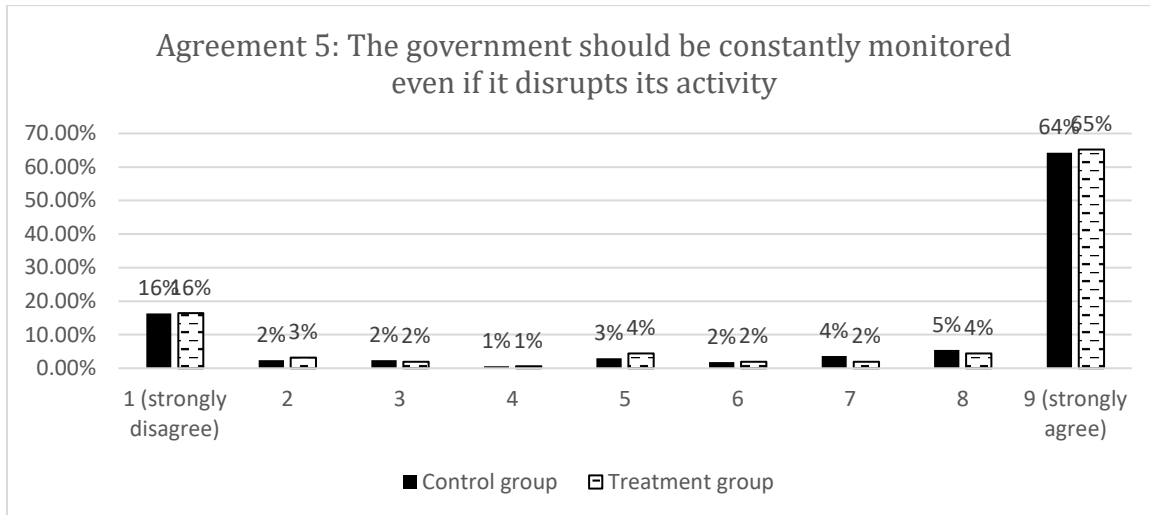
The control and treatment groups' attitudes toward rule of law aspect of liberal-democracy are presented in Figure 48. The overall observation is that a majority of the respondents (68% from the control group and 62% from the treatment group) are strongly supportive of an independent judiciary from the government. Still, there is a difference of 6% between the two groups, indicating that the control group has marginally more liberal attitudes than the treatment group.

Figure 48. Control and Treatment groups' attitudes towards rule of law



Finally, in the case of Agreement 5 which measures the respondents' attitudes towards power constrains and divisions aspect of a liberal-democracy (Figure 49), there are minimal differences between the treatment and the control group (1%) and both groups show strong liberal attitudes with a majority of the respondents agreeing with the statement that "The government should be constantly monitored even if it disrupts its activity".

Figure 49. Control and Treatment groups' attitudes towards power constrains and divisions



I compute the mean and median of overall support for liberal-democracy for each respondent based on attitudes toward the 5 aspects of liberal-democracy (multipartism, elections, civil liberties, rule of law and power constrains and divisions). While acknowledging the limitations of using either mean or the median with survey data, in this case, they are meant to offer a general perception on the distribution of the liberal-democratic attitudes between the two groups. Figures 50 and 51 indicate that both groups display, in general, support for liberal-democracy (the distribution for both mean and media is similar between groups), with the control group being slightly more liberal-democratic than the treatment group, which might indicate that there is an effect of learning about the Chinese model on the respondents' attitudes towards liberal-democracy.

Figure 50. Distribution, across control and treatment groups, of respondents' median support for liberal-democracy

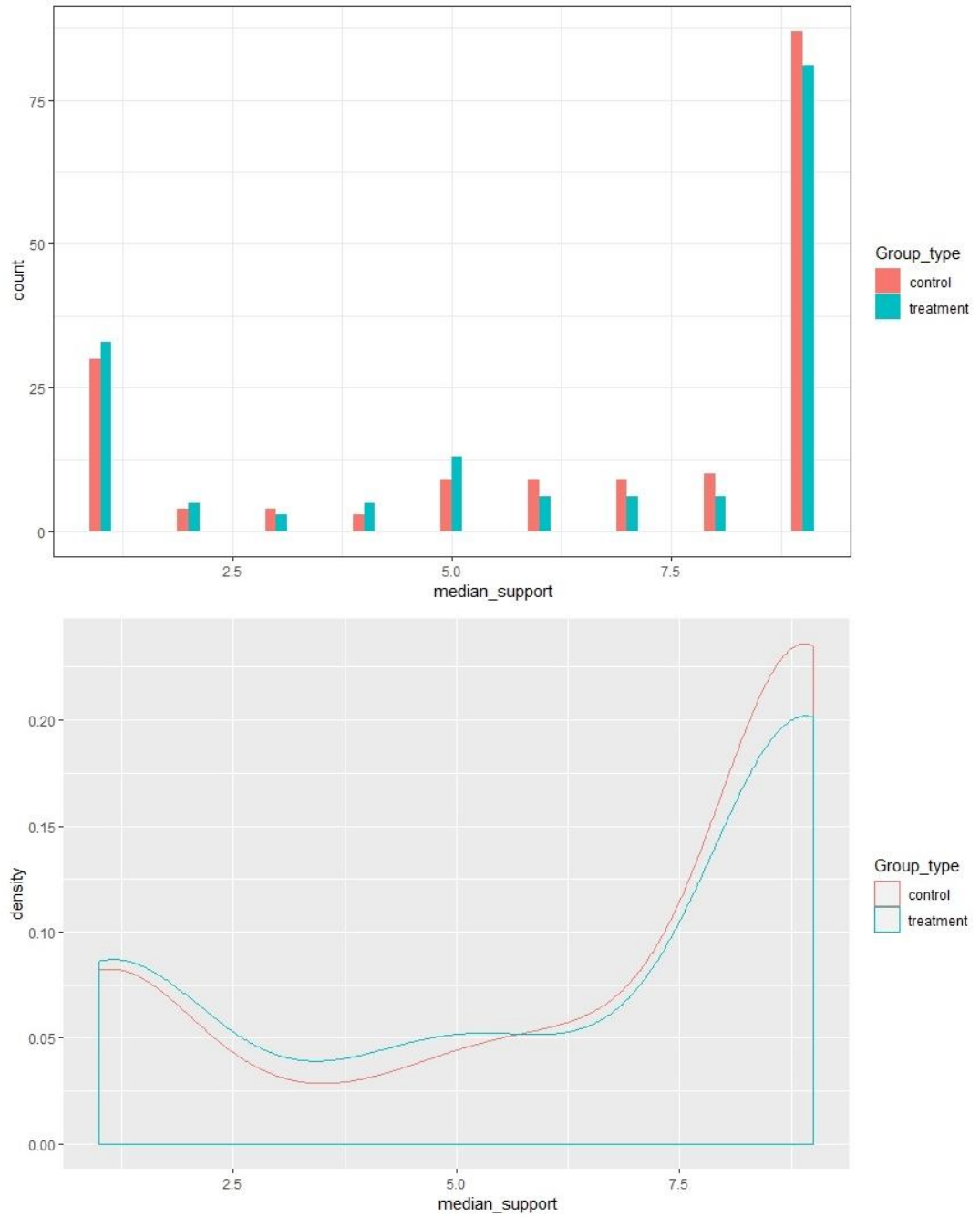
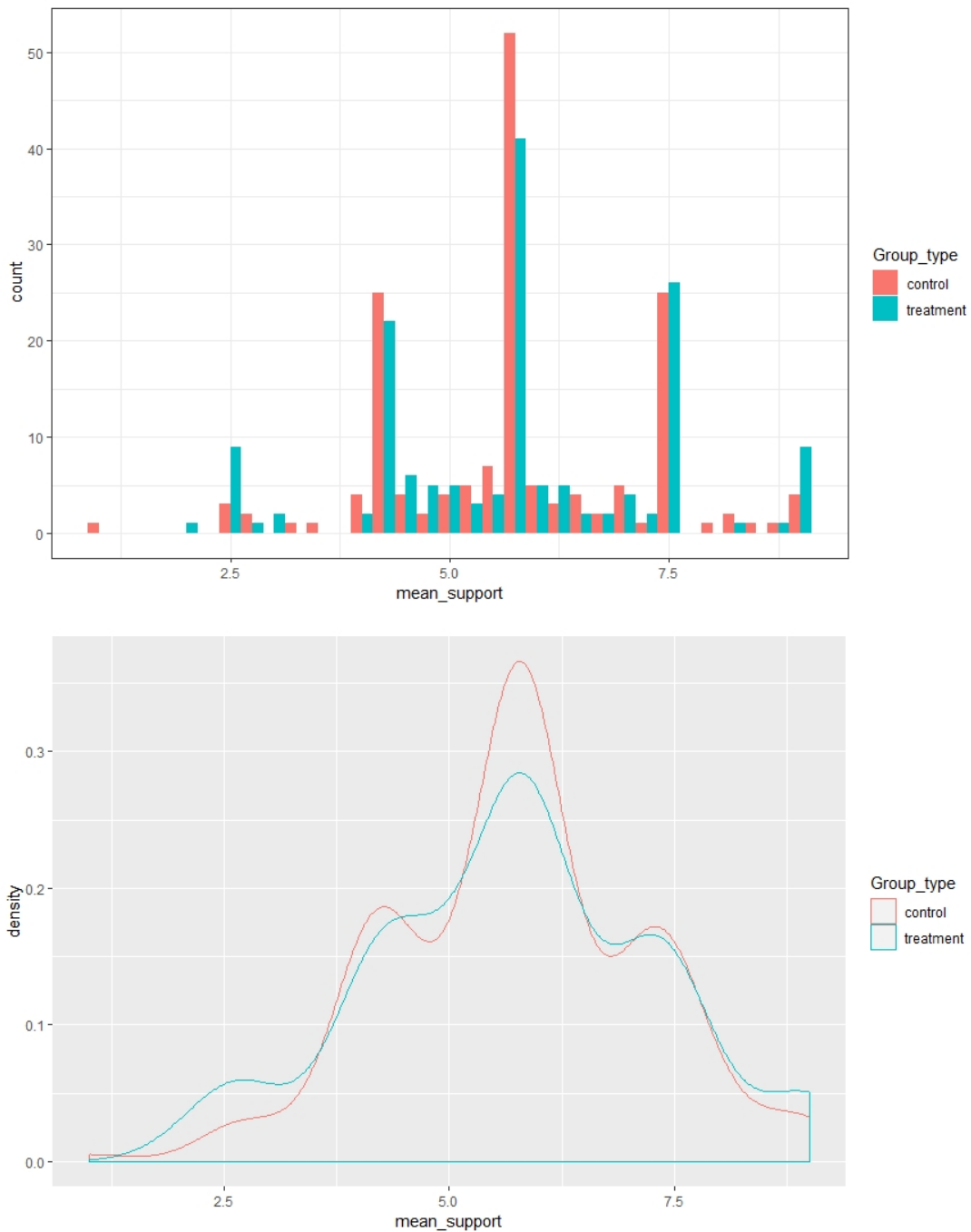


Figure 51. Distribution, across control and treatment groups, of respondents' mean support for liberal-democracy



Overall, based on the descriptive statistics presented in the Figures 45-49 (page 153-156), I find preliminary support for one of the hypothesis as the treatment group which was exposed to specific information regarding Chinese political model that contributed to its high growth performance, has shown slightly more non-democratic attitudes than the control group by preferring to choose their political leaders based on capabilities rather than through elections. Regarding attitudes towards civil liberties, a majority of respondents from both groups are displaying illiberal views by

preferring a “society with order” even with the cost of having certain civil liberties reduced, but the respondents from the control group are 6% more illiberal than the treatment group, which is contradictory to my initial expectations. In Figures 45 and 49 (pages 153 and 156), as both the treatment and the control groups show strong support for multipartism and power constrains and divisions, this descriptive data provides contradictory information to the hypotheses that learning about the Chinese model decrease the attitudes towards these two aspects of liberal-democracy, especially considering that the treatment group has even stronger liberal-democratic views than the control group. Similarly, over 62% of the respondents from both groups are supportive of an independent judiciary from the government, but, in this case, the control group has marginally more liberal attitudes than the treatment group which might indicate a certain effect of learning about the Chinese model.

c) Results

There are different empirical methods that can be used to analyse survey-experiment data. Typically, to compare the subjects’ attitudes towards liberal-democracy under the treatment condition with those in the control group, I could use an independent-means t-test because there are no common subjects between the treatment and the control group. Still, there is debate between scholars regarding the use of t-test for analysing data obtained through a Likert scale. One of the main criticisms is that a Likert scale data is ordinal by nature and thus, a parametric test that compares groups’ means, such a t-test is inappropriate (Jamieson 2004). Instead, it is recommended to choose a non-parametric test, like Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon, or conduct an ordinal regression analysis. Nevertheless, there have been scholars such as De Winter and Dodou (2010) which found that both t-test and Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test have similar power, meaning that it is up to the researcher to decide which test is preferred.

The previous histograms (Figures 45-49 from page 153-156) indicate that the data is not normally distributed, and it is skewed at the extremes. Therefore, according to the literature, the use of parametric tests, such as the independent t-means test, is not appropriate for this type of data as it violates the assumption that the data is normally distributed. Instead, I will use the Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test and will conduct ordinal regression analysis. I also reverse the scale of responses to Agreement 2 (elections) and Agreement 3 (civil liberties) so that 1 indicates strong illiberal/non-democratic attitudes and 9 is strong liberal/democratic attitudes.

First, I employ the Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test to assess whether there is a significant difference stochastically between the rank sum of the treatment and the control group on the total sample. Based on Table 31 below, there is no significant results when I conduct two-sided hypotheses testing meaning that I do not have strong evidence to reject the null hypotheses that the true location shift is equal to 0. Still, when I perform the same tests one-sided, I find that, in the case of the Agreement 2 (which measures attitudes toward elections), the control group's sum of rank is greater than the treatment group, with a difference in location of 0.00005670143, a p-value of 0.03803 which is significant at 95% confidence interval. While the location shift between the treatment and the control group is relatively small, this result indicates that it is more likely to find more positive attitudes toward the electoral aspect of a liberal-democracy in the control group than it is in the treatment group when randomly drawing values from the two samples.

Table 31. Results of Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test two-sided

	Total sample	
	W	P-value
Agreement 1 (multipartism)	11824	0.1181
Agreement 2 reversed (elections)	14428	0.07606 ³⁵
Agreement 3 reversed (civil liberties)	12069	0.209
Agreement 4 (rule of law)	13837	0.2591
Agreement 5 (division of power)	12984	0.9436

Secondly, I conduct an ordinal logistic regression to test whether treatment has a negative impact on the respondents' attitudes towards different aspects of liberal-democracy. Therefore, the independent variable is a binary variable coded as 1 if the respondent was part of the treatment group and 0 if the respondent was part of the control group. The dependent variable measures the respondents' attitudes towards 5 different aspects of liberal-democracy and has a 9-point, where 1 is the most illiberal/non-democratic attitudes and 9 is the most liberal/democratic. I compute an ordinal logistic regression model using the total sample and including the following 6 control variables:

³⁵ Becomes significant when I test the one-side hypothesis regarding whether the sum of ranks for the control group is higher than that of the treatment group.

- “Female” – coded as 1 if the respondent is female and 0 if the respondent is male
- “High education” – coded as 0 if the respondent does not have higher education (“Non-formal education”, “Primary school” and “Secondary school”, and 1 if the respondents has higher education “Post-secondary” and “University degree”;
- “If voted for Jubilee” - coded as 1 if the respondent voted for Jubilee and 0 if the respondent didn’t vote for Jubilee;
- “Whether employed” - coded as 1 if the respondent is employed and 0 if the respondent is unemployed, student, retired and homemaker;
- “Positive view of Gov Performance” (measures the performance of government is handling the economy) – coded as 0 if “Very bad”, “Bad”, “Neutral”, 1 if “Good”, “Very good”, and NA if “Don’t Know”;
- “Experience in a Chinese company” – coded as 0 if the respondent does not have experience of working in or with a Chinese company and 1 if the respondent has such an experience.

The formula of the ordinal logistic regression (also known as a Proportional Odds Model):

$$\text{logit } P(Y \leq j|x) = \alpha_j - \sum \beta_i x_i,$$

where j = ordered categories of the DV and i = independent variable and controls

The results included in Table 32 show that there is an effect of having received the treatment on the respondents’ attitudes toward elections (model 2), while there is no significant impact in any of the other models. Regarding the control variables, the only variable significant is *Experience in a Chinese company* and it indicates that if a respondent has experience of working in a Chinese company, his support for electoral aspect of a liberal-democracy decreases.

Table 32. Extended OLR with attitudes towards 5 aspects of liberal-democracy as DV (total sample)

	Agreement 1 multipartyism	Agreement 2 reversed elections	Agreement 3 reversed civil liberties	Agreement 4 rule of law	Agreement 5 power division
If treated	0.325 (0.213)	-0.370* (0.210)	0.248 (0.215)	-0.268 (0.233)	0.029 (0.229)
Female	-0.412* (0.215)	-0.176 (0.211)	-0.165 (0.219)	-0.486** (0.236)	-0.062 (0.233)
High education	0.054 (0.223)	-0.125 (0.221)	0.372 (0.229)	0.211 (0.241)	0.214 (0.239)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.263 (0.221)	-0.119 (0.216)	-0.504** (0.222)	-0.278 (0.244)	-0.135 (0.240)
Whether employed	0.264 (0.246)	0.018 (0.246)	-0.150 (0.250)	0.309 (0.277)	-0.071 (0.266)
Positive view of Gov Performance	0.194 (0.224)	0.212 (0.221)	-0.059 (0.227)	0.161 (0.248)	0.158 (0.241)
Experience in a Chinese company	0.202 (0.272)	-0.615** (0.278)	-0.493* (0.299)	0.268 (0.323)	-0.218 (0.287)
N	321	321	321	321	321

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

In order to be able to interpret the results, I compute the proportional odds ratios for the independent variable and the controls included in model 2, Table 32. Based on the results of Table 33 I find that the odds of choosing a score of 2 or higher versus a score of 1 are more than 31% lower for the respondents from than treatment group than those in the control group.

Table 33. Proportional odds ratios for the IVs in model with Agreement 2 as DV

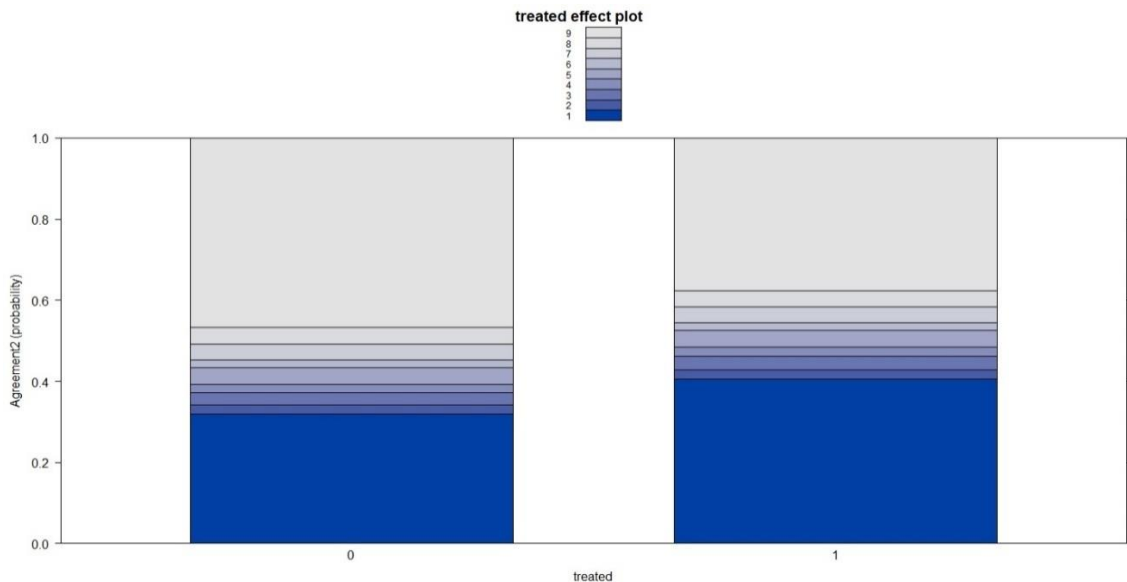
	OR	2.5 %	97.5 %
If treated	0.69	0.46	1.04
Female	0.84	0.55	1.27
High education	0.88	0.57	1.36
If voted for Jubilee	0.89	0.58	1.36
Whether employed	1.02	0.63	1.65
Positive view of Gov Performance	1.24	0.80	1.91
Experience in a Chinese company	0.54	0.31	0.93

Finally, I compute the table with the predicted probabilities (Table 34) and plot them for a better visualization of the data (Figure 52). The results indicate that the predicted probabilities of a respondent from the treatment group having a democratic attitude toward the electoral aspect of a liberal democracy decreases from 0.40 to 0.37.

Table 34. Predicted probabilities for IV (If treated) at each category of the DV (attitudes towards elections)

Categories of DV (attitudes towards elections)	If treated	
	0	1
1 (non-democratic)	0.3199	0.4051
2	0.0210	0.0231
3	0.0304	0.0327
4	0.0215	0.0227
5	0.0405	0.0418
6	0.0189	0.0191
7	0.0384	0.0379
8	0.04225	0.0405
9 (democratic)	0.4667	0.3767

Figure 52. Plot of predicted probabilities values (included in table 34)



Discussion of the results

The results presented in the previous section indicate that there is an effect of learning about the Chinese model on the respondents' attitudes towards electoral selection of politicians as the treatment group shows a higher preference than the control group for choosing the officials through a performance-based appointment rather than through an electoral process. However, there is no evidence of diffusion on the other elements of a liberal-democracy. To better understand why we observe diffusion on one area and not on others, I will discuss both empirical and theoretical reasons that

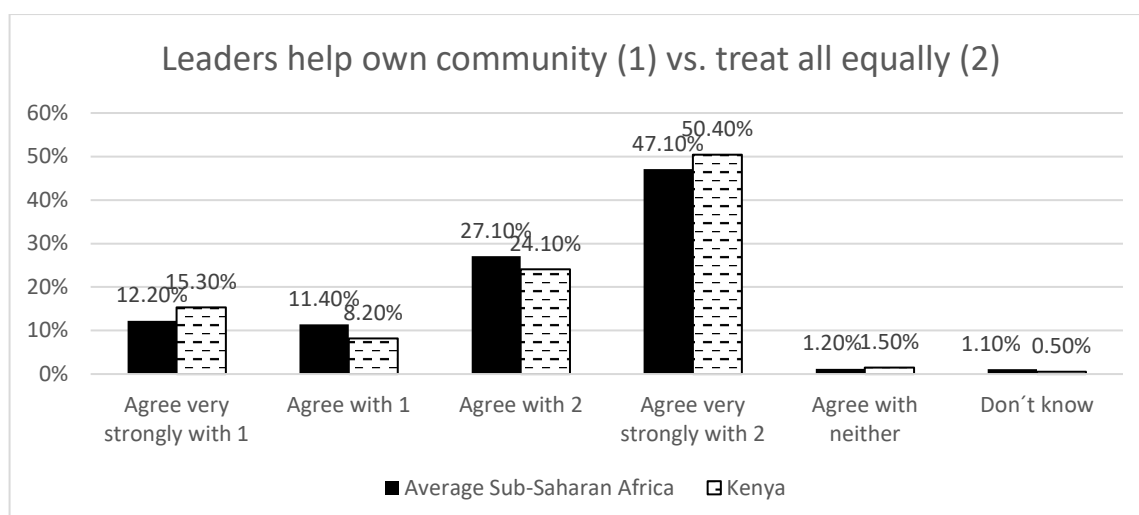
might explain these results, such as the appeal of meritocracy, biases in the sample, potential issues with the treatment effect, the interference of country-level processes and the existence of cultural distance that might dilute the effectiveness of the learning process. Based on this in-depth discussion, I argue that the theoretical explanations are the most persuasive: cultural distance and country-level processes. Out of the two, I find the cultural distance explanation to be a more plausible for explaining why diffusion might not be observed at the individual level as it resonates with the studies on the role of diffusion preconditions (Bunce and Wolchik 2006, 2010; Gerlach 2014; Goldring and Greitens 2019), such as cultural similarities between actors, in order to facilitate the process of diffusion. In this context, the learning process about the Chinese authoritarian practices could be to be disrupted by these existing cultural differences that might act as barriers to the diffusion process.

a) The appeal of meritocracy

The Table 32 (page 162) shows a significant and negative effect of having received the treatment group on the respondents' attitudes towards selection of politicians through elections. This result indicates that the meritocratic aspect of the Chinese model has more potential to be diffused to the African countries than the authoritarian features.

One of the potential explanations for this could be that the African countries have already experienced both autocratic and democratic rule, but they have yet to experience the practice of choosing politicians based on performance and merit. This is more relevant in a context in which people have already shown dissatisfaction with the extensive patronage practices. Figure 53, from page 165, indicates that over 70% of the Afrobarometer respondents, from Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa on average, prefer that the elected politicians distribute equally the goods to all citizens and not only to their own ethnic group. Still, the literature on patronage politics in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Persson et al. 2013) emphasized that corruption becomes a collective action problem as, while people clearly criticize such practices and they continue to take part in them.

Figure 53. People's attitude towards patronage politics (Source: Afrobarometer round 5)



Second, the appeal of meritocracy to Kenyan respondents could also be explained by the fact that, in a way, meritocratic appointment resonates with traditional means of leadership selection in precolonial Africa where chiefs were judged on performance. In the precolonial societies of Sub-Saharan Africa, the chiefs, regardless of the way they got in power (e.g. through elections or hereditarily), were ultimately accountable for their acts to the members of society (Mamdani 1996). According to Kelsall (2011, p. s228), their power was constrained, and they were likely to stand “face-to-face community pressure” if their actions were perceived as deviating. Even in the most hierarchical societies, the underperforming chiefs were responsible for their acts to the *traditional authorities* (Vansina 1990, Gennaioli and Rainer 2007). One particular example can be found in the Kuba Kingdom, a precolonial political entity that was located in the territory of the contemporary Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its political system included several executive councils, where “the majority [of members] were appointed meritocratically, with status being achievement-based” and who shared the power to veto “king’s orders and edicts” (Lowes et al. 2015, p. 13).

In general, the chiefs were expected to ensure the basic needs of the society and were blamed whenever the society was suffering from problems, such as famine and droughts (Lonsdale 1986, p. 146). In some areas, they were “recognized leaders [...] who achieved rather than inherited their status” and attaining such a position involved competition between men looking to attract followers (Vansina 1990, pp. 73-74). Overall, the scholarship (e.g. Gennaioli and Rainer 2007; Kelsall 2011) has widely acknowledged the persistence of these precolonial understandings of political accountability in the contemporary Sub-Saharan African states, but they have linked

them to the clientelist practices, used by politicians to reward the voters for their loyalty. While I am not questioning this reasoning, it is possible that as people are criticizing these practices (see Figure 53, page 165), they see meritocracy as an alternative to the existing patronage politics; whereby a leader, chosen on the basis of performance, is expected to contribute to the wellbeing of the society, not to satisfy the needs of a smaller group.

Finally, another potential explanation for why we only observe diffusion on the meritocratic aspect, is that the more educated people, who are the likely beneficiary of such practices, are overly represented in the survey-experiment sample. The theory of education-based meritocracy was developed by Young (1961), who argued that success is achieved by combining individual abilities (or IQ) with effort while the role of the education is to mediate the whole process. Meritocracy has been criticized as being a theory of inequality (Tan 2008; Tannock 2008), non-democratic to a certain degree (Mavrogordatos 1997) because it is believed that it promotes the interests of a particular category of people within the society who demonstrate higher skills while implicitly, excluding others. Still, empirically, Solt et al (2016) have challenged the assumption that inequality is negatively correlated with meritocracy as they have found that people with lower income are less likely to reject meritocracy if they live in conditions of inequalities rather than in more egalitarian settings. One potential explanation for this finding is that meritocracy is expected to increase social mobility and thus, it gives people agency, considering that they can change their own social status based on performance (Themelis 2008; Souto-Otero 2010).

Returning to the idea that African politics have been characterized by clientelist practices, meaning that redistribution of goods was done on other criteria (e.g. ethnic affiliation) than merit or performance, this created a state of a high level of inequality between people in these societies. Thus, following the scholarship evidence, meritocracy may be perceived by citizens of African countries as an alternative to the existing clientelist practices.

b) Biases in the sample

In this section, I will discuss whether the bias in the survey-experiment sample (the respondents are more educated and postmaterialist) might explain the non-results and why we see diffusion on the electoral aspect and not the others.

First, a generally more educated sample, with over 60% of the respondents having completed either a post-secondary or a university degree, constitutes an issue as it is not representative of the overall Kenyan population and it violates an assumption of the theory that citizens of the Sub-Saharan African countries (including Kenyans) are materialists. This last point is relevant because the theory of this paper assumes, following the previous findings in the literature, that they are materialists so one possible explanation for the non-results could be the post-materialist bias in the sample. The Figures 54 and 55 below show that there is a variation in the materialist/postmaterialist values depending on the level of education. For example, the data indicates that respondents with lower level of education (ex. non-formal education) have more materialist views and those with university degrees display more postmaterialist views.

Figure 54. Control group materialist/postmaterialist views filtered by level of education (the numbers are the counts of respondents)

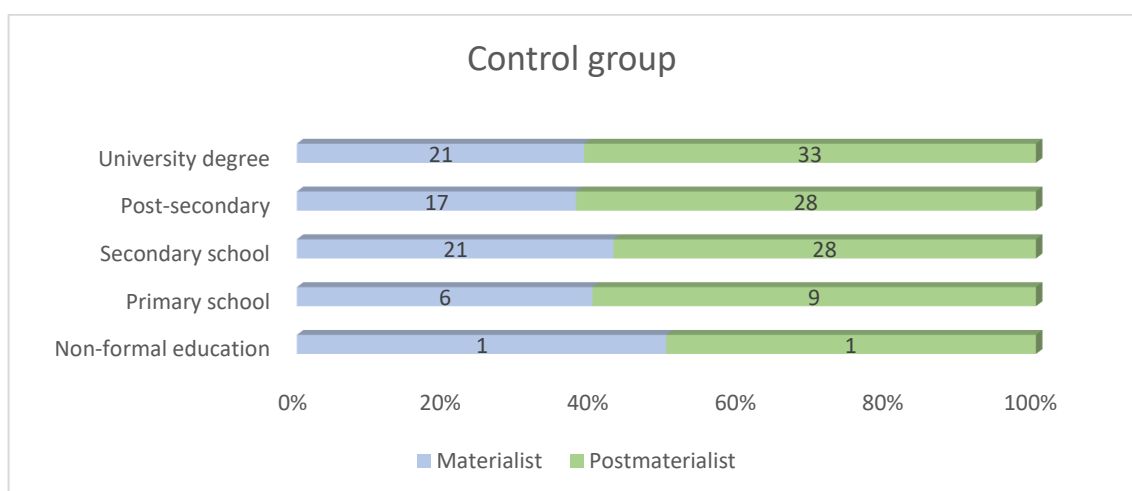
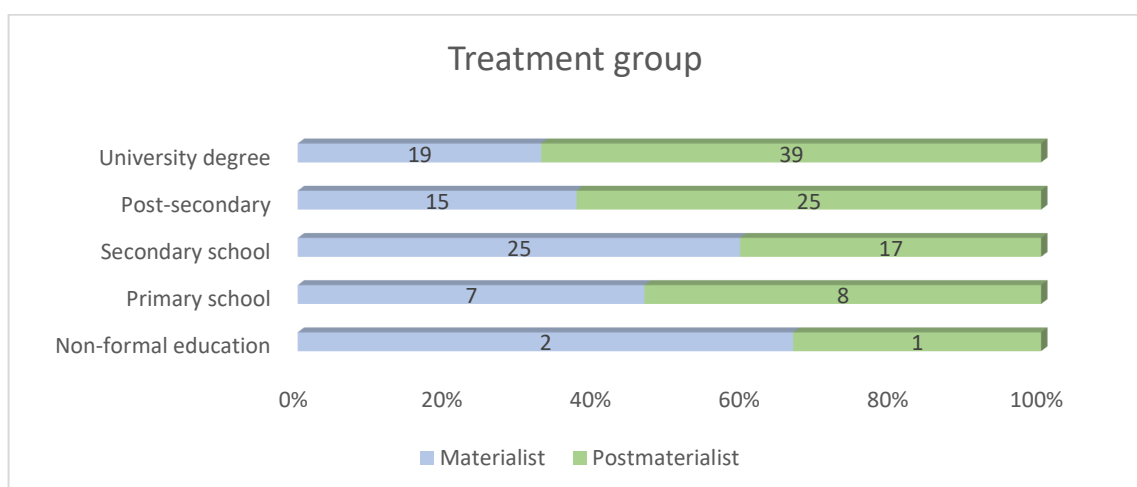


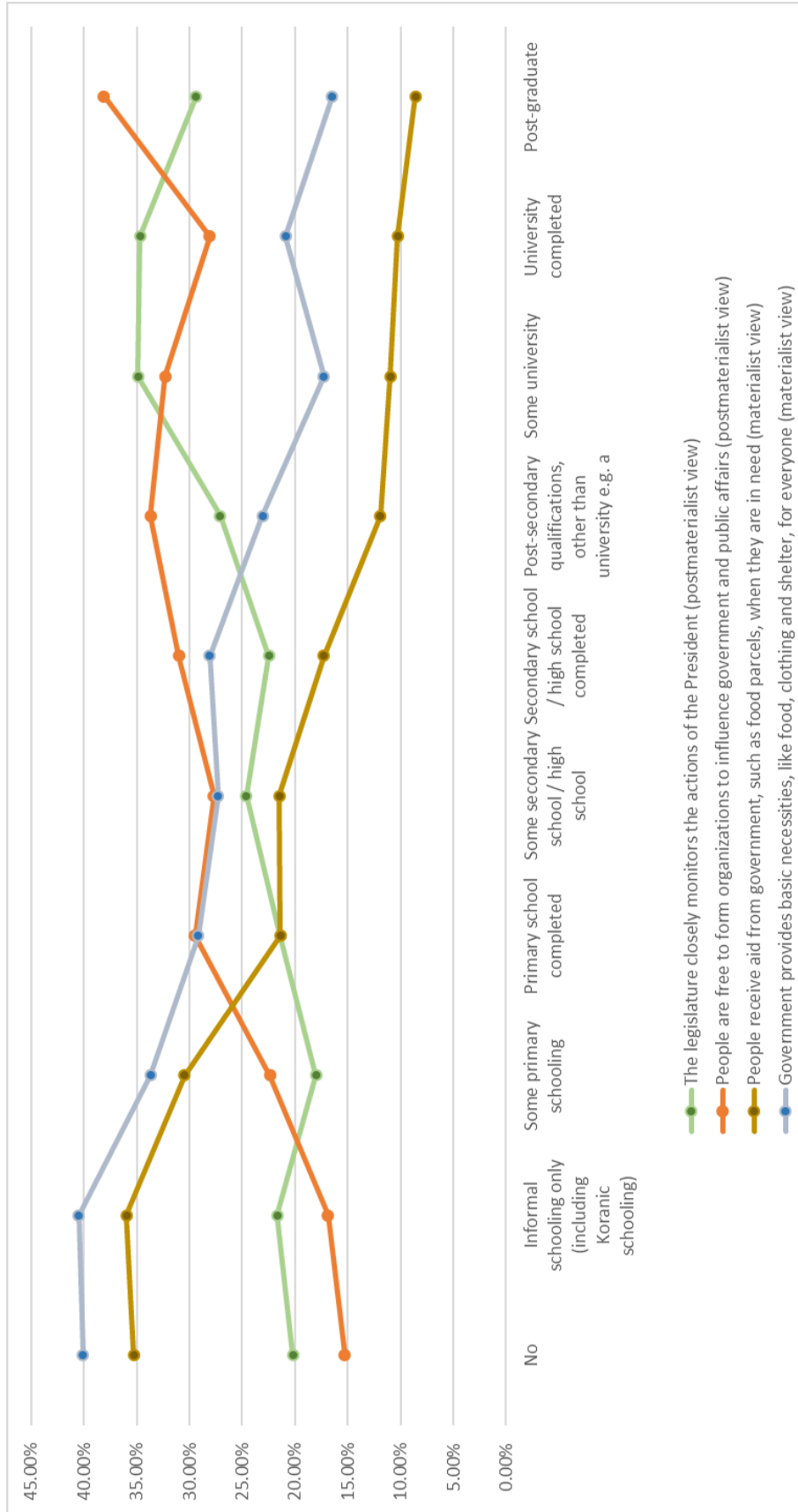
Figure 55. Treatment group materialist/postmaterialist views filtered by level of education (the numbers are the counts of respondents)



Still, there is a noticeable difference in the distribution of respondents across the different levels of education as there is a lower number of respondents with non-formal education (2 in the control group and 3 in the treatment group) and higher of those having university degrees (54 in the control group and 58 in the treatment group). Based on the expert reviews' feedback, I considered the possibility of using a quota sampling based on the level of education, but this would have increased substantially the costs of conducting the survey-experiment by surpassing the budget limit of the direct research costs available.

The correlation between the level of education and the materialist/postmaterialist views can also be observed more broadly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although there is no direct question in the Afrobarometer that measures the materialist/postmaterialist dimension, I use two questions from the Afrobarometer round 5 which asks the respondents about their view on the essential characteristics of democracy and filter the responses by the level of education. I consider a respondent as having materialist views if he considers that an essential characteristic of democracy is that the "Government provides basic necessities, like food, clothing and shelter, for everyone" or that "People receive aid from government, such as food parcels, when they are in need". Similarly, a respondent will share postmaterialist views if he prioritizes as an essential feature of democracy the fact that "The legislature closely monitors the actions of the President" or that "People are free to form organizations to influence government and public affairs". In Figure 56, we can see that there is a decreasing trend of the preference of materialist choices as the level of education increases, while there seems to be a positive correlation between the level of education and sharing postmaterialist views.

Figure 56. Essential characteristics of democracy, filtered by the level of education (Afrobarometer round 5)



As the overrepresentation of postmaterialists in the sample constitutes a bias and violate the assumption of the theory that diffusion is likely to happen because Sub-Saharan Africans share materialist values, I split the sample into two based on that postmaterialist question. This allows me to test if there is an effect on materialists. The results included in Tables 35-36 below indicate that splitting the total sample based on the materialist-postmaterialist distinction provide different results, as, on the contrary, there seems to be no significant effect in any of the new models. Therefore, this indicates that it might not be the postmaterialist bias in the sample that explains the non-results.

Table 35. Extended OLR with attitudes towards 5 aspects of liberal-democracy as DV (sample: materialist respondents)

	Agreement 1 multipartyism	Agreement 2 reversed elections	Agreement 3 reversed civil liberties	Agreement 4 rule of law	Agreement 5 power division
If treated	0.481 (0.343)	-0.564 (0.349)	-0.042 (0.348)	-0.166 (0.390)	0.149 (0.355)
Female	-0.596* (0.337)	0.016 (0.336)	0.152 (0.345)	-0.498 (0.382)	-0.476 (0.348)
High education	0.030 (0.343)	-0.371 (0.345)	-0.238 (0.353)	0.569 (0.384)	0.345 (0.360)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.343 (0.363)	-0.359 (0.368)	-0.396 (0.367)	0.066 (0.415)	-0.033 (0.379)
Whether employed	-0.192 (0.382)	0.296 (0.397)	0.274 (0.401)	-0.264 (0.431)	-0.280 (0.405)
Positive view of government performance	0.209 (0.340)	0.989*** (0.353)	0.108 (0.355)	0.211 (0.398)	0.266 (0.356)
Experience in a Chinese company	0.403 (0.415)	-0.769* (0.424)	-0.771 (0.483)	-0.247 (0.468)	-0.610 (0.408)
N	134	134	134	134	134

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

Table 36. Extended OLR with attitudes towards 5 aspects of liberal-democracy as DV (sample: postmaterialist respondents)

	Agreement 1 multipartyism	Agreement 2 reversed elections	Agreement 3 reversed civil liberties	Agreement 4 rule of law	Agreement 5 power division
If treated	0.197 (0.284)	-0.319 (0.275)	0.453 (0.282)	-0.349 (0.305)	-0.101 (0.313)
Female	-0.371 (0.290)	-0.292 (0.281)	-0.459 (0.291)	-0.367 (0.310)	0.304 (0.323)
High education	0.060 (0.307)	-0.038 (0.301)	0.756** (0.319)	0.014 (0.329)	0.001 (0.338)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.143 (0.290)	0.001 (0.278)	-0.554* (0.287)	-0.487 (0.310)	-0.102 (0.320)
Whether employed	0.656* (0.337)	-0.234 (0.324)	-0.475 (0.333)	0.662* (0.374)	0.068 (0.369)
Positive view of government performance	0.245 (0.305)	-0.359 (0.295)	-0.171 (0.304)	0.055 (0.324)	0.004 (0.335)
Experience in a Chinese company	0.059 (0.377)	-0.447 (0.390)	-0.395 (0.399)	0.714 (0.474)	0.341 (0.439)
N	187	187	187	187	187

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

c) Potential issue with the treatment effect

Another potential issue that might explain the absence of diffusion could be related to the treatment and its design. As the survey-experiment was only pre-tested with experts and not through a pilot study on the GeoPoll platform, it is possible that the design of the treatment to not be convincing or clear enough to lead to a learning process. As there are no prior questions that measure the respondents' knowledge of the China model, it is very difficult to establish how much learning happened due to the treatment and its persistence.

Still, the survey-experiment includes two questions, at the end, that are meant to assess the quality of the treatment as they ask the respondents specific information about the Chinese model, that was previously included in the treatment. Considering that the respondents from the treatment group had access to this information as part of the treatment while those in the control group did not, it might be possible to test the treatment effect by splitting the dataset based on these two questions. Thus, I split the dataset into four samples based on the two questions about the Chinese model used to test the effect of the treatment: "The Chinese political system includes: One political party/Multiple political parties/Don't know" and "The members of Chinese government are: Elected/Appointed by the ruling party/Don't know". The responses are coded binary with 1 if the answer is correct (one political party or appointed by the ruling party) and 0 if incorrect (Multiple political parties or elected) and "Don't know". I conduct the ordered logistic regression models on each of the subsets and the results are included in Table 37, from page 172. Overall, we can observe that if a respondent is knowledgeable about certain characteristics of the Chinese model, having received the treatment strengthens the respondents' support for multipartism (Agreement 1) and civil liberties (Agreement 3). On the contrary, if a respondent does not know that the Chinese system is a one-party system, and/or the Chinese officials are appointed by the party, having received the treatment decreases the respondents' attitudes towards elections (Agreement 2) and rule of law (Agreement 4).

Table 37. Extended OLR with attitudes towards 5 aspects of liberal-democracy as DV (sample divided based on knowledge about the Chinese model)

	Agreement 1				Agreement 2 reversed				Agreement 3 reversed				Agreement 4				Agreement 5			
	Know one party system	Don't know one party system	Know Chinese members are appointed	Don't know Chinese members are appointed	Know one party system	Don't know one party system	Know Chinese members are appointed	Don't know Chinese members are appointed	Know one party system	Don't know one party system	Know Chinese members are appointed	Don't know Chinese members are appointed	Know one party system	Don't know one party system	Know Chinese members are appointed	Don't know Chinese members are appointed	Know one party system	Don't know one party system	Know Chinese members are appointed	Don't know Chinese members are appointed
If treated	0.655* (0.358)	0.255 (0.289)	0.181 (0.350)	0.680** (0.325)	-0.193 (0.365)	-0.539* (0.284)	-0.459 (0.345)	-0.283 (0.312)	0.672* (0.361)	-0.050 (0.299)	1.006*** (0.386)	-0.162 (0.316)	-0.573 (0.437)	-0.269 (0.302)	-0.375 (0.410)	-0.337* (0.326)	-0.153 (0.394)	0.254 (0.314)	-0.057 (0.359)	0.421 (0.353)
Female	-0.193 (0.346)	-0.550* (0.283)	-0.065 (0.324)	-0.736** (0.302)	-0.247 (0.345)	-0.053 (0.276)	-0.246 (0.320)	-0.145 (0.290)	-0.375 (0.350)	-0.007 (0.291)	-0.547 (0.345)	0.226 (0.295)	-0.655* (0.397)	-0.342 (0.301)	-0.520 (0.373)	-0.450 (0.317)	-0.256 (0.377)	0.036 (0.306)	0.123 (0.343)	-0.229 (0.331)
High education	-0.121 (0.372)	0.091 (0.288)	-0.371 (0.365)	0.456 (0.302)	-0.270 (0.378)	-0.103 (0.282)	-0.020 (0.354)	-0.234 (0.294)	0.258 (0.374)	0.418 (0.300)	0.657* (0.392)	0.165 (0.300)	0.182 (0.422)	0.230 (0.300)	-0.214 (0.408)	0.297 (0.314)	-0.427 (0.417)	0.604** (0.307)	-0.356 (0.381)	0.765** (0.330)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.393 (0.350)	-0.215 (0.295)	-0.158 (0.345)	-0.475 (0.306)	-0.560 (0.348)	0.155 (0.286)	-0.633* (0.348)	0.244 (0.295)	-0.218 (0.348)	-0.663** (0.301)	-0.485 (0.357)	-0.274 (0.300)	-0.578 (0.405)	-0.077 (0.313)	-0.883** (0.419)	0.072 (0.325)	-0.257 (0.379)	-0.101 (0.318)	-0.443 (0.365)	0.001 (0.336)
Whether employed	0.106 (0.382)	0.431 (0.330)	0.210 (0.365)	0.389 (0.348)	0.136 (0.384)	-0.160 (0.328)	-0.360 (0.370)	0.220 (0.349)	0.177 (0.381)	-0.347 (0.341)	0.118 (0.383)	-0.309 (0.347)	0.270 (0.459)	0.264 (0.352)	0.326 (0.442)	0.116 (0.376)	-0.413 (0.401)	0.220 (0.370)	-0.244 (0.376)	0.153 (0.404)
Positive view of government performance	0.400 (0.353)	0.050 (0.296)	0.369 (0.347)	-0.001 (0.304)	0.017 (0.348)	0.345 (0.294)	-0.091 (0.337)	0.379 (0.303)	0.310 (0.351)	-0.214 (0.311)	0.107 (0.361)	-0.104 (0.307)	-0.029 (0.408)	0.197 (0.321)	-0.018 (0.394)	0.266 (0.333)	0.276 (0.382)	0.061 (0.319)	0.223 (0.359)	-0.041 (0.338)
Experience in a Chinese company	0.139 (0.395)	0.349 (0.392)	0.370 (0.385)	0.063 (0.404)	-0.138 (0.403)	-1.083*** (0.401)	-0.621 (0.398)	-0.669* (0.401)	-0.287 (0.412)	-0.939** (0.476)	-0.325 (0.421)	-0.617 (0.443)	0.746 (0.522)	-0.170 (0.429)	0.157 (0.472)	0.222 (0.467)	-0.390 (0.416)	-0.094 (0.424)	-0.026 (0.397)	-0.424 (0.433)
N	129	192	149	172	129	192	149	172	129	192	149	172	129	192	149	172	129	192	149	172

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

I also compute the same models and I include interaction effects between having received the treatment and knowing about the Chinese model. These models are relevant to find out whether the effect of the treatment is dependent on learning about particularities of the Chinese political model which are related to its high growth performance: having a one-party system and the Chinese officials are appointed by the party. I compute the ordinal regression models on the total sample, as well as on the postmaterialist and materialist subsets. Overall, the interaction effects are significant and positive only in Table 40, where I use the civil liberties aspect of liberal-democracy as dependent variable. These results indicate that having received the treatment and knowing how the Chinese official are appointed is strengthening the respondents' support for the civil liberties aspect of liberal democracy, in the case in which they are showing postmaterialist values or are part of the total sample. Similarly, for the materialist sample, there is a positive effect of the interaction between being in the treatment group and knowing about the Chinese one-party system on their attitudes towards civil liberties aspect of liberal-democracy. Overall, based on the results from Tables 38-42 (pages 173-175), there is no strong evidence that the absence of diffusion might be due to an issue with the treatment. But, in terms of the learning process, it is not possible to establish how much learning happened, as there are no pre-existing data on the citizens of the African states' knowledge of the particularities of the Chinese model that have contributed to the high growth performance.

Table 38. Extended OLR with attitudes towards multipartism as DV and interaction effects

	Agreement 1 (multipartism)					
	total	postmaterialist	materialist	total	postmaterialist	materialist
If treated	0.198 (0.286)	0.237 (0.396)	0.124 (0.445)	0.536* (0.313)	0.524 (0.426)	0.601 (0.496)
Know one party system	-0.351 (0.327)	-0.281 (0.438)	-0.578 (0.518)			
Know Chinese members are appointed				0.341 (0.328)	0.574 (0.433)	-0.192 (0.536)
If treated:Know one party system	0.399 (0.454)	0.076 (0.609)	0.950 (0.722)			
If treated:Know Chinese members are appointed				-0.524 (0.468)	-0.809 (0.626)	-0.061 (0.736)
Female	-0.397* (0.218)	-0.387 (0.293)	-0.531 (0.343)	-0.445** (0.218)	-0.417 (0.294)	-0.615* (0.343)
High education	0.028 (0.226)	0.065 (0.308)	-0.069 (0.352)	0.080 (0.227)	0.106 (0.310)	0.098 (0.365)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.281 (0.223)	-0.169 (0.292)	-0.391 (0.367)	-0.284 (0.223)	-0.193 (0.293)	-0.325 (0.365)
Whether employed	0.277 (0.247)	0.685** (0.340)	-0.207 (0.382)	0.254 (0.247)	0.629* (0.338)	-0.203 (0.383)
Positive view of government performance	0.213 (0.225)	0.276 (0.310)	0.207 (0.341)	0.176 (0.225)	0.195 (0.308)	0.177 (0.344)
Experience in a Chinese company	0.225 (0.275)	0.069 (0.377)	0.444 (0.428)	0.194 (0.274)	0.035 (0.379)	0.460 (0.427)
N	321	187	134	321	187	134

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

Table 39. Extended OLR with attitudes towards elections aspect of liberal-democracy as DV and interaction effects

	Agreement 2 reversed (elections)					
	total	postmaterialist	materialist	total	postmaterialist	materialist
If treated	-0.485*	-0.534	-0.632	-0.249	-0.077	-0.582
	(0.277)	(0.380)	(0.450)	(0.305)	(0.412)	(0.504)
Know one party system	-0.114	0.412	-0.825			
	(0.336)	(0.442)	(0.560)			
Know Chinese members are appointed				-0.201	0.370	-1.103*
				(0.324)	(0.412)	(0.577)
If treated:Know one party system	0.281	0.157	0.476			
	(0.456)	(0.602)	(0.754)			
If treated:Know Chinese members are appointed				-0.080	-0.561	0.774
				(0.456)	(0.595)	(0.766)
Female	-0.156	-0.233	0.011	-0.187	-0.317	0.029
	(0.214)	(0.286)	(0.345)	(0.213)	(0.284)	(0.345)
High education	-0.149	-0.070	-0.430	-0.094	-0.020	-0.250
	(0.224)	(0.303)	(0.357)	(0.224)	(0.302)	(0.365)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.118	0.064	-0.425	-0.106	-0.034	-0.266
	(0.218)	(0.282)	(0.372)	(0.217)	(0.281)	(0.373)
Whether employed	0.020	-0.265	0.327	0.033	-0.250	0.292
	(0.247)	(0.328)	(0.403)	(0.246)	(0.328)	(0.400)
Positive view of government performance	0.218	-0.408	1.012***	0.196	-0.390	0.961***
	(0.222)	(0.300)	(0.355)	(0.222)	(0.298)	(0.357)
Experience in a Chinese company	-0.620**	-0.478	-0.653	-0.593**	-0.467	-0.681
	(0.280)	(0.393)	(0.430)	(0.279)	(0.392)	(0.432)
N	321	187	134	321	187	134

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Table 40. Extended OLR with attitudes towards civil liberties aspect of liberal-democracy as DV and interaction effects

	Agreement 3 reversed (civil liberties)					
	total	postmaterialist	materialist	total	postmaterialist	materialist
If treated	-0.036	0.453	-0.719	-0.071	0.001	-0.292
	(0.295)	(0.401)	(0.467)	(0.312)	(0.425)	(0.483)
Know one party system	-0.179	0.122	-0.721			
	(0.343)	(0.446)	(0.580)			
Know Chinese members are appointed				-1.069***	-0.988**	-1.117*
				(0.367)	(0.457)	(0.638)
If treated:Know one party system	0.598	-0.066	1.663**			
	(0.465)	(0.607)	(0.775)			
If treated:Know Chinese members are appointed				1.121**	1.221*	1.147
				(0.492)	(0.633)	(0.818)
Female	-0.127	-0.449	0.277	-0.103	-0.407	0.220
	(0.221)	(0.294)	(0.356)	(0.223)	(0.295)	(0.355)
High education	0.318	0.750**	-0.441	0.353	0.708**	-0.213
	(0.232)	(0.321)	(0.370)	(0.235)	(0.323)	(0.377)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.490**	-0.548*	-0.421	-0.453**	-0.501*	-0.323
	(0.224)	(0.288)	(0.377)	(0.224)	(0.289)	(0.371)
Whether employed	-0.146	-0.484	0.261	-0.116	-0.436	0.290
	(0.250)	(0.335)	(0.406)	(0.251)	(0.334)	(0.406)
Positive view of government performance	-0.040	-0.187	0.182	-0.035	-0.108	0.094
	(0.229)	(0.309)	(0.361)	(0.230)	(0.307)	(0.364)
Experience in a Chinese company	-0.516*	-0.397	-0.811	-0.432	-0.362	-0.670
	(0.302)	(0.399)	(0.497)	(0.303)	(0.402)	(0.499)
N	321	187	134	321	187	134

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Table 41. Extended OLR with attitudes towards rule of law aspect of liberal-democracy as DV and interaction effects

	Agreement 4 (rule of law)					
	total	postmaterialist	materialist	total	postmaterialist	materialist
If treated	-0.246 (0.302)	-0.310 (0.407)	-0.131 (0.494)	-0.522 (0.322)	-0.574 (0.430)	-0.456 (0.536)
Know one party system	0.480 (0.400)	0.242 (0.518)	0.911 (0.664)			
Know Chinese members are appointed				0.277 (0.377)	0.890* (0.519)	-0.598 (0.595)
If treated:Know one party system	-0.285 (0.521)	-0.205 (0.673)	-0.415 (0.871)			
If treated:Know Chinese members are appointed				0.281 (0.513)	-0.140 (0.695)	0.831 (0.802)
Female	-0.472** (0.240)	-0.356 (0.314)	-0.463 (0.391)	-0.457* (0.239)	-0.334 (0.315)	-0.437 (0.391)
High education	0.214 (0.243)	0.015 (0.330)	0.596 (0.399)	0.149 (0.244)	0.066 (0.332)	0.563 (0.411)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.251 (0.246)	-0.479 (0.311)	0.156 (0.424)	-0.293 (0.247)	-0.553* (0.317)	0.111 (0.421)
Whether employed	0.299 (0.277)	0.649* (0.375)	-0.242 (0.435)	0.301 (0.278)	0.610 (0.378)	-0.262 (0.434)
Positive view of government performance	0.133 (0.250)	0.030 (0.329)	0.175 (0.400)	0.206 (0.251)	0.067 (0.333)	0.210 (0.403)
Experience in a Chinese company	0.212 (0.326)	0.701 (0.475)	-0.407 (0.482)	0.215 (0.326)	0.687 (0.480)	-0.240 (0.484)
N	321	187	134	321	187	134

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Table 42. Extended OLR with attitudes towards power divisions aspect of liberal-democracy as DV and interaction effects

	Agreement 5 (power divisions)					
	total	postmaterialist	materialist	total	postmaterialist	materialist
If treated	0.192 (0.310)	0.185 (0.461)	0.338 (0.463)	0.310 (0.345)	0.581 (0.525)	0.074 (0.506)
Know one party system	0.234 (0.363)	-0.282 (0.482)	1.118* (0.582)			
Know Chinese members are appointed				-0.078 (0.344)	-0.053 (0.465)	-0.150 (0.540)
If treated:Know one party system	-0.419 (0.496)	-0.318 (0.680)	-0.844 (0.780)			
If treated:Know Chinese members are appointed				-0.400 (0.496)	-0.968 (0.710)	0.209 (0.745)
Female	-0.083 (0.236)	0.248 (0.326)	-0.465 (0.357)	-0.089 (0.235)	0.272 (0.326)	-0.462 (0.355)
High education	0.243 (0.242)	0.034 (0.341)	0.423 (0.373)	0.263 (0.242)	0.018 (0.343)	0.342 (0.377)
If voted for Jubilee	-0.135 (0.241)	-0.149 (0.322)	0.050 (0.386)	-0.131 (0.241)	-0.135 (0.324)	-0.026 (0.382)
Whether employed	-0.076 (0.267)	0.075 (0.370)	-0.306 (0.410)	-0.061 (0.267)	0.123 (0.371)	-0.276 (0.405)
Positive view of government performance	0.145 (0.242)	0.024 (0.339)	0.268 (0.358)	0.132 (0.242)	-0.034 (0.340)	0.262 (0.360)
Experience in a Chinese company	-0.221 (0.290)	0.374 (0.441)	-0.778* (0.425)	-0.185 (0.289)	0.330 (0.443)	-0.610 (0.420)
N	321	187	134	321	187	134

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

d) Country-level processes

Another explanation for why we observe these results is the fact that local processes might be mediating the diffusion process. In the case of Kenya, for instance, ethnic voting might be an example of country-level factor that might be mediating the diffusion process. In the sample, the government supporters are overly-represented which raises concerns about whether this affects their support for Chinese engagement in the country and thus partisanship influences the process of diffusion. The implications of such a bias are relevant in the context in which they might be influencing the respondents' support for Chinese engagement in Kenya.

To address this possibility, I filter the perceptions of China by party voted in the 2017 elections for each group. Figures 57-58 indicate that from the respondents who voted for the opposition, those who are in the control group have more negative views of China than those from the treatment group. Also, in both groups, the supporters of Jubilee have, in general, positive views of Chinese engagement in Kenya, there is a similar distribution between the control and the treatment groups, and their perceptions seem to be slightly more positive than the views of CORD supporters.

Figure 57. Control group's perceptions of China, filtered by voted party in the 2017 elections

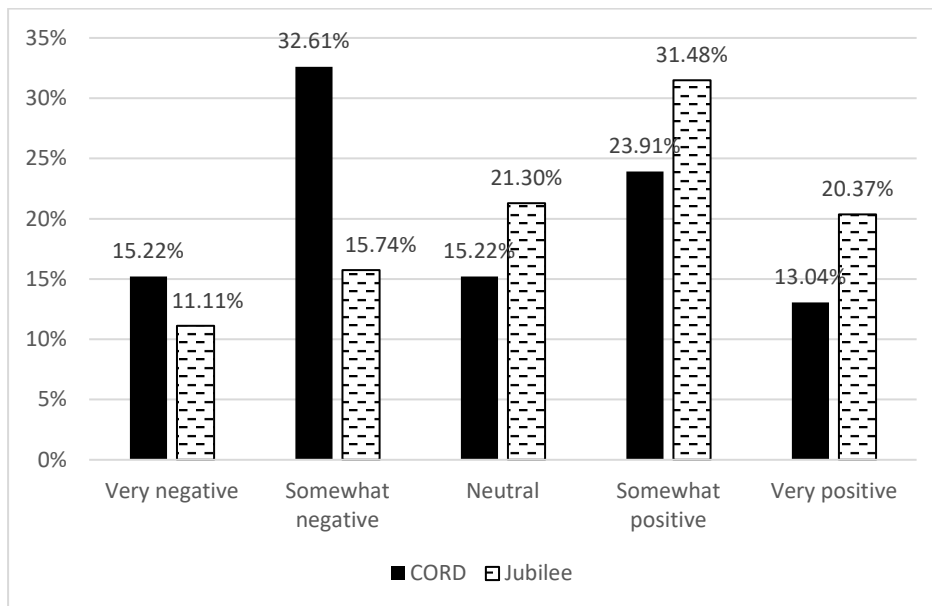
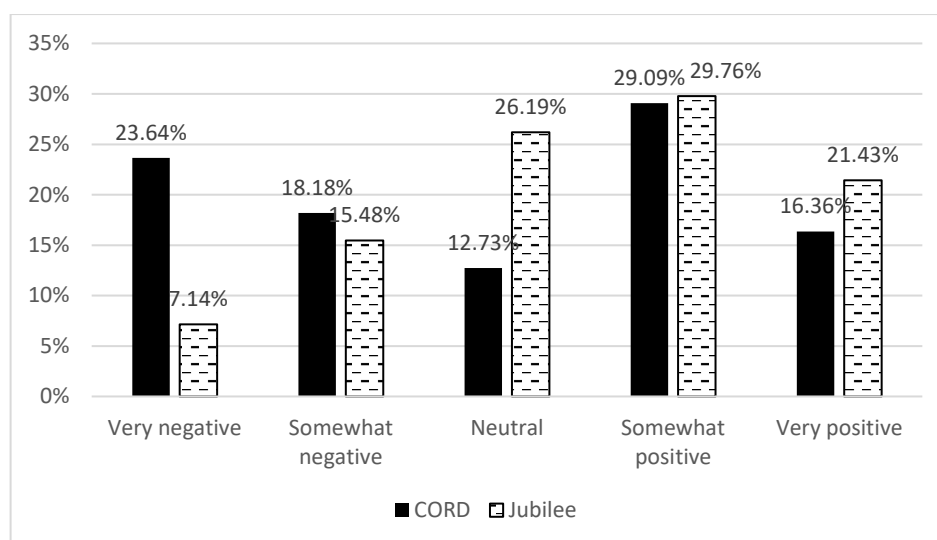


Figure 58. Treatment group's perceptions of China, filtered by voted party in the 2017 elections



These graphs seem to provide support for the view that government supporters might be more susceptible to Chinese influence as they share, in general, more positive perceptions of Chinese engagement. Similarly, in the SPEC barometer of the second quarter of 2018, the Jubilee supporters were observed to be more positive towards China than the opposition voters by evaluating China as an important country to have a good relationship with (with a difference of +11%), while the CORD supporters perceive China more as a threat to Kenya’s economic and political development (with a difference of +10%) (IPSOS 2018).

To further explore this issue, I look at perceptions of China in the most recent Afrobarometer data, round 6 and I filter these responses by ethnic group to further explore whether certain ethnic groups have different views of Chinese engagement in Kenya. The reason for using the ethnic affiliation question is that in the Afrobarometer there are no questions that asks the respondents with which party they voted in the previous election. Additionally, ethnic voting has been a long-term practice in Kenya (Bratton and Kimenyi 2008; Ferree et al. 2014; Long and Gibson 2015). In Figures 59 and 60 from pages 179-180, I explore two questions that asks the respondents to rate the Chinese influence in Kenya as being positive or negative and, respectively, to assess whether China is doing a good job at meeting Kenya’s needs.

At a first look, there is a general positive perception of Chinese engagement in Kenya across the majority of the ethnic group which counters the hypothesis that supporters of the opposition display a generally negative view of Chinese influence. In

Figure 59, we observe that ethnic groups, such as Kikuyu³⁶ and Kalenjin³⁷, which are known to be strong supporters of incumbent party Jubilee display very positive views regarding the Chinese influence in Kenya (over 80%). At the same time, ethnic groups which are part of the opposition, such as Luo³⁸ (supporting Raila Odinga), Kamba³⁹ (supporting Kalonzo Musyoka) and Luhya⁴⁰ (supporters of Moses Wetangula) considers the Chinese influence in Kenya to be positive in proportion of 63% for Luo, 78% for Kamba and 72% for Luhya. A similar picture is presented in Figure 60 as both government supporters, approximately 87% of Kikuyu and 70% of Kalenjin, but also opposition supporters, such as 54% of Luo, 71% of Kamba and 58% of Luhya considers that China is doing a good or very good job at meeting country's needs. The ethnic groups that display more negative perceptions of China in both figures are Kuria (roughly 32% in Figure 59 and 50% in Figure 60), which is one of the smallest ethnic groups in Kenya by representing less than 1% of the population and Kisii (approximately 26% in Figure 59 and 25% in Figure 60) is the sixth largest ethnic group Kenya, representing 5.7% of the overall population.

³⁶ The largest ethnic group in Kenya which accounts for 6.6 million people and represents 17% of the overall population of Kenya. (based on the 2009 Census)

³⁷ Third largest ethnic group in Kenya which accounts for almost 5 million people and constitutes 13% of the overall population of Kenya. (based on the 2009 Census)

³⁸ Fourth largest ethnic group in Kenya which accounts for roughly 4 million people and represents 10.4% of the overall population of Kenya. (based on the 2009 Census)

³⁹ Fifth largest ethnic group in Kenya which accounts for 3.9 million people and includes 10% of the general population of Kenya. (based on the 2009 Census)

⁴⁰ Second largest ethnic group in Kenya which accounts for 5.3 million people and represents approximately 13.7% of the Kenyan population. (based on the 2009 Census)

Figure 59. China's influence in Kenya: positive or negative; filtered by ethnic group (Afrobarometer round 6)

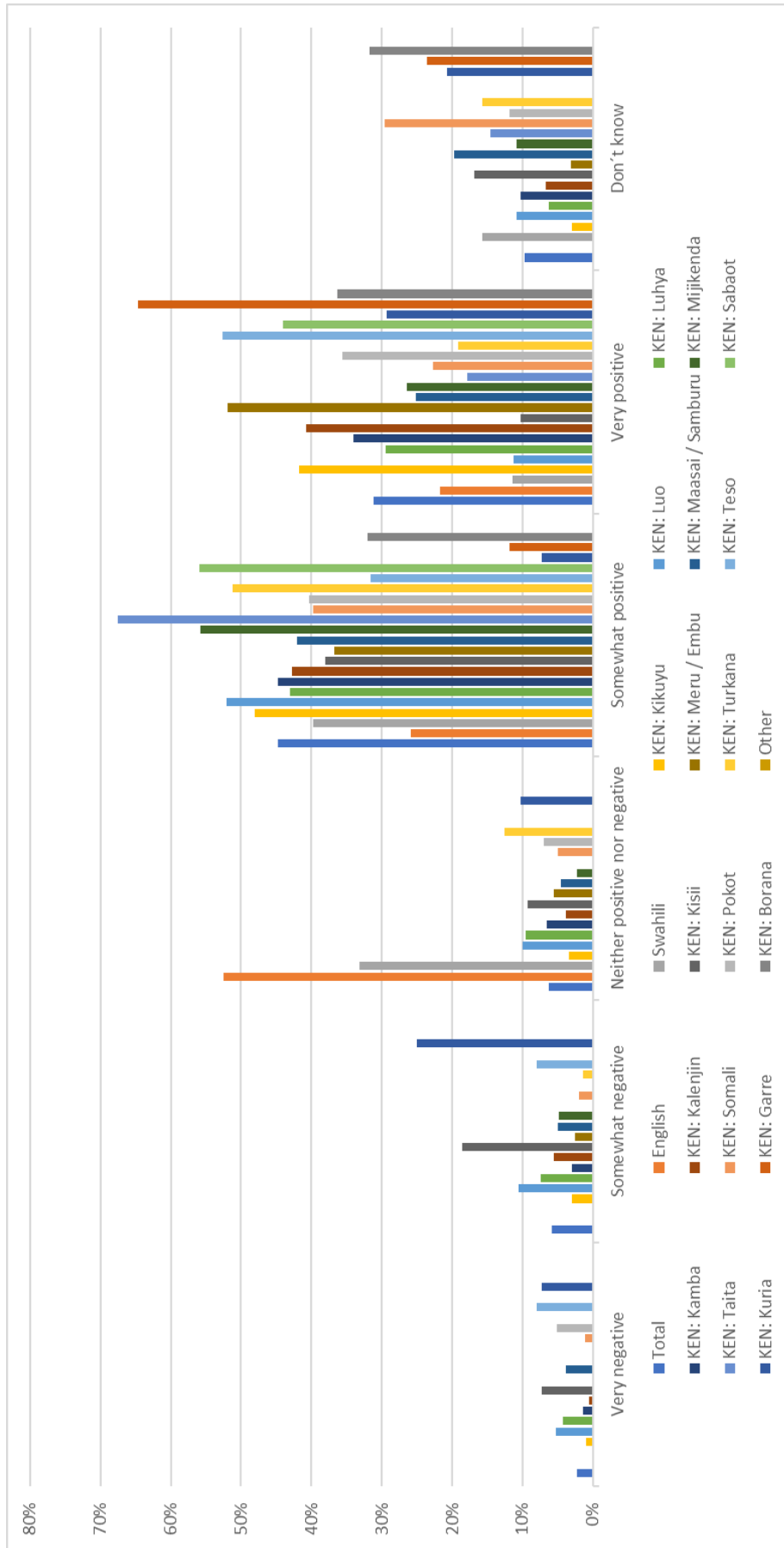
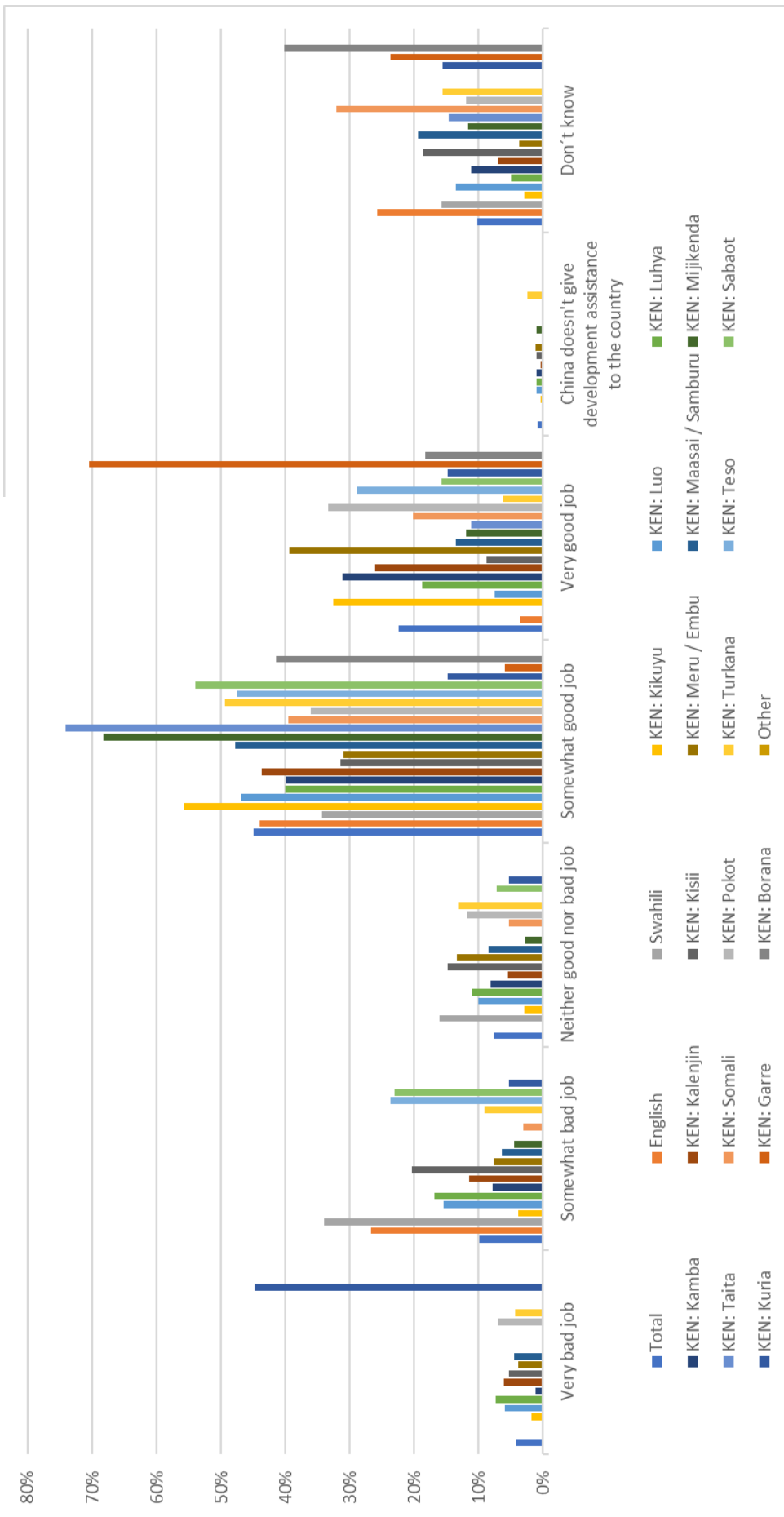


Figure 60. China's assistance does a good job at meeting Kenya's needs; filtered by ethnic group (Afrobarometer round 6)



According to a Daily Nation article from 2017, Kisii county is known for supporting Raila Odinga with 68% of their votes in the 2013 elections, but during the following round of general elections from 2017, the support for the opposition decreased to 55% while Uhuru Kenyatta, the candidate of the Jubilee, received 43% of the votes (with 15.4% more than he received in 2013) (Mbula 2017). While we could look at this result as an example of shift from the ethnic voting practice that has dominated the Kenyan politics, this drop in support recorded in the 2017 general elections could be more likely explained by the opposition's boycott of the elections (BBC 2017; Obulutsa and Houreld 2017).

Overall, there are concerns regarding the fact that government supporters might be more supportive of Chinese engagement in Kenya and, implicitly, more susceptible to Chinese influence than the supporters of the opposition, although existing survey data provides mixed results. To address these concerns, I have included a control variable for people who voted for Jubilee in the main models (Table 32, page 162). Further, I split the data into two subsets: one subset with supporters of government and another one with those who didn't vote for Jubilee. I conduct the ordered logistic models on each of the subset. We expect that as the government supporters tend to be positive of China, they should be affected more strongly by the process of diffusion. The results from Table 43, from page 182 that there is a negative effect of the treatment on the pro-government supporters' attitudes towards the electoral aspect of a liberal-democracy, but, at the same time, the treatment is enhancing their support for multipartism and civil liberties. In Table 44 from page 182, there is no significant effect of being in the treatment group on the attitudes towards different aspects of liberal-democracy of the respondents who did not vote for Jubilee. Based on these results, we observe that being pro-government does not make a respondent more susceptible to diffusion and one potential explanation for this could be that the government supporters are the ones benefitting from the democratic goods, as opposed to the opposition supporters.

Table 43. Extended OLR with attitudes towards 5 aspects of liberal-democracy as DV (sample: respondents who voted for Jubilee)

	Agreement1 multipartyism	Agreement2 reversed elections	Agreement3 reversed civil liberties	Agreement4 rule of law	Agreement5 power divisions
If treated	0.505*	-0.822***	0.521*	-0.463	0.079
	(0.279)	(0.281)	(0.290)	(0.297)	(0.297)
Female	-0.409	-0.195	-0.362	-0.266	-0.021
	(0.279)	(0.278)	(0.292)	(0.300)	(0.297)
High education	0.342	-0.393	0.628**	-0.093	0.329
	(0.281)	(0.286)	(0.302)	(0.306)	(0.305)
Whether employed	0.179	0.338	-0.481	-0.296	-0.258
	(0.330)	(0.343)	(0.362)	(0.345)	(0.351)
Positive view of gov performance	-0.150	0.439	0.131	0.143	0.114
	(0.280)	(0.284)	(0.292)	(0.303)	(0.299)
Experience in a Chinese company	0.258	-0.677*	-0.149	0.103	-0.103
	(0.354)	(0.369)	(0.386)	(0.397)	(0.367)
N	192	192	192	192	192

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

Table 44. Extended OLR with attitudes towards 5 aspects of liberal-democracy as DV (sample: respondents who didn't vote for Jubilee)

	Agreement1 multipartyism	Agreement2 reversed elections	Agreement3 reversed civil liberties	Agreement4 rule of law	Agreement5 power divisions
If treated	0.047	0.381	-0.054	-0.309	-0.082
	(0.345)	(0.333)	(0.329)	(0.415)	(0.371)
Female	-0.391	-0.113	0.034	-1.168***	-0.163
	(0.351)	(0.340)	(0.340)	(0.428)	(0.385)
High education	-0.469	0.341	-0.066	0.924**	0.062
	(0.386)	(0.363)	(0.364)	(0.419)	(0.392)
Whether employed	0.516	-0.504	0.153	1.551***	0.204
	(0.385)	(0.369)	(0.366)	(0.556)	(0.417)
Positive view of gov performance	0.801**	-0.149	-0.345	0.159	0.219
	(0.393)	(0.368)	(0.370)	(0.451)	(0.410)
Experience in a Chinese company	0.212	-0.806*	-0.870*	0.704	-0.359
	(0.445)	(0.445)	(0.480)	(0.628)	(0.470)
N	129	129	129	129	129

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

e) Cultural gaps: diffusion at a distance?

The last potential explanation for why we might not observe diffusion is that distance creates a barrier in the process of diffusion due to lower similarities between the actors involved. Scholars, such as Bunce and Wolchik (2006, 2010), Gerlach (2014) and Goldring and Greitens (2019), argued about the need for pre-existing conditions of diffusion (e.g. structural conditions) as these enhance the probability of adoption. In other words, a practice that does not require major changes in the already existing system or does not imply a drastic change has a higher chance of being adopted. For example, in the context of the Colour Revolutions, the diffusion of electoral revolutions

across the post-Soviet Union countries has been favoured by the fact that these countries shared similarities in the state formation and governmental performance (e.g. high levels of corruption and poor economic performance), as well as, they had common memories regarding the recent past and similar socio-demographics (e.g. heterogeneous populations) (Bunce and Wolchik 2006, 2010).

In comparison, China and Sub-Saharan African countries do not share the same level of similarities which could constitute a reason for why diffusion might not be happening. According to Anedo (2012) who analysed the different aspects of cultural distance between China and Sub-Saharan African countries, they are found to be more different than similar. This means that they are different based on three categories (orientation - Africans are short term orientated while the Chinese are long term orientate; masculinity/femininity - African societies are success-driven while the Chinese society is characterized by nurture; and power distance - African countries are seen as decentralized while China has a tendency for centralization), but similar in terms of being collective societies and looking to avoiding taking risks (Anedo 2012, p. 93). Empirically, a more recent study by O'scawn (2018) has found that cultural distance between China and Sub-Saharan African countries represents a barrier to the Chinese economic engagement as it negatively affects the magnitude of Chinese investments in these countries.

Overall, although China has a significant presence in Sub-Saharan Africa, this might not be enough to reduce the cultural distance that persists between China and Sub-Saharan African countries. Additionally, the cultural distance may be further deepened by the social tension that might arise between, on the one hand, the Chinese workers that are employed by the Chinese companies which are usually low-educated and unexperienced with foreigners and, on the other hand, the local African workers contracted (Yi-Chong 2014, p. 839). In this context, it is possible that the learning about the China model to be disrupted by these existing cultural differences that might act as a barrier to the process of authoritarian diffusion.

Conclusion

This paper has analysed the process of diffusion by testing the learning mechanism through a survey-experiment with a nationally representative sample of 400 Kenyan respondents. It tested whether learning about the Chinese model affects the respondents' attitudes towards different aspects of liberal-democracy, such as multipartism, elections, civil liberties, rule of law and power constraints and divisions.

I found support for one of the hypotheses as having received the treatment negatively affects the respondents' attitudes toward electoral aspect of liberal-democracy. Specifically, odds of choosing a score of 2 or higher (more democratic) versus a score of 1 (non-democratic) are more than 31% lower for the respondents from than treatment group than those in the control group. These results imply that the treatment group shows a higher preference than the control group for choosing the officials through a meritocratic appointment rather than through an electoral process and indicate that what is being diffused is something Africans have not experienced yet, meritocracy. However, there is no evidence of diffusion on the other elements of a liberal-democracy.

To better understand the results, the paper includes an in-depth discussion of the potential empirical and theoretical explanations that might explain these results: the appeal of meritocracy, biases in the sample, potential issues with the treatment effect, the inference of country-level processes and the existence of cultural and information gaps that might dilute the effectiveness of the learning process. This discussion indicates that being pro-government does not necessarily make a respondent more susceptible to diffusion and this could be explained by the fact that the government supporters are the ones benefitting from the democratic goods, as opposed to the opposition supporters. Also, I found no support for the initial expectation that that materialist values might increase the susceptibility to learning about the authoritarian development model, represented by China. Therefore, more research is needed on where Africans fall on the materialist/post-materialist spectrum.

Then, I discuss the argument that cultural distance might create a barrier in the process of authoritarian diffusion as it makes learning across cultures difficult. Overall, the paper contributes to the literature on authoritarian diffusion by proving a first test the learning mechanism of diffusion through a survey-experiment in the African context.

Paper 3: Explaining the impact of Chinese economic engagement on levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries

Abstract

The recent 'democratic recession' trend observed across developing countries from Sub-Saharan Africa has coincided with the emergence of authoritarian countries, such as China, as leading economic powers, increasingly engaged in the developing world. This paper asks the following questions: Is the economic engagement of China with Sub-Saharan Africa affecting the levels of democracy?

This question can be studied from several angles, one of which is whether authoritarian diffusion is happening at the institutional level because of the increasing economic linkages between Sub-Saharan African countries and China. The Chinese authoritarian practices might be attractive to Sub-Saharan African countries due to the prestige of the China model that achieved a high growth performance without political compromises. Another possible explanation is that Chinese finance comes with "no strings" attached that could appeal to the elites from Sub-Saharan African countries that have autocratic tendency as it enables them to revert to autocratic preferences and destabilize democratic institutions.

Thus, this paper tests the hypothesis that higher Chinese trade flows with Sub-Saharan African countries will have a negative impact on levels of liberal-democracy. To test it, I use different model specification, such as GLM and linear regression models with panel corrected standard (PCSE) and AR(1) Prais-Winsten correction. The results indicate that there is no strong evidence that a process of authoritarian diffusion might be happening at the institutional level in Sub-Saharan African states as a result of the increasing economic linkages with China. Overall, this paper contributes to our understanding of the process of authoritarian diffusion at the institutional level, by testing whether external actors can be influential across their border, based on the prestige of their performance and institutions. It suggests that the diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices might not be happening due to the enduring appeal of the West in the Sub-Saharan African region.

Introduction

Since 2005, the democratic world has witnessed a generalized recession trend that has affected democracies around the world. According to the 2016 Freedom House report, in 2015, more countries experienced a decline in levels of freedom (72 countries) than recorded gains in terms of safeguarding political rights and civil liberties (43 states) (Freedom House 2016). In particular, only 12% of Sub-Saharan African countries are free as 20 countries are reported as not free and 20 countries are only partially free. Between them, there are states, such as Kenya, that although initially regarded as successful transitioned democracies (Lynch and Crawford 2011, p. 280), soon failed to cope with the problems that have emerged and threatened their democratic stability. Even if Sub-Saharan Africa reflects the broader 'democratic recession', recent events from Thailand and Hungary have indicated that we are observing a global trend slowdown in the consolidation of democracies (Freedom House 2015).

The global rollback has coincided with a rise of authoritarian countries as global economic powers. China, for example, became the world's largest and fastest growing economy with highest level of industrial and agricultural outputs and largest hold of foreign reserve (Chen et al. 2014; Olivier 2014; Besada and O'Bright 2017; Desjardins 2018; Babones 2018; Leong 2019; World Bank 2019). Because of their own growth, these authoritarian powers are becoming important economic partners for many developing countries. For example, China represents the largest exporter and development partner in Sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 25% of the region's total trade (Pigato and Tang 2015, p.1).

So far, Paper 1 has investigated whether the authoritarian features of the China model are being demonstrated at the individual level, to the citizens of African states in the proximity of the China aid projects, but the inconclusive findings suggest that there is no strong evidence to believe that diffusion is happening, which may be because the geographical distance might dilute the demonstration effect of the Chinese finance projects abroad by creating informational gaps between the public of African countries and the Chinese model. Paper 2 further extended the investigation of diffusion at individual level and examined whether by filling in this informational gap and providing information about the all the features of the China model (e.g. authoritarian and meritocratic), diffusion might happen through a learning process. The results of the survey-experiment conducted in Kenya, showed that learning about

the particularities of the China model that have contributed to China's high growth performance, increases Kenyan respondents' preference for choosing the politicians through a meritocratic appointment rather than through an electoral process. It indicates that what is found to be diffused, at the individual level, is something citizens of Sub-Saharan African states have not experienced yet, meritocracy and not the non-democratic and illiberal features of the China model. The results suggested geographical distance might also increase cultural distance between China and the citizens of the Sub-Saharan Africa countries, making the learning process about the authoritarian characteristics of the China model to be more difficult across cultures. Thus, this paper builds on the previous findings and investigates whether the process of authoritarian diffusion could instead be happening at the institutional level. The scholarship on authoritarian diffusion has already established that authoritarian diffusion is a typical elite-type of process as it has prioritized the study of diffusion at the level of institutions. Still, it has not yet investigated whether the economic interconnection created due to globalization, might lead to diffusion happening at a distance and not just in the proximity of the diffuser, China.

This paper aims to answer the following question: is the increasing economic linkages between China and Sub-Saharan African states leading to a process of diffusion of authoritarian practices at the institutional level? What is the impact of the Chinese trade engagement on levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan African states? The Chinese authoritarian practices might be attractive to Sub-Saharan African countries due to the prestige of the China model that achieved a high growth performance without political compromises and because its political and economic decisions currently affect international society. Another possible explanation is that Chinese foreign engagement comes with "no strings" attached which might appeal to the elites from Sub-Saharan African countries that have autocratic tendency as it enables them to revert to autocratic preferences and destabilize democratic institutions.

I use GLM and linear regression model with panel corrected standard (PCSE) and AR(1) Prais-Winsten correction to investigate the impact of Chinese trade on different measures of levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan African states, using V-Dem, Polity IV, DD and Freedom House. The results do not show a consistent effect across the different model specifications and measurements of the dependent and independent variables. It indicates that there is no strong evidence in support of the

hypothesis that authoritarian diffusion might be happening at institution level in Sub-Saharan African states. These findings are in-line with the results of the previous papers.

Overall, this paper contributes to our understanding of the process of authoritarian diffusion at the institutional level, by testing whether external actors can be influential beyond their geographic region based on the prestige of their performance and institutions. The diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices might not happen due to the enduring appeal of the West in the Sub-Saharan African region. It also adds to the China in Africa literature by investigating whether Chinese trade is affecting the performance of democratic institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Literature review

Scholars interested in explaining what affects the levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa have closely followed the findings of the broader literature on determinants of democracy⁴¹ by primarily investigating the role of domestic determinants, such as economic development and structure. The broader literature has been influenced by grand theories, such as the modernization theory (Lipset 1959, 1960; Geddes 1999) which emphasized the positive effect of economic development on democracy; and the resource curse theory (Auty 1993; Sachs and Warner 1995; Ross 2013; Badeeb et. al 2017; Cassidy 2018) that argued that the abundance of natural resources is negatively correlated with national levels of growth and democracy. Looking at the determinants of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa, Jensen and Wantchekon (2004) and Anyanwu and Erhijakpor (2014) found that both theories are relevant for the African context: resource rents/oil wealth are found to decrease the levels of democracy while growth and wealth have a positive impact on the quality of democracy. Still, these claims have been questioned by Acemoglu et al. (2005, 2008) and Chisadza and Bittencourt (2014) who argued that the modernization theory is not applicable in Sub-Saharan Africa as they find empirical support for the reverse relationship: income (measured as GDP per capita) has a negative impact on the level of democracy. Overall, there is conflicting evidence on how applicable general theories are to the Sub-Saharan African region.

⁴¹ See the in-depth literature review on the internal and external determinants of democratic transition and consolidation, from the Introduction chapter, pages 18-35.

However, the scholarship has found other internal determinants, specific to this region, that can affect the level of democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries, such as remittances and the type of independence movements. On the one hand, remittances are found to enhance the quality of democracy by improving the level of education and reducing poverty (Williams 2017) while, on the other hand, countries with rural insurgencies have experienced a lower average level of democracy than those with urban insurgencies (Garcia-Ponce and Wantchékon 2017). Other scholars have investigated the role of social and cultural determinants, such as the role of ethnicity in understanding the quality of democracy in the Sub-Saharan African region. Dowd and Driessen (2008), for example, found that ethnic politicisation is responsible for decreasing levels of democracy, while Baker et al. (2016) showed that countries with a large ethnopolitical group have an increased likelihood of transitioning to democracy.

The scholarship has also investigated the external determinants of levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. First, the impact of aid on quality of liberal-democratic institutions in Sub-Saharan African states is debated. On the one hand, Goldsmith (2001) who found a positive impact of ODA on the levels of freedoms. Still, Dunning (2004)'s detailed investigation has shown that the positive impact of ODA on the levels of freedom of African countries is dependent on the period investigated (e.g. post-Cold War period). On the other hand, scholars, such as Bräutigam and Knack (2004) argued about the negative effect of aid, finding that higher levels of aid deteriorate the governmental and democratic performance, by decreasing the incentives for accountability. To shed some light in the aid debate, more recent papers have called for the need to distinguish between the different forms of aid. According to Gibson et al. (2015), only technical assistance is found to exert a positive impact on political concession, while the other forms of aid (e.g. ODA) don't have any significant effect at all. Others, like Dietrich and Wright (2015), showed that economic aid increases the likelihood of transitions to multiparty regimes while democratic aid reduces the electoral misconduct and multiparty failure, and increases the opposition vote share.

So far, the literature on levels of democracy has found that both internal (such as growth, natural resources, remittances, and ethnicity) and external determinants of democracy (e.g. aid) matter. Still, the study of the effect of external factors on levels of democracy needs further development, especially, in the context of the recent trend of

democratic rollback that has affected democracies across the world but in particular, those from the developing world. One example of external determinants that might affect the quality of liberal-democratic institutions is the presence of alternative models of development that have become more visible due to increasing economic linkages between the developing world and the authoritarian economic powers.

The literature on diffusion has particularly focused on studying the role of external actors in the understanding domestic regime changes. While the democratic diffusion literature has investigated, in detail, the temporal and geographic waves of democratic transition (Weyland 2005; Obydenkova 2007), the authoritarian diffusion scholarship has mainly been interested at the diffusion of democracy prevention practices and authoritarian learning (Cameron and Orenstein 2012; Libman and Obydenkova 2014; Tolstrup 2015a; Vanderhill 2017). The diffusion literature has presented Sub-Saharan African region as a clear example of spatial and temporal democratic diffusion due to the generalized process of democratization recorded in the 1980s-90s (O'Loughlin et al. 1998). Still, scholars, such as O'Loughlin et al. (1998) and Brinks and Coppedge (2006), have emphasized the importance of local and regional conditions (e.g. wealth and influence of external actors) in understanding differences in degrees of democratization between regions in Africa, especially, by comparing the West and the South. In terms of mechanisms of diffusion, Doces and Nega (2013) have found that the process of democratic diffusion in Sub-Saharan Africa was due to the neighbourhood mechanism, which is a typical channel from the diffusion literature. Finally, other scholars have looked at the role of regional organizations, such as the African Union in enhancing the process of democratic diffusion in Sub-Saharan Africa (Darkwa and Attuquayefio 2014) and preventing democratic reversals through strategies, such as suspending the membership of countries experiencing coups and sending *high-level mediators* (Obi 2014).

The authoritarian diffusion literature, while being an emerging and increasingly important area of research in the context of the reversing global trend in democratization (Ambrosio 2010; Way 2016; Bank 2017; Ambrosio and Tolstrup 2019), has not yet looked at the Sub-Saharan African region. Such an investigation is especially important, as the economic links between economically vibrant autocracies and often fragile democracies become stronger and it is important to establish whether this increased engagement is leading to authoritarian diffusion. Until now, the

preoccupation of the authoritarian diffusion literature has been to analyse the responses of major authoritarian powers to regime contestations and democratic promotion efforts in their neighbourhood, such as Colour Revolutions in the Balkans and former Soviet Union in the early 2000s (Ambrosio 2010). In general, the main focus of this scholarship has always been Russia which has been studied as a counter to the role of European Union in diffusing and promoting liberal-democracy across Europe (Lankina and Getachew 2006; Obydenkova and Libman. 2012; Libman and Obydenkova 2014; Tolstrup 2015a; Lankina et al. 2016).

Recently, scholars have shown interest in understanding the implications of the emergence of other authoritarian powers', such as China in the context the rollback of the democratization process (Hackenesch 2015; Brownlee 2017). While the Introduction chapter discusses in more details these studies (see pages 46-47), their overarching conclusion is that there are limited reasons to believe that the increasing engagement of China across the world, and especially in developing areas, might be responsible for the problems in democratic consolidation. For example, Hackenesch (2015) argues that Chinese engagement does not affect the democratic promotions practices of the EU and US in Angola and Ethiopia. As previously mentioned, these pioneering studies have provided new directions of research for the authoritarian diffusion literature: understanding the political impact of the increasing economic linkages between developing democracies and economically performant authoritarian regimes. This paper adds to this new approach of the scholarship by providing an empirical test of whether the prestige of the China model as being an alternative model of development that has proven to be highly performant, is negatively affecting the levels of liberal-democracy in Sub-Saharan African states.

Theory

This paper explores to what degree the kind and intensity of economic links between China and Sub-Saharan African states determine variation in levels of democracy in these countries. Higher levels of economic linkages (trade flows) might affect the quality of liberal democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries by diffusing authoritarian practices based on the prestige of the performance of their institutions. I define diffusion as a complex process that involves the transmission of attitudes and practices between individuals, groups of people or countries (Welsh 1984). As mentioned before, the investigation of the process of diffusion implies a discussion of

the practices that are being diffused as well as the mechanisms through which diffusion is happening.

Similar to the previous papers, this paper also looks at the diffusion of authoritarian practices and attitudes that are part of the China model, also called the Beijing Consensus (Ramo 2004). The scholarship has characterized the China model as an illiberal model (Zhao 2010), “pro-growth authoritarianism” (Lai 2010, p. 4), or a successful example of a competitive and alternative development model as it managed to achieve a high growth performance and become a global economic power in less than 30 years. Like other authoritarian models, the China model includes both non-democratic (e.g. central role of the government) and illiberal elements (e.g. reduced civil liberties and political rights), but its uniqueness resides in an additional feature, meritocracy or the selection of political and administrative staff partially through performance-based appointment (see Figure 17, page 76, from Paper 1).

In terms of mechanism of diffusion, the authoritarian diffusion process could happen, at the level of institutions, in the context of the increasing Chinese trade engagement in Sub-Saharan African states, through the prestige and accommodation mechanisms of diffusion. First, according to Fordham and Asal (2007, p. 32), top states can become models for the other actors “through the prestige of their institutions and practices”. Specifically, in the context of the recent loss in prestige experienced by liberal-democratic norms, we might be experiencing a new hegemonic shock as alternative norms, such as the one embodied by the China, could become the new universal norms acknowledged by the international community (e.g. see for example Gunitsky 2014 and Öniş 2017, as well as the discussion on this issue from page 43, in the Introduction chapter). The Chinese authoritarian practices are attractive because they are associated with a global economic power that has provided an alternative way to develop than the Washington Consensus model and, currently, its political and economic decisions affect the whole of international society. By being associated with a country that has such a level of power internationally, African politicians have an incentive to adopt practices that have proven to be successful in a country that shared similar development challenges. In practice, the adoption of Chinese practices due to their prestige could happen, at the institutional level, as elites from Sub-Saharan African countries, initially, express admiration for the performance of the China model, and, thus, legitimating them as potential follow-up practices. For example, during the

2018 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Ghanaian president Akufo-Addo described the Chinese model to be inspirational while declaring that he is looking to replicate the Chinese successful story in his country, Ghana (Communications Bureau of Presidency of Republic of Ghana 2018). Other examples are the Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo who presented the China model as an alternative model of development, former presidents Jacob Zuma (South Africa) and Meles Zenawi (Ethiopia) known for their admiration and desire to learn from the Chinese model (Mekonnen 2015; Fourie 2015; Alden 2019).

Another mechanism of diffusion that might be observed at institutional is accommodation. African political-economic elites might adapt the local environment and institutions to accommodate the Chinese economic engagement in their country as, compared to the Western cooperation, it has no strings attached. This accommodating practice might include the adoption of Chinese authoritarian practices that make African countries attractive for investment and trade cooperation by the Chinese government and businesses. As the Chinese foreign policy stresses the importance of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Sub-Saharan African countries, this could appeal to local political elites with autocratic predispositions as it enables them to revert to autocratic preferences and subvert democracy. Scholars studying the democratic transitions in the region have noticed that a lot of young democracies from the Third Wave of democratization have experienced incomplete transitions, leading to the creation of hybrid regimes, embodying a mix of democratic and autocratic practices (Bogaards 2009). Many of the new democracies from the Sub-Saharan African region are part of the reason why scholars needed “adjectives” (Collier and Levitsky 1997) to describe them, including *illiberal* (Zakaria 1997), *defective* (Merkel 2004), *feckless* (Rakner and Svåsand 2013) or *competitive authoritarian regimes* (Levitsky and Way 2010). All these new concepts are meant to reference the issues stalling the process of democratic consolidation, such as the concentration of power in the executive, mainly around the presidential function.

As most of the finances received by Sub-Saharan African countries from the West, included political conditionalities that implied political reforms that would substantially limit the power the elites from Sub-Saharan African states had access to, the entrance of China as an economic partner and generous donor with no strings attached became a more reasonable alternative to what the West was offering (Zhang

2016; Hodzi 2018). This idea refers to the view of one of the strands from the China in Africa literature (Olivier 2014; Besada and O'Bright 2017) which argues that the cooperation between China and Sub-Saharan African countries has developed mainly due to the complementary of interests between actors and it is not simply a replication of the Western neo-colonialism (which tends to omit the agency of the African elites).

According to Møller et al. (2017), the appeal of these authoritarian practices could be enhanced by internal factors that are favourable towards these new norms. In addition to the geographic, cultural and socio-demographic factors, Tolstrup (2013, 2014) argues that gatekeeper elites represent important mediators that can condition the strength of the linkages with external actors and, for this reason, they are responsible for enhancing or diluting the impact of the linkages with foreign actors. In particular for China, Zhang (2016) claims that China is more experienced in interacting with the elite rather than with civil society and also it has shown more interest in doing so as the elite represents the doorway towards China achieving its foreign policy interests (e.g. they have access natural resources). This is because, according to Hodzi (2018, p. 193), in the majority of the Sub-Saharan African states, the political elites "have no restrictions on the implementation of their decisions". For this reason, the author emphasizes the role of the African elite agency in the dramatic development of Sino-African cooperation.

Also called the *Big Man* in Sub-Saharan African region, presidents are "extremely powerful [individuals] due to constitutional prerogatives and agenda power" (Van Cranenburgh 2011, pp. 451-2) and are experienced in using the informal institutions to support their own political agenda (Marty 2002). They are known to be open towards opportunities that strengthens their own position and weakens the opposition. For example, between 1996-2006, in Uganda, Keating (2011) identifies several attempts of the executive to limit the influence of the legislature. This example shows that these Big Men are ready to undermine any effort made toward reaching a substantive democracy whenever it challenges their authority. In this context, the possibility of cooperating with China under the philosophy of "no-strings attached" represent an opportunity to by-pass and weaken the democratic institutions and procedures, by gaining access to new resources that can be used to reward party loyalty and support patronage networks. In conclusion, African elites might be showing willingness to accommodate new practices if these are in line with their preferences.

Thus, in this context, authoritarian diffusion at the institutional level might be going with the grain of the local actors' preferences. An example of Chinese authoritarian practice that might resonate with the local preference is the elimination of presidential term in China, in 2018, which has been described as "music to the ears of many African leaders" as the prestige of this practice might appeal to the African elites looking to maintain their offices and avoid the transition out of power (Gavin 2018).

As discussed on pages 63-64, several scholars, such as Broich and Szirmai (2014) and Lemi (2017), have argued about the complementarity and interconnectivity between the different types of Chinese foreign economic engagement as they constitute channels to achieve China's foreign policy interests. In particular, the increase in Chinese trade flows to Sub-Saharan African countries is considered to be determined by China's high demand for natural resources in order to sustain the economic growth. Moreover, Biggeri and Sanfilippo (2009) and Eisenman (2012) claimed that Chinese imports target primary commodities while Chinese exports are composed of manufactured goods. Others, such as Haugen (2011), observed that there are high spatial disparities in the distribution of the Chinese imports and exports across Africa as China imports mainly from resource rich countries and exports to states with market potential. For example, according to Table 45, page 196, the top three countries with the highest volumes of Chinese imports are Congo, who is rich in petroleum, Angola with reserves of diamond and oil, and South Africa which has deposits of minerals (e.g. iron, gold and diamonds). The top three states to which China exports are South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana, which are countries with market potential, being one of the fastest growing economies in the region, facilitated by political stability (Ghana), large population (Nigeria) and expansive consumer market (South Africa). Building on these observations, I argue that disaggregating trade volumes in imports and exports could provide a comprehensive picture regarding the impact of Chinese trade engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa as they target a different profile of countries and a different typology of product traded.

On the one hand, Chinese exports to Sub-Saharan African countries include cheap manufactured products that can represent a competition for the local business, while being accessible for a wide range of African consumers, across different socio-economic classes. The consumer demand for accessible products can act as an incentive for the elite to favour the trade partnership with China, and disregard the

pressure from local businesses that are unable to face the new competition. On the other hand, Chinese imports from Sub-Saharan Africa represent a channel through which China access national resources from abroad. Most of the time, the extraction of these ground resources will require infrastructure investments (such as the construction of roads) and the involvement of Chinese companies to conduct the extraction process (that come with the management practices employed in China). In this context, scholars, such as Adolph et al. (2017), have argued that we could witness a potential Shanghai Effect which refers to the fact that practices (e.g. labour practices) employed by a developed country can be projected towards partner countries that less developed. In other words, the increase in volumes of trade could lead to a process of diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices towards Sub-Saharan African countries.

Table 45. The top 5 recipients of Chinese imports and exports (measured as % of total Chinese imports/exports)

Country	Sum of exports as % of total Chinese exports	Country	Sum of imports as % of total Chinese imports
South Africa	22.18%	Angola	40.26%
Nigeria	16.61%	South Africa	16.44%
Ghana	5.77%	Congo	7.51%
Kenya	5.49%	Sudan	6.68%
Angola	4.73%	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	4.33%

This paper tests the main hypothesis that higher levels of Chinese trade will have a negative impact on the different measurements of levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries.

H1: Increased amounts of Chinese trade will have a negative impact on levels of liberal-democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries.

Methodology and data

This hypothesis will be tested using a panel of 45 Sub-Saharan African countries, which is the maximum number of countries from the region covered by both the dependent and the independent variables' data. These countries are covered over a period of 27 years for reasons of consistency in the data, which are discussed in more details in the Methods sub-section. The paper investigates whether authoritarian diffusion is

happening as a result of economic linkages between China and Sub-Saharan African countries. It will do so by analysing the impact of Chinese trade engagements on a plurality of measures of democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries.

Therefore, the process of diffusion is captured, at the institutional level, by investigating the impact of Sino-African trade linkages on levels of liberal-democracy. Increasing volumes of trade represent a treatment of exposure to Chinese practices as it deepens the economic interdependence and the bilateral relationship between China and Sub-Saharan African countries. In this way, on the one hand, the Sub-Saharan African elites become more susceptible to the prestige effect of the Chinese practices and more willing to accommodate them as they have no strings attached. On the other hand, we know from the scholarship that actors, such as trading companies, are known to project their home practices abroad while they could also constitute pressure for lowering local standards (e.g. local business might adopt Chinese practices that would increase their competitiveness on the market) (Vogel 1997; Prakash and Potoski 2006; Fisman and Miguel 2007; Greenhill et al 2009; Cao et al. 2013; Gamso 2018; Isaksson and Kotsadam 2018b). This has led scholars, such as Adolph et al. (2017) to question the possibility of a “Shanghai Effect” (adopted after the “California effect” theory) as Chinese trading companies might export their practices, in particular labour standard, to their less developed partners, from Sub-Saharan Africa.

In terms of the practices that could be subject to the diffusion process, we would expect officials from Sub-Saharan African countries to observe and adopt non-democratic practices, such as removal of presidential term limits (adopted by China in 2018) which are attractive as these are in line with their own preference. Moreover, Chinese trading companies could project their illiberal practices, such as low industrial and labour practices, increase preference for corruption (e.g. requesting/accepting bribes from Chinese trade companies to facilitate preferential treatment and access to market (for exports) or resource extraction (for imports)) (Geerts et al. 2014; Adolph et al. 2017; Gavin 2018).

If Chinese practices are diffused they will undermine democratic institutions, captured through my dependent variable which includes measures for democratic practices (e.g. elections) and liberal practices (e.g. civil liberties, rule of law, and judicial and legislative checks on the executive). Similar to Paper 1, I employ composite (e.g. V-Dem, FH PR and CL) and disaggregated (e.g. V-Dem Polyarchy and V-Dem Liberal

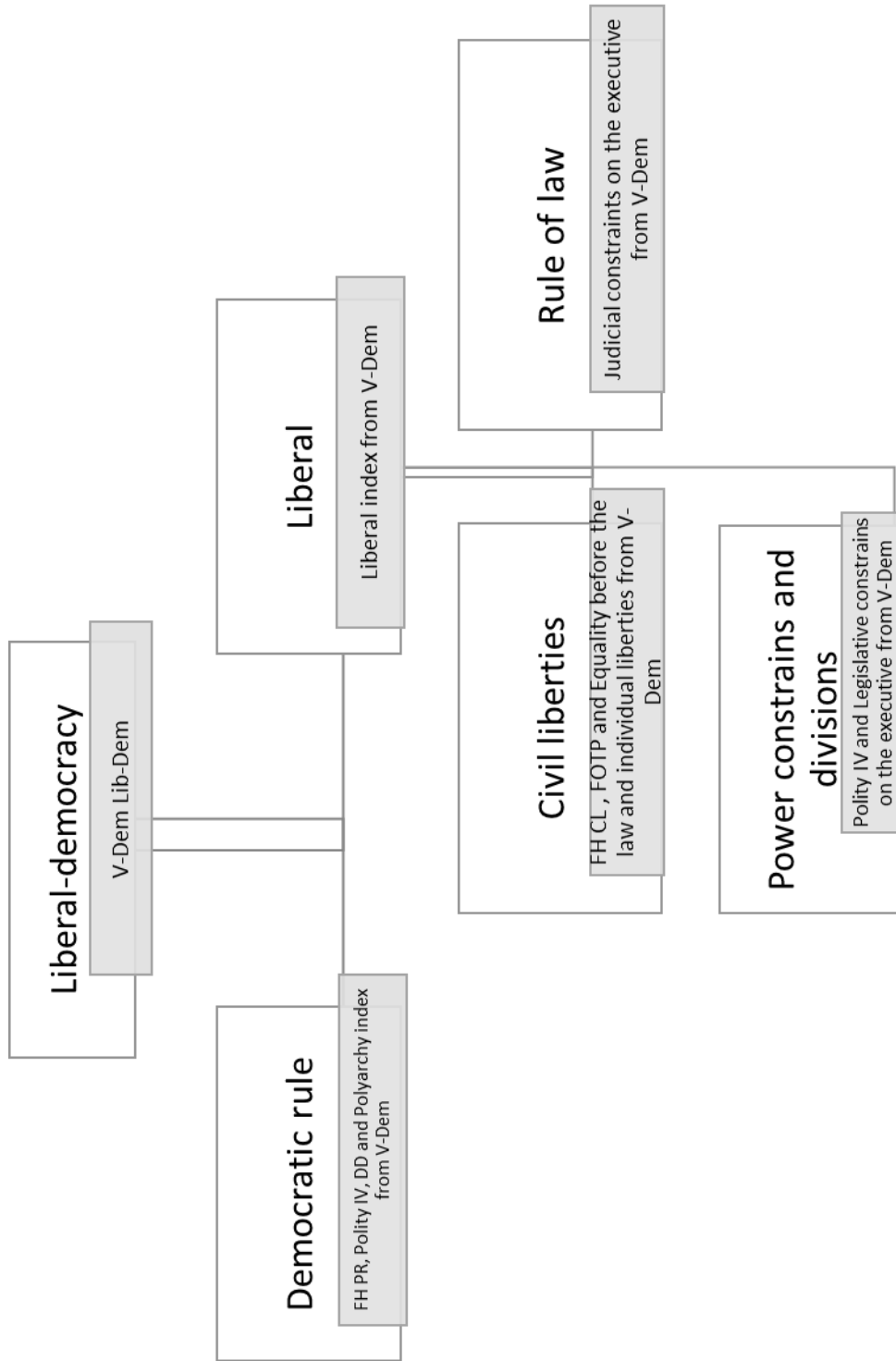
index) approaches in measuring my dependent variables in order to find which Chinese practices might be subject to the authoritarian diffusion process. Thus, the increasing volumes of Chinese imports and exports might represent a treatment by acting as a channel of diffusion through which Chinese practices are transmitted to the Sub-Saharan African states. Theoretically, I expect the diffusion of the Chinese practices to be facilitated by, first, the prestige of the Chinese model that achieved a high growth performance without political liberalization and, second, as Chinese economic engagement comes with no political strings attached, they might enable the African elites to revert to autocratic preferences and destabilize democratic institutions.

a) Dependent variable

Following the scholarship⁴² that has looked into measurement of liberal-democracy (Zakaria 1997; Bollen 1993, 2009; Foweraker and Krznaric 2002, Chang et al. 2007, Starr 2007, Dixon 2008 and Rhoden 2015), I employ a plurality of measures to measure the dependent variable, levels of liberal-democracy. These include composite measures (e.g. Polity IV and the Liberal democracy component from the Varieties of Democracy dataset) and more disaggregated measures of democracy that capture specific characteristics of democratic and liberal governance: the Liberal index from Varieties of Democracy (composed of “Equality before the law and individual liberties”, “Judicial constraints on the executive”, and “Legislative constraints on the executive” indices), Democracy and Dictatorship, as well as Freedom House’s Freedom of the press and Freedom in the world datasets. Figure 61, from page 199, summarizes the different measurements of the dependent variable. In the following paragraphs, I will present each measurement individually and discuss the observable trends in the data, across countries and year

⁴² For a review of this literature, see pages 188-191.

Figure 61. Different measurements of the dependent variable



First, I employ maximalist approach to measure the levels of liberal-democracy, using Polity IV and the Liberal-Democracy index included in the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset. Both are composite measures that assess the quality of liberal democracy based on liberal and democratic criteria and, for this reason, I consider them to represent the most comprehensive measurements of levels of liberal-democracy, currently available. Polity IV has the “broadest coverage of all democracy indicators” (Plümper and Neumayer 2010, p. 206) and covers 47 Sub-Saharan African countries. It assesses the quality of the institutional performance of democracy based on expert coding and with states or *politie*s as units of analysis. Polity is a composite measure which includes assessment of political competition, executive recruitment and constrains (Polity IV Project 2016). It is computed by deducting the score of the variable *Institutional Autocracy* (which measures the degree of reduced freedoms and rights, no constrains on the executive and the existence of a closed system of elite selection) from the score of *Institutionalized democracy* (which assesses the level of protection of democratic attributes of the political system). In this analysis, I will use the Polity2 variable which represents a revised combined polity score, specially created for time series regressions.

V-Dem has a multidimensional approach to liberal-democracy by evaluating its performance based on five main criteria: electoral, liberal, deliberative, egalitarian and participatory democracy indexes (Lindberg et al. 2014, pp. 159-160). From this dataset, I use the Liberal-democracy index and its components. The Liberal-democracy index measures the degree to which the *ideal of liberal democracy is achieved* (Coppedge et al. 2019b, p. 40). According to the V-Dem codebook, it reflects “constitutionally protected civil liberties, strong rule of law, an independent judiciary, [...] effective checks and balances that, together, limit the exercise of executive power [... but also] the level of electoral democracy.” (Coppedge et al. 2019b, p. 40). It is calculated based on the values of two indices: the Liberal index and the electoral democracy index (the measure for electoral democracy). The Liberal index accounts for the quality of civil liberties, rule of law, judicial and legislative checks on the executive. It is calculated by averaging the values of “Equality before the law and individual liberties”, “Judicial constraints on the executive” and “Legislative constraints on the executive indices” (Coppedge et al. 2019b, p. 47). The “Electoral democracy index” measures functional electoral competition, the existence of civil and political

organizations, free and fair elections, protection of the freedom of expression and an independent media (Coppedge et al. 2019b, p. 39) In the empirical analysis, I will use the Liberal-democracy index (V-Dem Lib-Dem), the Liberal index and Electoral democracy index, as well as their subcomponents presented before. These V-Dem variables are expressed on an interval scale, varying between 0 and 1, where 0 is a low performance and 1 represents a high performance.

Figure 62 from page 203 presents the variation in Polity2 and V-Dem Lib-Dem index across countries and years. In general, we notice a lot of oscillations in the evolution of the two indices, indicating that Sub-Saharan African countries had encountered several difficulties in consolidating their democratic regime (Lynch and Crawford 2011).

Regarding the variation of Polity2, we observe different types of trends across countries: 16 countries experienced small to no change (e.g. Angola had a decrease in the late 90s, but no meaningful change afterwards while Rwanda had small improvements), 11 countries with one visible event (e.g. Gabon and Mauritania had a spike in the late 2000s while Ethiopia experienced a decrease in the mid-2000s), 5 countries with “U” or bell shape trend (Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo and Gambia, Madagascar), 6 countries with visible oscillations (e.g. Guinea Bissau had moments of sensible decrease in the late 90s, around 2003-4 and 2013), 6 countries with a temporal increase (Burkina Faso until 2000 and from 2015 onwards, Ghana until 2005, Guinea in the early 1990s and around 2010, Kenya until early 2000s, Sierra Leone until mid-2000s and Zimbabwe). Overall, we noticed that there are three important points in time in which several countries had evident changes in their Polity score: late 90s (8 countries experienced decrease while Nigeria has seen an increase spike), 2004 (Ethiopia, Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau had seen a decrease while Liberia, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo has an increase) and 2014-5 (Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Mali experience a decrease while Central African Republic, Gambia, Tanzania had seen an increase in their score).

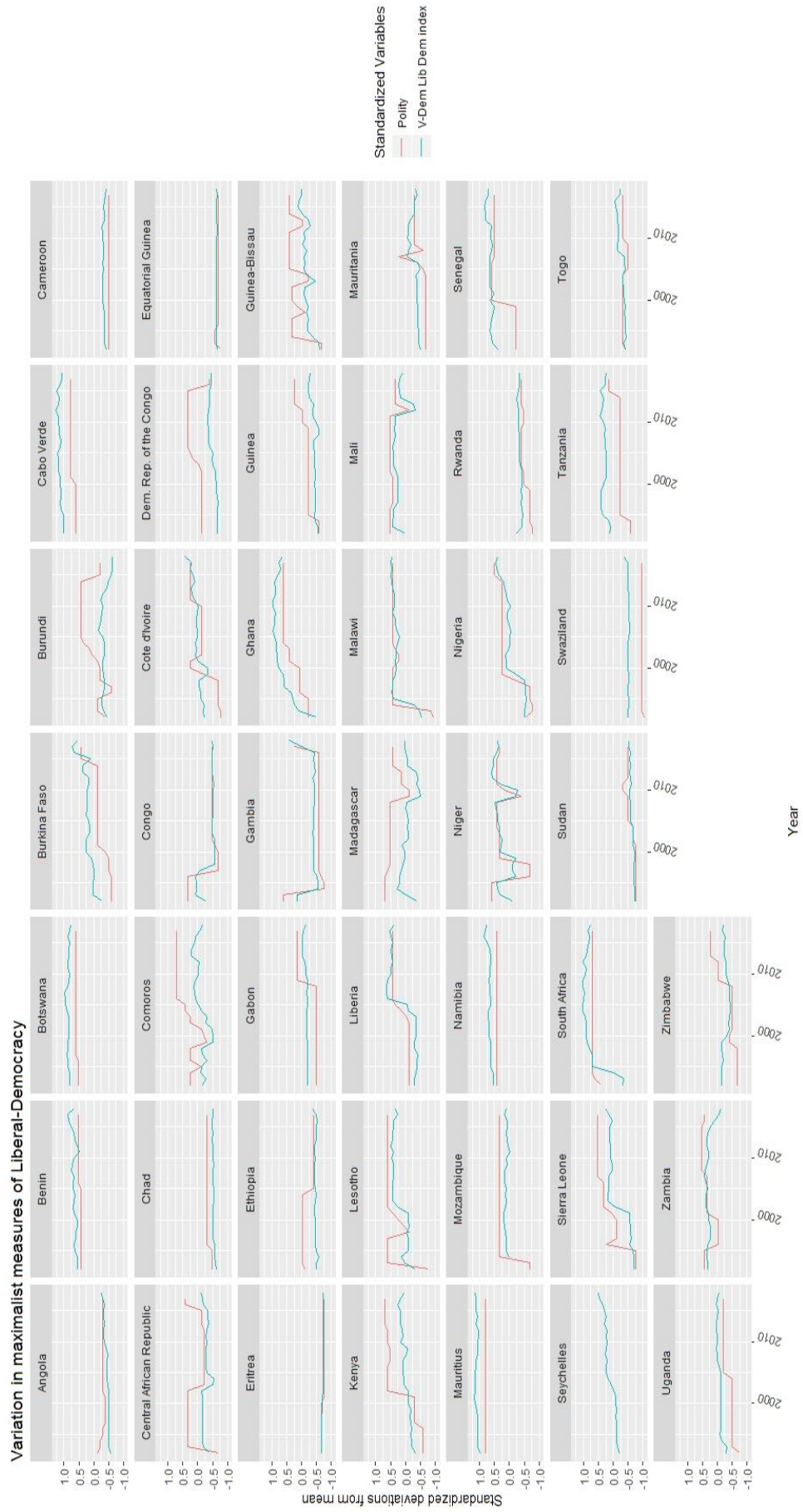
In terms of the variation in the V-Dem Liberal-Democracy index, we notice that there are 19 countries which have experienced small to no change (e.g. Botswana has a very small oscillation across year while Swaziland had no change at all), 4 countries with one visible event (e.g. Liberia experienced an increase in the mid-2000s), 7 countries with “U” or bell shape trend (e.g. South Africa has an increase in the early-

90s and since 2010 it started decreasing), 9 countries with visible oscillations, 4 countries with a temporal increase (e.g. Kenya's increase is not as dramatic as in the Polity2) and 2 countries with a decreasing trend (Burundi and Zambia).

Generally speaking, the two variables display very similar trends, in some cases even identical (e.g. Malawi, Gambia and Mali), but there are a few examples of countries whose liberal-democratic performance is assessed differently by the two indices. For example, Burundi displays a decreasing trend according to V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index, while Polity 2 assesses its evolution as a bell shape, meaning that it decreased in the mid-1990s, visibly increased until 2005, but started decreasing again from 2014. Also, Zambia, has an overall positive performance based on Polity2, while the V-Dem assesses it more negatively. Finally, there are cases such as Guinea-Bissau, where we can observe that V-Dem Liberal Democracy index's oscillation across years are not as strong as seen for Polity2.

The differences between the V-Dem Liberal-Democracy index and the Polity2 are more likely, explained by the fact that there is no perfect way of measuring the liberal-democratic performance of a country and these two indices, while highly correlated, they are still not identical, in terms of what they measure. For example, while there is a 0.78 correlation between Polity2 and V-Dem Liberal-Democracy index, we know from discussion of how they are measured and aggregated (see pages 200-201), that each index emphasizes specific aspects of what is believed to represent a liberal-democracy. Polity2, on the one hand, assesses the performance of a liberal-democracy in two areas: elections (Democratic rule) and separation of powers (Power constrains and divisions). V-Dem Liberal-Democracy index, on the other hand, has a more extended view on the Liberal aspect, in addition to what Polity2 already does, by looking also at Civil Liberties, and Rule of law. For this reason, it is not surprising that there is a slightly higher correlation between Polity2 and the V-Dem Polyarchy index of 0.8 (component that measures the electoral performance of a Liberal-Democracy in V-Dem); while there is a somewhat lower correlation (0.73) with the Liberal component of the V-Dem Liberal-Democracy index.

Figure 62. Variation in the Polity IV and V-Dem Liberal-Democracy index, across countries and years



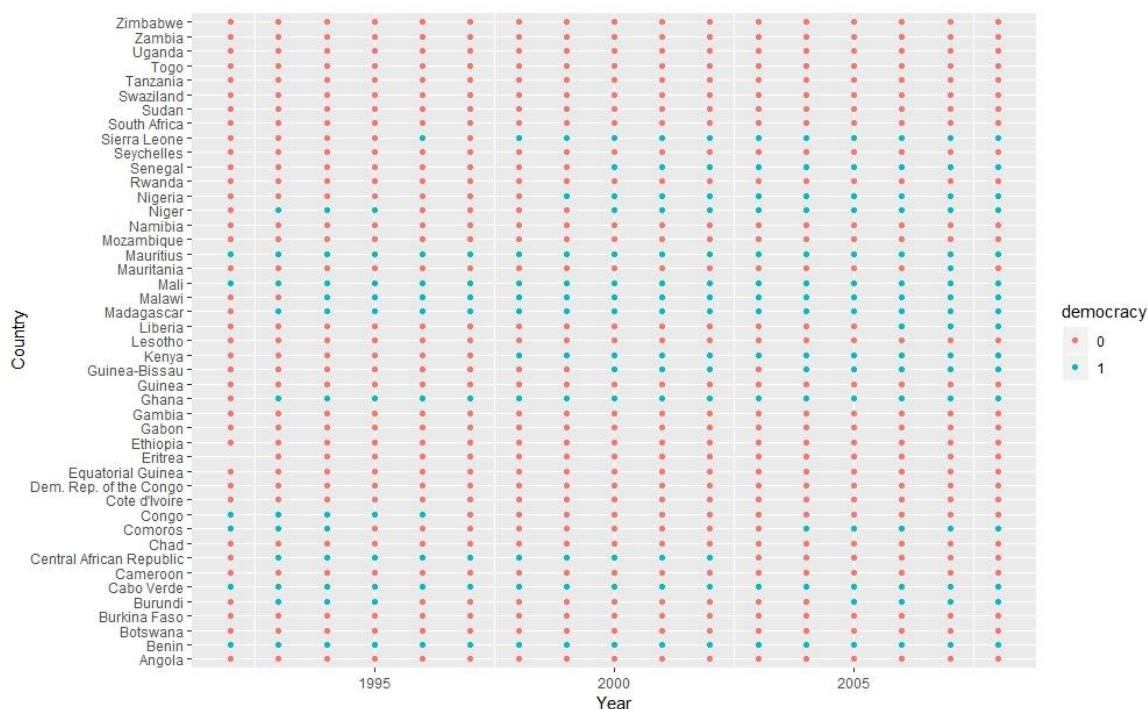
Second, I use minimalist measurements of democracy such as: Democracy and Dictatorship (Cheibub et al. 2009), Freedom House (FH)'s *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the press* datasets. Democracy-Dictatorship (DD) index represents “minimalist dichotomous measure of political regime” (Cheibub et al. 2010, p. 71) which was initially introduced by Alvarez et al. (1996), but, subsequently, developed by Cheibub et al. (2010). It covers 199 countries, out of which 47 are located in Sub-Saharan African region, between 1946 and 2008 (Cheibub et al. 2010, p. 68). The binary variable “democracy” is coded 1 if the regime is a democracy and 0 otherwise. It assesses the quality of the electoral aspect of a democracy by looking at election of the chief executive and the legislative, the participation of more than one party in the elections and *the alternation in power under the same electoral rules*. Thus, the index is used to classify a country as having a democratic regime in a year if all the following conditions are satisfied at the same time:

- the executive is elected directly by the population or by delegates;
- the legislative is elected, either directly or indirectly;
- multiple parties are allowed, exist and are part of the legislative;
- the incumbent has not consolidated his power through unconstitutional and undemocratic acts (E.g. by changing the legislation in his favour and closing the lower house of the legislative etc.);
- functional alternation in power, meaning that the opposition is not prevented by the incumbent party to get into office.

In addition to this, the DD dataset includes information about the number of years accumulated by a country as a democracy and in the current regime, as well as a classification by regime type (parliamentary democracy, mixed (semi-presidential) democracy, presidential democracy, civilian dictatorship, military dictatorship and royal dictatorship).

Based on the Figure 63, from page 205, which presents the variation of DD's binary variable, between 1992 and 2008, we observe that 30 countries have witnessed no change in their status (26 are not democracies and 4 are democracies) and 15 countries have changed the regime type (7 have managed to democratize, 2 have switched to a non-democratic system and 6 have oscillated between a democratic and an autocratic regime).

Figure 63. Variation of DD's binary variable across years and countries



Freedom House (FH) offers measurements for *civil liberties*, *political rights* and *freedom of the press*. First, one of the most commonly used measurements of “civil liberties” (CL) and “political rights” (PR) can be found in the “Freedom in the World” dataset. The importance of “civil liberties” and “political rights” for measuring the quality of democracy in a state has been widely acknowledged by the literature (Barro 1999; Tsai 2006; Giannone 2010; BenYishay and Betancourt 2010; Hunter 2016). Scholars such as Hunter (2016, p. 167) have described *civil liberties* as being “pivotal to democratic governance” while *political rights* are regarded as essential for a representative democracy. Freedom House’s *Political Rights* assess the status of the *electoral process*, *political pluralism and participation*, as well as the *functioning of government* (Freedom House 2015b, pp. 6-10). It includes 12 questions which are distributed across three categories: Electoral Process (3 questions), Political Pluralism and Participation (4 questions), and Functioning of Government (3 questions). According to Freedom in the World methodology, *civil liberties* refer to the existence of an established legal system that protects a wide range of liberties, such as *freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion, equality of chances and allows free economic activity* (Freedom House 2015b, p. 4). The FH civil liberties index includes 15 questions divided across 4 categories: Freedom of Expression and Belief (4 questions), Associational and Organizational Rights (3 questions), Rule of Law (4 questions) and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights (4 questions). Each question

is evaluated on a scale from 0 to 4 and the points are aggregated for each category and, implicitly at the index level, giving the overall score. Based on the scores, the Freedom House's coders calculate the rating and status following the rules presented in the Table 74 (pages 275-276 from the Annexes J).

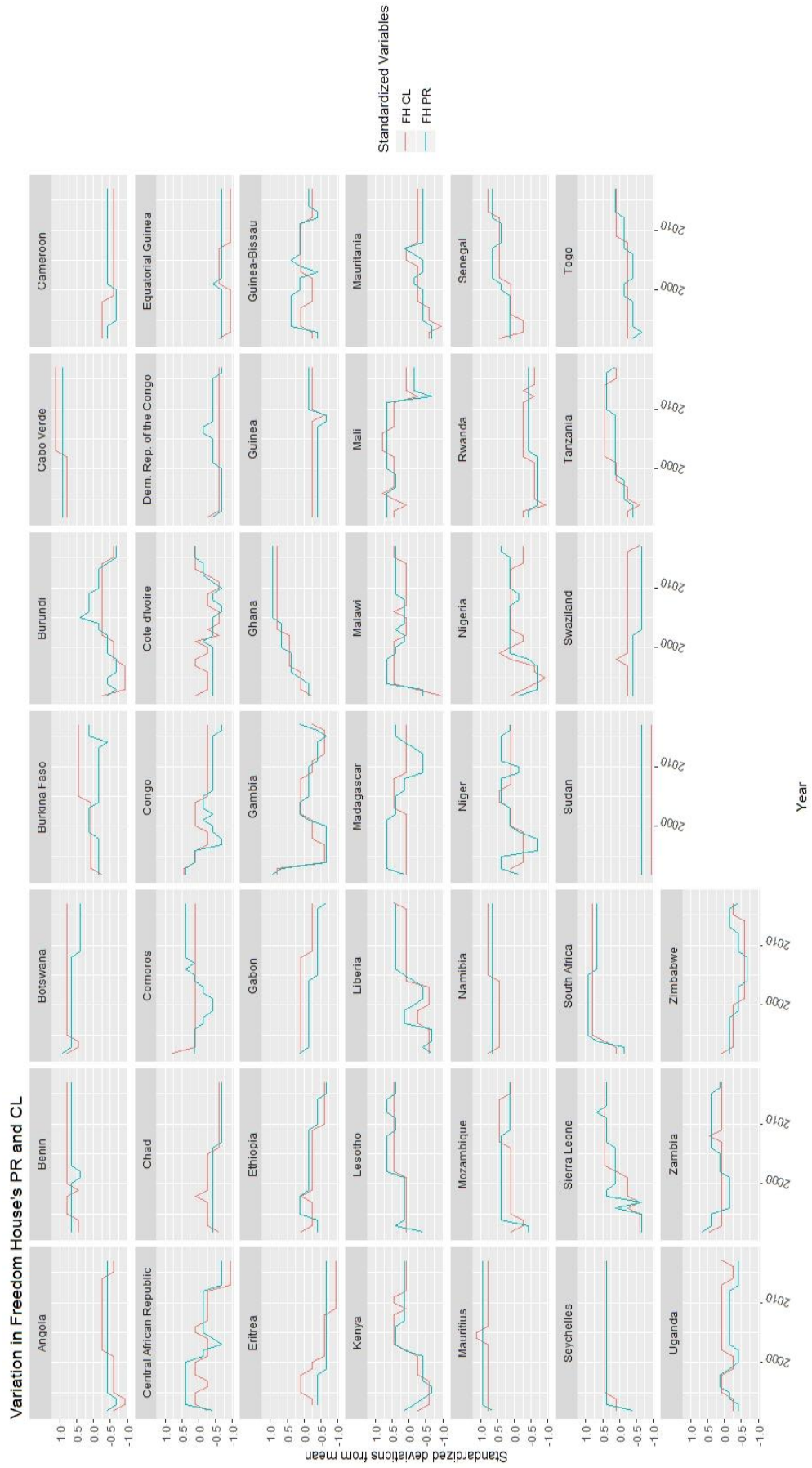
In this paper, I use the status, the scores and the inverted ratings of the Freedom House's Civil liberties and Political Rights in order to maintain consistency in the direction of values of all variables from my dataset. The compiled panel data is taken from Amanda B. Edgell's blog⁴³, while the disaggregated time series data is available on the Freedom House website.

Overall, based on the Figure 64, from page 207, we observe that the trends of FH PR and CL scores across 45 countries and 27 years are very similar. In terms of the PR scores, there are 5 countries which have experienced no change (Cabo Verde, Mauritius, Seychelles, Namibia, and Sudan), 7 countries with one visible event (e.g. Guinea had a decrease in 2007 which was soon followed by an increase until 2010), 8 countries with "U" or bell shape trend (e.g. Cameroon witnessed a decline in the early 90s and had a raise in the score in the early 2000s); 21 countries with oscillations; 2 countries with a temporal increase (Ghana and Tanzania) and 2 countries with a decreasing trend (Botswana and Gabon).

Looking at the variation in the CL scores, we notice the following trends: 3 countries which have experienced no change (Democratic Republic of Congo, Seychelles, and Sudan), 10 countries with one visible event (e.g. Lesotho had an increase in the early 2000s), 7 countries with "U" or bell shape trend (E.g. Burundi's CL score shrank in the early 1990s, then increased until 2005 and started decreasing again from 2014), 22 countries with oscillations, 2 countries with a temporal increase (Burkina Faso and Ghana) and one countries with a decreasing trend (Eritrea). While there are a lot of similarities between the evolution of the PR and CL scores across countries (e.g. Ghana), at the same time, there are some noticeable difference: Botswana experienced a small "U" shape type of trend in the CL, at the end of 90s, but a decline in the PR score.

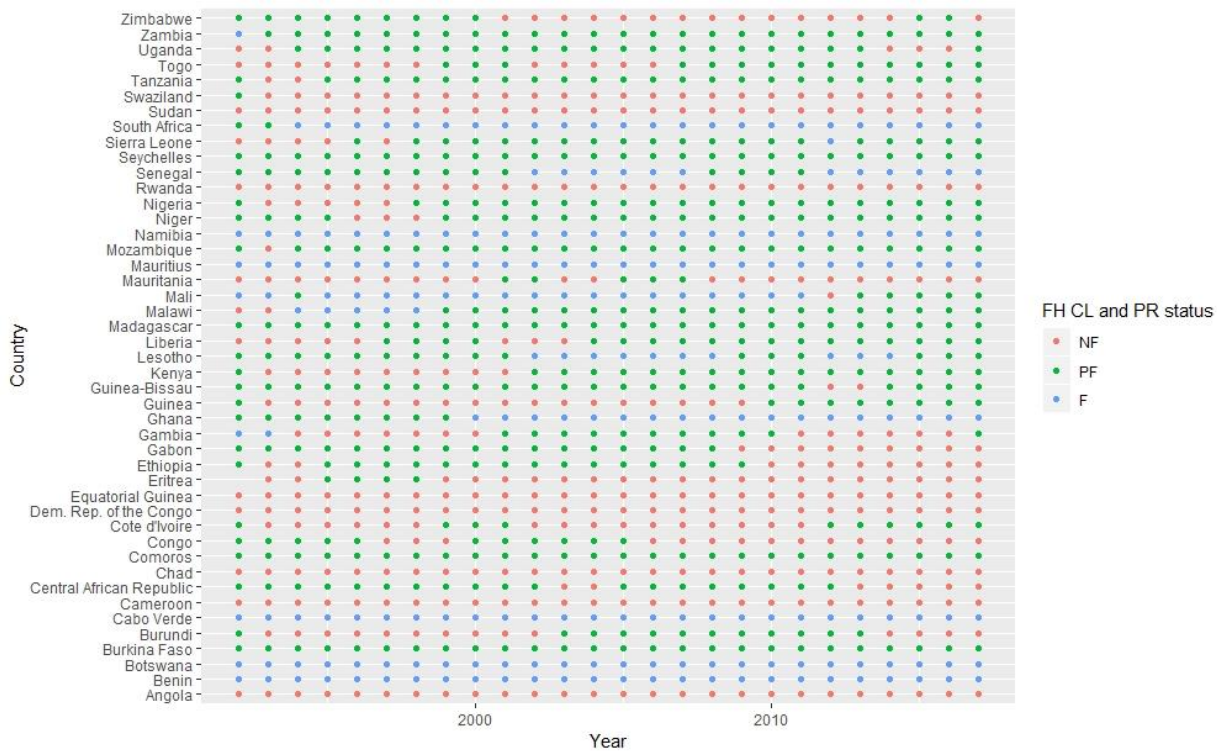
⁴³ Amanda B. Edgell is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute for 2019-2021. The data is available at <https://acrowinghen.com/data/>.

Figure 64. Variation in the FH's PR and CL scores, across countries and years



As the scores determine the status of civil liberties and politics rights, we can see in Figure 65 that countries that had an increase in the scores, for example, Ghana has upgraded its status from Partially Free to Free in 2000 while other that have seen a decrease, have been downgraded: Ethiopia, for instance, although it reached a Partially Free status in 1995, it only managed to maintain it until 2009.

Figure 65. The evolution of the FH CL and PR status across countries and years



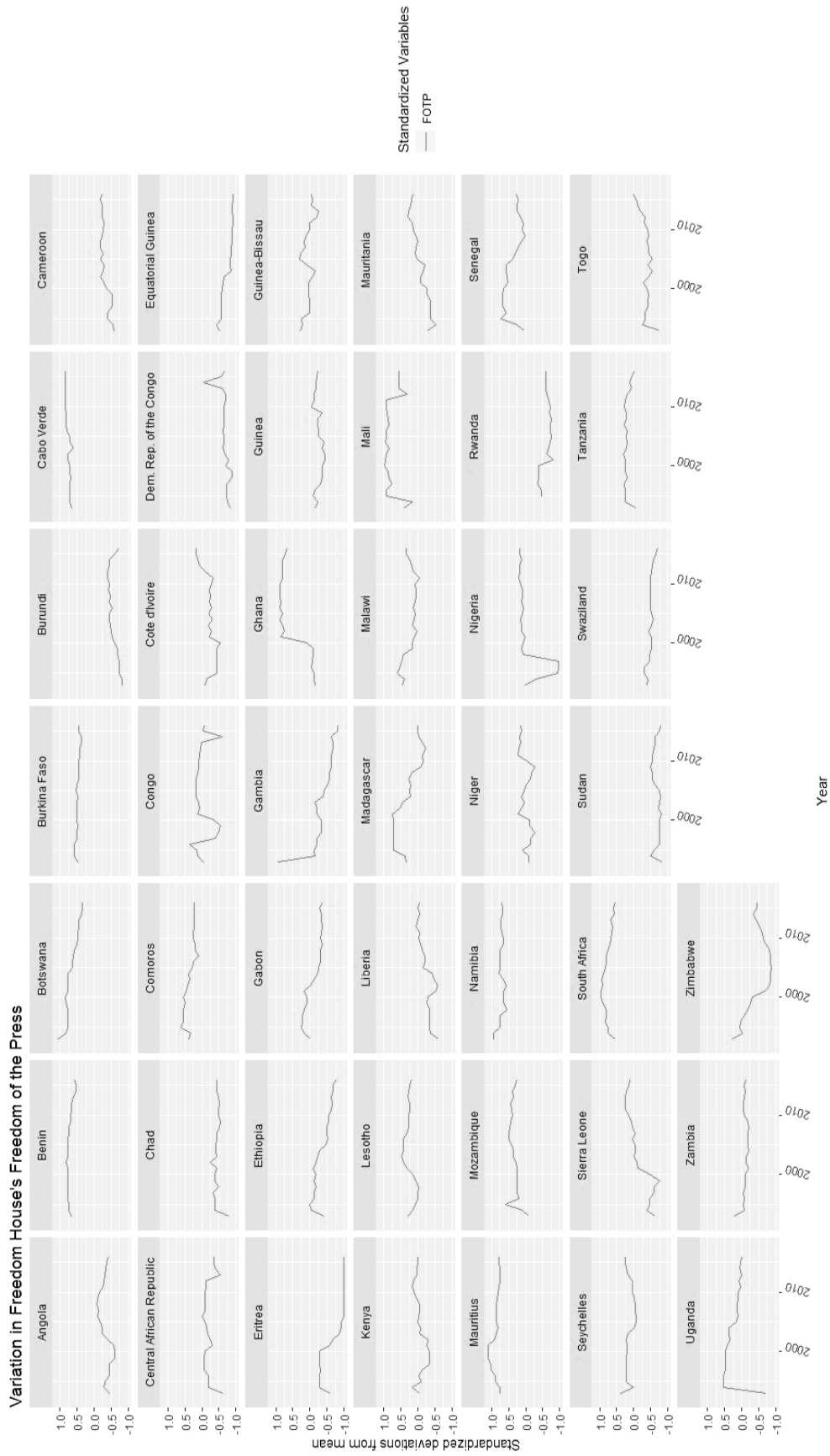
“Freedom of the press” (FOTP) is another dataset compiled by Freedom House that provides information about the status of media freedom around the world, which has been extensively used in empirical analysis (Brunetti and Weder 2003; Chowdhury 2004; Freille et al. 2007; Egorov et al. 2009; Kellam and Stein 2015; Bairrett 2015; Stier 2015). The importance of the media’s freedom for assessing the quality of the liberal practices in a democracy has been widely acknowledged by the scholarship. Dahl (2005) has argued that one of the political institutions required for *a large-scale* democracy is a free and independent media as it represents an alternative and unbiased source of information for citizens (Dahl 2005, pp. 188-189). The scholarship has widely investigated the importance of media for the transparency and accountability of democratic governance (Sussman 2000; Brunetti and Weder 2003; Chowdhury 2004; Freille et al. 2007; Egorov et al. 2009; Kellam and Stein 2015; Bairrett 2015).

The FOTP methodology has changed since the first appearance of the report and in 1993-4, FH introduced the 100-point scale to rate the level of freedom experienced by media and access to information, in addition to the existing use of the freedom status (free, partially free and not free). Between 1993 and 2001, the *FOTP* index was composed of four categories measuring potential constraints on the media's freedom: *laws and regulations, political pressures and controls, economic influence* and *repressive actions*. Although the coders assessed the level of freedom for both the print and broadcast media, the weighting of each category was changed halfway throughout this period which makes the use of the disaggregated timeseries data problematic in empirical analysis without proper adjustments.

From 2002, FOTP measurement is composed of three categories: legal, political and economic environment. The legal environment (maximum 30 points) assesses “the laws and regulations that could influence media content, and the extent to which they are used in practice to enable or restrict the media's ability to operate”, the political environment (maximum 40 points) provides information about “the degree of political influence in the content of news media” and the economic environment (maximum 30 points) evaluates the costs and financial aspects of media ownership, content and sustainability (Freedom House 2017b). For reasons of consistency, I have inverted the original scale of the composite variable and its components so that a score of 0 indicates a country with no freedom of the press and a maximum score (100) is attributed to a country with a high level of media freedom.

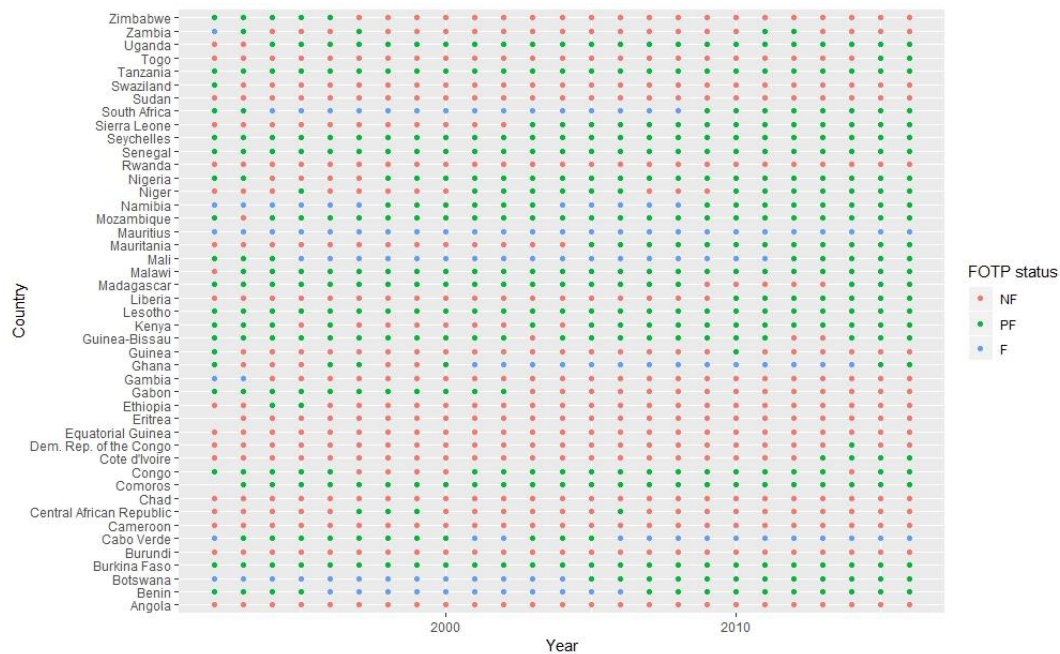
By looking at the overall evolutions of each country between 1993 and 2016, available in the Figure 66, from page 210, we note that almost half of the countries (25 out of 45 countries) have experienced noticeable oscillations in their FOTP press while 3 countries had no sensible change (Burkina Faso, Zambia, and Benin), 8 countries share “U” or bell shape trend (e.g. South Africa had an increase until early 2000s then it started decreasing), 6 countries display a general decreasing trend and the remaining 3 had experienced one visible event (Cape Verde, Nigeria, and Mozambique).

Figure 66. Variation in the FOFP's scores, across countries and years



Still, not all changes in the score resulted in a change in the freedom status. For example, while Sudan has maintained an overall *Not Free* environment for the press, throughout the 25 years covered in the dataset although its score has some oscillations; Botswana's FOTP score had a decreasing trend which resulted in it being degraded from being Free to Partially free in 2005 and, lastly, Ghana could be seen as an example of country has had a sudden increase in its FOTP score in early 2000s which was reflected in the FOTP status being upgraded from Not Free to Free in 2001.

Figure 67. The variation of the FOTP's Status, across countries and years



To sum up, I employ different measurements to capture the dependent variables, levels of democracy, such as V-Dem, Polity, Freedom House's datasets and Cheibub et al. (2009, 2010) 's Democracy and Dictatorship as each one of these measurements tends to capture particular features of what is considered to be a liberal-democracy, while complementing each other.

b) Independent variable

The independent variable is Chinese economic engagement, measured as Chinese trade flows (imports from and exports to Sub-Saharan African countries). I use the dataset provided by SAIS China Africa Research Initiative as this research institute checks the data provided by the Chinese government in the China Statistical Yearbooks and compare it with the other official reports of the Sub-Saharan Africa countries to the U.N. Comtrade

and UNCTAD. The independent variable is expressed as lagged Chinese imports and lagged Chinese exports measured as percentage of recipient country's GDP constant 2010 US\$.

I have addressed in Paper 1 (pages 92-93) the issues of data availability of Chinese foreign engagements which arise mainly due to the practice of the Chinese government of not reporting the official statistics to the international institutions (E.g. UN and World Bank). This led to situations in which the Chinese foreign engagement, especially Chinese investments, has been overly estimated by foreign institutions⁴⁴ and, implicitly, fuelled the perception that Chinese official statistics might not be reliable. For reasons of inconsistency in the FDI data (e.g. the definition of what is considered to be FDI changes across years), I will use only the Chinese trade data as independent variable for this analysis. While, on the one hand, it is important to acknowledge the concerns regarding the Chinese economic data and its limitations; on the other hand, it is necessary to investigate using the available data in order to shed some light into the political implications of the Chinese trade engagement with Sub-Saharan African countries.

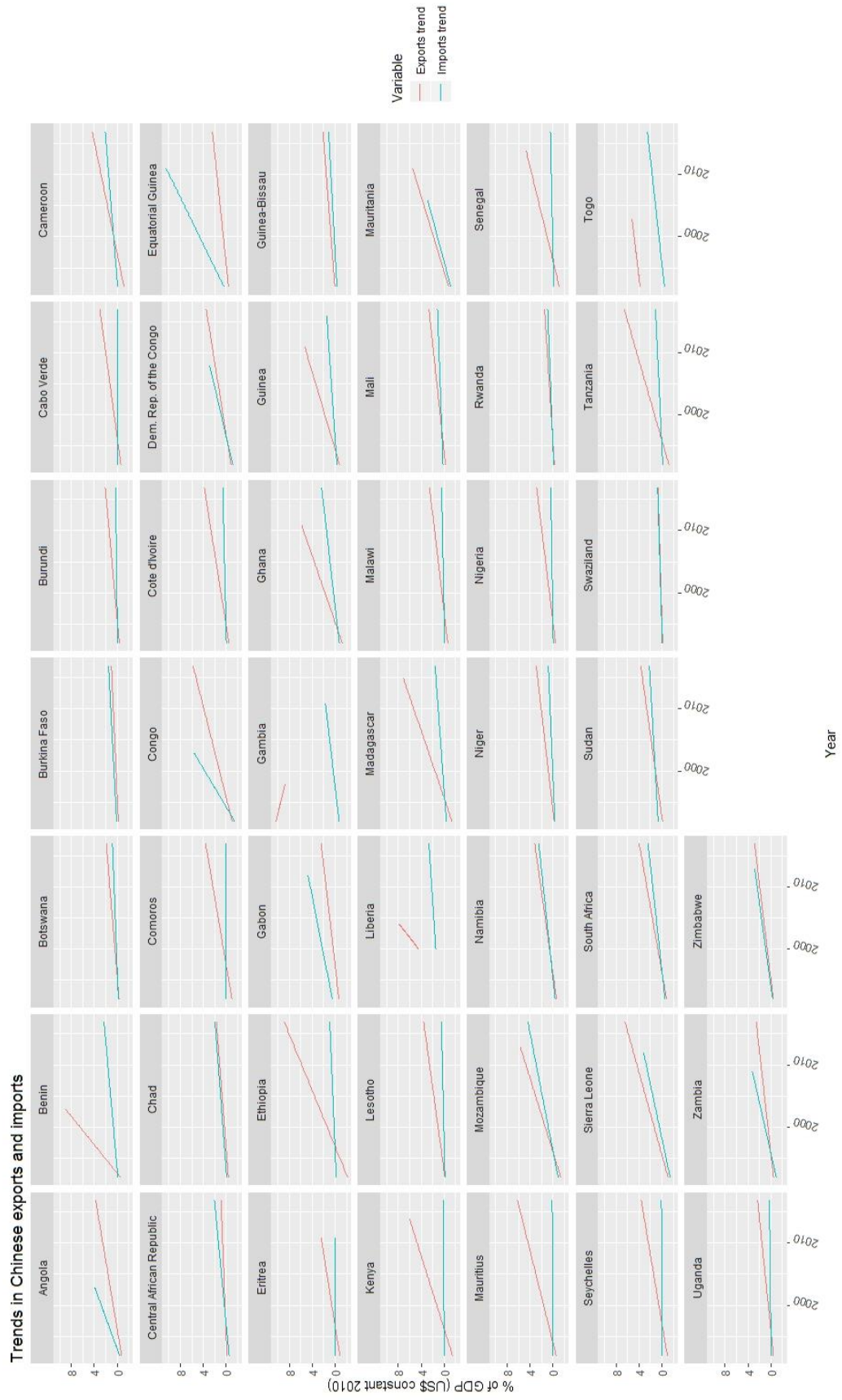
Figure 68 reports the trends across 45 Sub-Saharan African countries and 26 years, of the Chinese imports and exports, after filtering the significant outliers⁴⁵. In general, we observe that the majority of the countries have experienced an increase in both Chinese imports and exports. 41 Sub-Saharan African countries, representing 90% of the data, have witnessed an increasing trend in Chinese exports, while 25 countries (56% of the data) have experienced a rise in the Chinese imports. Also, around 20 countries⁴⁶ had a stagnant trend in regard to Chinese imports while only 3 countries (Swaziland, Rwanda and Central African Republic) had no visible change in the Chinese exports across the 27 years. Overall, the lowest increase in the Chinese exports has been recorded in Swaziland (approx. 0.7% of Swaziland's GDP), while the highest increase of the Chinese exports was identified in Ethiopia, where they went up from 0.2% of the Ethiopia's GDP in 1993 to 28% in 2015. In terms of Chinese imports, the lowest values are recorded in Cabo Verde and Comoros (less than 0.01% of country's GDP) while the highest raise has been in Sierra Leone where the Chinese imports grew from 0.003% in 1993 to 15.9% in 2012.

⁴⁴ See SAIS CARI's data collection process: <https://www.sais-cari.org/chinese-investment-in-africa>

⁴⁵ After identifying the potential outliers using boxplots (observations outside the 1.5 * interquartile range), I use the Rosner test (generalized ESD test) to decide which extreme observations are indeed outliers.

⁴⁶ Botswana, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Swaziland and Uganda.

Figure 68. Trends in the Chinese exports to and Chinese imports from Sub-Saharan African countries



c) **Methods**

The dataset includes 45 Sub-Saharan African countries⁴⁷ over a period of 27 years (from 1992 to 2017); a total of 1215 observations. While the variation in the levels of liberal-democracy is determined by multiple factors, I include specific control variables that have been used in the literature (see Barro 1999 as a starting point) to cover each of the following main categories (see the Literature Review, pages 188-191, for an in-depth discussion of the previous scholarship findings). First, economic development is probably one of the most highly studied determinants of liberal-democracy (see Lipset (1959, 1960) and the Modernization Theory literature). To measure the level of economic development, I use the Log of GDP per capita measured in constant 2010 US dollars and the Total natural resource rents measured as percentage of GDP (both are taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators). The latter one also allows me to test the resources curse theory (e.g. Auty 1993; Sachs and Warner 1995; Badeeb et. al 2017) which alongside with the Modernization theory (Anyanwu and Erhijakpor 2014), have been highly debated in the context of the Sub-Saharan African countries.

Then, following previous findings from the literature (e.g. Jacobsen 2015) regarding the impact of socio-demographics features of each country on democracy, I include measures that account for the variation in the population and longevity, operationalized as "Log of total population" and, implicitly, the "Life expectancy at birth", measured in number of years (Source: World Bank's World Development Indicators). Another type of determinants of level of liberal-democracy is related to the regime particularities. For example, scholars, such as Gunitsky (2014) and Pérez-Liñán and Mainwaring (2013) found that the regime history matters as countries with a longer democratic experience have stronger democratic regimes. To measure it, I use the Regime Durability variable from Polity IV data which accounts for the number of years since the last regime change or the instauration of the current regime (Source: Polity IV dataset). The government performance is another factor that can influence the quality of the liberal-democratic institutions. Corruption, in particular, is perceived to undermine the performance of democracies (Kubbe and Engelbert 2018). For this

⁴⁷ List of Sub-Saharan African countries included in the dataset Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

paper, I use the Political corruption index from V-Dem dataset as it has a higher coverage than the widely used Corruption perception index from Transparency International.

Finally, I include two variables that are specific to the Sub-Saharan African region: colonial origin and ethnicity. Although these variables are time-invariant, they vary across countries and represent relevant factors that have influenced the democratization process. The scholarship has widely studied the impact of different colonial experiences on the development of state capacity and democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa (Bollen 1979; Huntington 1984; Bollen and Jackman 1985a; Lipset et al. 1993; Owolabi 2014). To measure the colonial origin, I include two dummy variables indicating whether the country was a former colony of UK or France (which had the largest colonial empires by including 33 out of the 45 Sub-Saharan African countries from the dataset). The last control variable included is a measure for ethnicity which represents an important dimension that characterizes the current Sub-Saharan African countries' societies and politics and affecting the quality of the liberal-democratic practices (Dowd and Driessen 2008; Baker et al. 2016). To measure it, I use Alesina et al. (2003)'s ethnic fractionalization index⁴⁸. All explanatory variables that are not time invariant are expressed with lagged values to account for simultaneity bias (Sun 2014). Considering the numerous determinants of levels of democracy, the effects are likely to be small. The empirical strategy is to compute linear regression with AR(1) Prais-Winsten correction and panel-corrected standard errors (PCSE) if the dependent variable is continuous and Generalized Linear Model (GLM) if the dependent variable is binary factor (e.g. Cheibub's DD).

First, the PCSE model addresses the panel specific AR(1)-type autocorrelation through a two-step Prais-Winsten feasible generalized least squares procedure. This step correction is necessary to avoid biased estimations as one of the main assumptions of PCSE is that there is no autocorrelation between units. The AR (1) is used to control for time-serial correlation, while the Prais-Winsten correction is a solution for the autocorrelation problem. Second, the model implements panel corrected standard errors. As the number of time periods is not higher than number of panels⁴⁹, panel-corrected standard errors estimator (PCSE) is a better estimator to control for heteroskedasticity and contemporaneous correlation than Parks-Kmenta

⁴⁸ Data available online in the QoG (Quality of the Government) standard dataset and in the NSD (Norwegian Center for Research Data) at <https://nsd.no/macrodatabase/set.html?id=16&sub=1>.

⁴⁹ The number of times is 24 while the number of panels is 44 for the models.

FGLS. This type of model specification has been used by several scholars studying the levels of democracy (Foweraker and Landman 2002; Fish and Kroenig 2006; Drury et al. 2006; Gans-Morse and Nichter 2008; Charron and Lapuente 2010; Bäck and Hadenius 2008; Sun 2014; Chisadza and Bittencourt 2014; Murtin and Wacziarg 2014).

PCSE equation (adapted from Beck and Katz (1995, p. 638) and Plümpner et al. (2005)):

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Maximalist or minimalist measure of Liberal Democracy}(DV)_{ct} = & \\ & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Export or Imports as \% of GDP}_{ct-1} + \beta_2 \text{Log of GDP}_{ct-1} \\ & + \beta_3 \text{Resource rents}_{ct-1} + \beta_4 \text{Log of Population}_{ct-1} \\ & + \beta_5 \text{Life expentancy}_{ct-1} + \beta_6 \text{If UK colony}_{ct} + \beta_7 \text{If France colony}_{ct} \\ & + \beta_8 \text{Political corruption}_{ct-1} + \beta_9 \text{Regime durability}_{ct-1} \\ & + \beta_{10} \text{Ethnolugvistic fractionalization}_{ct-1} \\ & + e_{ct} (+\beta_{11} DV_{ct-1} \text{ for the Dynamic model or } \delta_t \text{ for time FE}) \end{aligned}$$

where t is the time period =1,...,T, c is the country =1,...,N, δ_t is the time FE and e is the errors

Overall, this model is perceived to perform better than the other panel linear models as it accounts for complex error structures and correlations in time series cross-sectional data (Beck and Katz 1995). In addition to the basic PCSE model with AR(1) Prais-Winsten correction, I conduct a dynamic PCSE model by including a lagged dependent variable as an independent variable and another PCSE model with time FE⁵⁰.

Second, I use a GLM model with logit link to test the impact of Chinese trade engagement on the binary variable DD measuring whether a country is a democracy or not, from Cheibub et al. (2010)'s Democracy and Dictatorship dataset.

The equation of GLM model is the following:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Logit} \left(\frac{P}{1-P} \right)_{ct} = & \\ & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Export or Imports as \% of GDP}_{ct-1} + \beta_2 \text{Log of GDP per capita}_{ct-1} \\ & + \beta_3 \text{Resource rents}_{ct-1} + \beta_4 \text{Log of Population}_{ct-1} \\ & + \beta_5 \text{Life expentancy}_{ct-1} + \beta_6 \text{If UK colony}_{ct} + \beta_7 \text{If France colony}_{ct} \\ & + \beta_8 \text{Political corruption}_{ct-1} + \beta_9 \text{Regime durability}_{ct-1} \\ & + \beta_{10} \text{Ethnolugvistic fractionalization}_{ct} \\ & + e_{ct} (+L_{0l} \text{ for Time FE model}), \end{aligned}$$

⁵⁰ I only use time fixed effects as the country fixed effects do not pass the multicollinearity test.

where P is the probability that DD takes the value of 1 (the country is a democracy).

Analysis

This section will present the empirical results of the models testing the impact of Chinese imports and exports on the maximalist and minimalist measures of liberal-democracy. In general, the expected negative effect is not consistent throughout the variety of measurements and model specification. Considering the multiple determinants of a liberal-democracy, it is not surprising that the observed effect is modest. Overall, the evidence does not provide strong support for the hypothesis that authoritarian diffusion might be happening at institutional level as a result of Chinese trade engagement.

I start by discussing the results of the Linear AR(1) Panel Data Models with PCSE and Prais-Winsten correction that include maximalist measures of liberal-democracy as dependent variables. In Table 46, from page 219, I report the models using Polity2 and V-Dem Liberal Democracy index as dependent variables. First, we observe that the impact of the Chinese trade (exports and imports) on Polity2 is only significant in the models that include Time FE, but not in the basic or the dynamic models. This indicates that there are some relevant unobserved time-related factors that are captured by the Time FE. Then, the negative impact of Chinese exports on V-Dem Liberal Democracy index is consistent throughout the models, while the Chinese imports have a negative effect only in the Time FE model.

By looking at the controls, it is not surprising that several of them are significant, considering that the scholarship has acknowledge them as potential determinants of levels of democracy. Still, it is important to note again that all the models presented in this paper have successfully passed the multicollinearity test. First, Log of GDP per capita has a negative impact on Polity 2, but it becomes positive in the models using V-Dem Liberal Democracy index as a dependent variable. This result brings into our attention the scholarship debate regarding the applicability of big theories (E.g. modernization theory) to the African context (see the Literature review section for more details). Then, the Resources rents variable has a negative impact on both Polity2 and V-Dem Liberal Democracy index, which confirms the general expectation that countries that have more natural resources (see Resource curse theory) seem to have a lower democratic performance. Out of the socio-demographic variables, life expectancy displays the expected positive impact on Polity2 and V-Dem Liberal

Democracy index while the effect of log of population changes sign across the different models. Fourthly, the two variables used to identify the colonial origin indicate that different colonial heritage affects differently the quality of the democratic practices. While the British colonial origin has, in general, a positive impact on Polity2 and V-Dem Liberal Democracy index; the France colonial origin exert a positive effect on V-Dem Liberal Democracy index, but negative effect on Polity2. The latter finding closely follows the previous results from the literature (Bernhard et al. 2004; Lee and Schultz 2012; Lee and Paine 2019), while the positive effect of the French colonial heritage on the V-Dem Liberal Democracy index confirms the argument of Diamond (1988) and indicates that more research is needed in order to clarify the implications of the colonial origin on the process of democratic consolidation. Then, while it is not surprising to see the consistent negative and strong effect of Political corruption index on levels of democracy, it is puzzling to observe that the regime durability is having a similar effect. This could be driven by the fact that the variable measures the number of years in the current regime, regardless of the type of the regime (democracy or autocracy). The Ethnolinguistic fractionalization variable is positive and significant, in the models using V-Dem Liberal Democracy as a dependent variable; which is counter-intuitive and conflicting to what the literature has found before (e.g. Jensen and Skaaning 2012). Finally, some of the models using Polity2 as a dependent variable have a relatively small R^2 (e.g. 0.13 - 0.24), while in the models with V-Dem Liberal Democracy index as dependent variable, the R^2 ranges between .72 and .98, meaning that these models capture between 72% and 98% of the variation in the data. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss the models which test the impact of Chinese trade engagement on minimalist measurements of Liberal-Democracy.

a) Democratic rule

The democratic rule aspect of a liberal democracy measures the existence and functionality of the electoral institutions. To measure this, I use Cheibub et al. (2009, 2010)'s democracy binary variable from the Democracy and Dictatorship dataset, Freedom House's Political Rights (FH PR) and the V-Dem Polyarchy index. In this section I will discuss the results of the GLM models using DD's democracy as a dependent variable (Table 47) and the Linear AR(1) Panel Data Models with PCSE and Prais-Winsten correction with FH PR and V-Dem Polyarchy as dependent variables (Table 48).

First, Table 47 shows that the effect of Chinese imports is more consistent than that of the Chinese exports, even when including the Time FE. By looking at the controls, we observe the negative and significant impact of Log of GDP per capita on the DD's democracy, which suggests that there are reasons to believe that the direction of the effect is not persistent when different measurement of levels of democracy are employed.

Table 47. GLM (logit) models with DD binary variable as dependent variable

	DV: DD's democracy			
	Basic	Time FE	Basic	Time FE
Chinese exports (% of GDP) lagged	-0.098 (0.097)	-0.206** (0.103)		
Chinese imports (% of GDP) lagged			-0.940*** (0.264)	-1.529*** (0.327)
Log of GDP per capita lagged	-1.187*** (0.193)	-1.207*** (0.194)	-0.592*** (0.159)	-0.460*** (0.161)
Resources rents lagged	-0.045*** (0.015)	-0.050*** (0.015)	-0.020 (0.015)	-0.010 (0.016)
Log of population lagged	-0.671*** (0.121)	-0.780*** (0.128)	-0.220** (0.096)	-0.286*** (0.099)
Life expectancy lagged	0.163*** (0.024)	0.158*** (0.025)	0.136*** (0.022)	0.118*** (0.022)
If UK colony	2.129*** (0.382)	2.312*** (0.395)	1.114*** (0.336)	1.250*** (0.353)
If France colony	1.438*** (0.336)	1.624*** (0.352)	1.168*** (0.316)	1.455*** (0.340)
Political corruption lagged	0.050 (0.642)	-0.091 (0.659)	0.336 (0.631)	-0.180 (0.662)
Regime Durability lagged	-0.060*** (0.013)	-0.062*** (0.013)	-0.051*** (0.012)	-0.055*** (0.012)
Ethnoligvistic fractionalization	3.083*** (0.675)	3.466*** (0.699)	1.575*** (0.574)	1.813*** (0.592)
Constant	6.452*** (2.260)	8.020*** (2.395)	-2.052 (2.069)	-1.370 (2.132)
N	645	645	649	649
Log Likelihood	-300.018	-291.346	-325.296	-310.439
AIC	622.035	634.691	672.592	672.878

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Other measurements used to capture the Democratic Rule aspect of a Liberal-Democracy is Freedom House's Political Rights scores and the V-Dem Polyarchy index (Table 48). While there is no significant effect of Chinese trade on the V-Dem Polyarchy index, the Chinese exports and imports are negatively affecting the FH PR score in the Time FE models, but also in the basic model with the Chinese imports as IV. The controls show similar patterns to those in previous tables, while the R² varies considerably between .43 and .98.

Table 48. PCSE models with FH inverted PR scores and V-Dem Polyarchy as dependent variables

	DV: Inverted PR score						DV: V-Dem Polyarchy index					
	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE
Chinese exports (% of GDP) lagged	-0.059 (0.038)	-0.004 (0.015)	-0.078* (0.046)				-0.001 (0.003)	-0.0003 (0.001)	-0.003 (0.003)			
Chinese imports (% of GDP) lagged				-0.096** (0.047)	-0.034 (0.030)	-0.147*** (0.049)				0.0001 (0.004)	0.00003 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.004)
Log of GDP per capita lagged	-0.093 (0.097)	-0.053** (0.025)	-0.067 (0.105)	-0.020 (0.083)	-0.034 (0.030)	0.061 (0.085)	-0.002 (0.009)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.010)	0.010 (0.011)	0.002 (0.002)	0.006 (0.011)
Resources rents lagged	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.006** (0.003)	-0.008* (0.005)	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.006 (0.004)	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.001*** (0.0003)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	-0.001*** (0.0003)	-0.001** (0.001)	-0.001*** (0.0003)	-0.001*** (0.0005)
Log of population lagged	-0.037 (0.167)	-0.063** (0.028)	-0.164 (0.138)	-0.083 (0.128)	-0.031 (0.026)	-0.226* (0.125)	0.019* (0.011)	-0.005*** (0.002)	0.004 (0.013)	0.030*** (0.012)	-0.004* (0.002)	-0.012 (0.012)
Life expectancy lagged	0.047** (0.023)	0.007* (0.004)	0.030 (0.029)	0.067*** (0.015)	0.007** (0.004)	0.049*** (0.015)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.005*** (0.002)	0.006*** (0.002)	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.006*** (0.002)
If UK colony	1.228*** (0.374)	0.213** (0.086)	1.072*** (0.336)	1.135*** (0.357)	0.194* (0.104)	0.951*** (0.341)	0.028 (0.040)	0.022*** (0.005)	0.034 (0.041)	-0.009 (0.037)	0.013** (0.005)	0.047 (0.034)
If France colony	0.419 (0.306)	0.033 (0.086)	0.551* (0.282)	0.523 (0.360)	0.073 (0.096)	0.550* (0.310)	0.068*** (0.019)	0.018*** (0.006)	0.064*** (0.023)	0.044 (0.033)	0.014** (0.007)	0.065*** (0.025)
Political corruption lagged	-2.372*** (0.578)	-0.685*** (0.188)	-3.031*** (0.529)	-2.600*** (0.480)	-0.665*** (0.188)	-3.210*** (0.453)	-0.319*** (0.042)	-0.093*** (0.016)	-0.336*** (0.041)	-0.307*** (0.046)	-0.081*** (0.017)	-0.354*** (0.043)
Regime Durability lagged	-0.023*** (0.006)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.022*** (0.006)	-0.020*** (0.005)	-0.008*** (0.002)	-0.020*** (0.005)	-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	-0.001* (0.0004)	-0.0003 (0.0004)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0004)
Ethnoligvistic fractionalization	0.179 (0.787)	0.337** (0.150)	0.113 (0.747)	0.977 (0.644)	0.253** (0.122)	1.023* (0.596)	-0.006 (0.064)	0.045*** (0.013)	-0.002 (0.069)	-0.029 (0.066)	0.044*** (0.014)	0.137** (0.060)
Inverted FH PR lagged		0.851*** (0.028)			0.853*** (0.031)							
V-Dem Polyarchy index lagged							0.830*** (0.025)				0.841*** (0.028)	
Constant	3.384 (2.180)	1.841*** (0.577)	6.098*** (1.811)	2.287 (1.973)	1.229** (0.499)	4.950** (1.938)	0.008 (0.173)	0.133*** (0.038)	0.243 (0.187)	-0.199 (0.204)	0.105*** (0.045)	0.313 (0.201)
R squared	0.429	0.918	0.456	0.46	0.906	0.571	0.755	0.98	0.768	0.757	0.963	0.738
Wald statistic	83.943	4569.614	341.331	265.706	4935.09	636.271	183.614	47806.659	773.366	142.458	29682.064	-209.493
Time FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N	926	926	926	906	906	906	925	924	925	905	904	905

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

b) Liberal aspect

The Liberal aspect of a liberal-democracy refers to the means through which the power of the state is constrained while the individual liberties are protected. It is composed of three elements: Civil Liberties, Rule of law and Power constrains and divisions. Before I look at these elements individually, I will use the V-Dem Liberal index as an overall measurement of the Liberal aspect of a democracy in a PCSE model and test the impact of Chinese trade engagements. The results included in the Table 49 (page 222) are confusing in the sense that the effect of Chinese exports on the V-Dem Liberal index

is positive and significant in the basic model (which contrary to my initial expectations), but it changes sign when I include a lagged dependent variable and becomes insignificant when the Time FE are included. This outcome could be explained by a potential serial correlation existent in the basic model or, according to Achen (2000, p. 21), it could constitute an example of abnormality due to *the presence of one parameter exceeding unity*. The fact that two controls (e.g. Log of GDP per capita and Log of Population) also change direction of the effect seems to provide support for Achen's theory. In regard to the Chinese imports, they seem to negatively affect the liberal practices in the basic and the Time FE model specifications, but the significant effect is not robust when I include a lagged dependent variable as regressor.

Table 49. PCSE models with V-Dem Liberal index as dependent variable

	DV: V-Dem Liberal index					
	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE
Chinese exports (% of GDP) lagged	0.006** (0.003)	-0.003*** (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)			
Chinese imports (% of GDP) lagged				-0.007* (0.004)	0.0003 (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.004)
Log of GDP per capita lagged	0.035*** (0.008)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.039*** (0.009)	0.027*** (0.010)	0.001 (0.002)	0.025*** (0.009)
Resources rents lagged	-0.001* (0.0004)	-0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.0002 (0.0005)	-0.0005* (0.0003)	-0.0004 (0.0005)
Log of population lagged	0.035** (0.017)	-0.005*** (0.002)	0.020 (0.016)	0.020* (0.012)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.011)
Life expectancy lagged	0.002 (0.001)	0.001*** (0.0002)	0.002 (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.0002 (0.0002)	0.005*** (0.001)
If UK colony			0.108** (0.052)	0.187*** (0.031)	0.011 (0.007)	0.166*** (0.032)
If France colony			0.113*** (0.026)	0.183*** (0.025)	0.003 (0.007)	0.128*** (0.023)
Political corruption lagged	-0.384*** (0.035)	-0.053*** (0.014)	-0.430*** (0.036)	-0.358*** (0.044)	-0.048*** (0.018)	-0.414*** (0.041)
Regime Durability lagged	-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.001*** (0.0001)	-0.001** (0.0004)
Ethnoligvistic fractionalization	0.031 (0.055)	0.043*** (0.008)	0.020 (0.060)	0.075 (0.055)	0.021** (0.010)	0.154*** (0.047)
V-Dem Liberal index lagged		0.918*** (0.016)			0.928*** (0.020)	
Constant	-0.236 (0.215)	0.110*** (0.031)	0.007 (0.230)	-0.230 (0.180)	0.055 (0.042)	0.171 (0.188)
R squared	0.9	0.986	0.935	0.794	0.962	0.807
Wald statistic	894.117	50119.611	7338.446	930.624	30141.78	1075.539
Time FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N	926	926	926	906	906	906

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Civil Liberties represent one of the three components of the Liberal aspect and to measure it, I use *V-Dem Equality before the law and individual liberty index*, *FH Civil Liberties scores* and *Freedom of the press index* (FOTP). Table 50, page 224, includes the

results of the models with these three dependent variables. First, we notice that there is no significant effect of Chinese imports and exports on the FH CL in any of the models. Then, the Chinese exports have a negative impact on the V-Dem Equality before the law and individual liberty index, in the Time FE model while the effect of the Chinese imports is positive and significant only in the dynamic model while it becomes insignificant in all the basic and Time FE model. Regarding Freedom of the Press index inverted scores' models, only the Chinese exports are exerting a negative and significant effect on the DV, in the basic model, but this result is not robust in the dynamic and Time FE models. Similarly, to the previous models, the effect of the Chinese trade is not consistent throughout the different model specifications. In terms of the controls, there are some concerns with that basic model as Resources rents and Log of Population variables have an opposite sign comparing to the previous findings.

Finally, Table 51, page 225, contains the remaining PCSE models with *V-Dem Judicial constraints on the executive index* as DV, which is a measure of the *Rule of law component* of the liberal aspect of a Liberal-Democracy; and *the V-Dem Legislative constraints on the executive index* as DV, which is a measure for the check and balance between state institutions. On the one hand, similarly to the V-Dem Polyarchy and FH Civil Liberties score, there is no significant effect of Chinese export and imports in any of the models with *V-Dem Legislative constraints on the executive index* as DV, On the other hand, in the models with *V-Dem Judicial constraints on the executive index* as DV, the impact of the Chinese trade is inconclusive as the Chinese exports are exerting a negative impact while the Chinese imports have a positive effect. These last results confirm that the impact of the Chinese trade linkages is not consistent throughout the different models and measurement of the dependent variable, levels of liberal-democracy.

Table 50. PCSE models with 3 DV: inverted FH CL, V-Dem equality and Inverted FH FOFP

	DV: Inverted FH Civil Liberties score			DV: V-Dem Equality			DV: Inverted FH FOFP		
	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE
Chinese exports (% of GDP) lagged	-0.038 (0.024)	-0.010 (0.013)	-0.025 (0.025)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.008** (0.004)	-0.427* (0.218)	0.006 (0.109)	-0.326 (0.233)
Chinese imports (% of GDP) lagged									
Log of GDP per capita lagged	0.098 (0.086)	-0.032 (0.022)	0.043 (0.080)	0.033** (0.012)	0.002 (0.003)	0.038*** (0.011)	2.687 (1.760)	-0.095 (0.225)	2.796 (1.801)
Resources rents lagged	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.003 (0.003)	0.0001 (0.0003)	-0.00000 (0.0002)	-0.00003 (0.0004)	0.029 (0.033)	-0.013 (0.017)	0.026 (0.036)
Log of population lagged	-0.098 (0.122)	-0.056*** (0.021)	-0.113 (0.121)	0.028 (0.019)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.015)	-0.416 (1.590)	-0.251 (0.195)	-0.576 (1.534)
Life expectancy lagged	0.035*** (0.013)	0.009*** (0.003)	0.032** (0.013)	0.005*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.004)	0.004*** (0.002)	0.354** (0.175)	0.001 (0.026)	0.298 (0.201)
If UK colony	1.171*** (0.191)	0.210*** (0.052)	1.117*** (0.195)	0.171** (0.068)	0.015*** (0.004)	0.190*** (0.055)	16.121*** (2.434)	0.649 (0.452)	15.303*** (2.493)
If France colony	0.786** (0.182)	0.102** (0.042)	0.878*** (0.180)	0.223*** (0.067)	0.011** (0.005)	0.227*** (0.058)	10.823*** (2.414)	1.062* (0.565)	10.653*** (2.638)
Political corruption lagged	-2.233*** (0.333)	-0.512*** (0.120)	-2.526*** (0.330)	0.285*** (0.050)	-0.034*** (0.011)	-0.337*** (0.052)	-25.857*** (4.165)	-3.982*** (1.301)	-26.681*** (4.303)
Regime Durability	-0.013*** (0.004)	-0.004** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.004)	-0.001 (0.0004)	-0.0004** (0.0002)	-0.0004 (0.0004)	-0.034 (0.041)	-0.029** (0.014)	-0.026 (0.039)
Ethnolinguistic fractionalization	0.775 (0.516)	0.385*** (0.107)	0.843* (0.440)	-0.031 (0.111)	-0.004 (0.012)	-0.007 (0.112)	-8.774 (8.819)	2.223* (1.283)	-7.663 (9.977)
Inverted FH CL lagged		0.870*** (0.027)							
V-Dem Equality lagged									
Inverted FH FOFP lagged									
Constant	3.018 (2.083)	1.193*** (0.409)	3.536* (2.082)	-0.284 (0.260)	-0.011 (0.053)	0.158 (0.219)	24.731 (28.732)	8.861** (3.927)	25.745 (26.537)
R squared	0.647	0.927	0.67	0.878	0.98	0.877	0.63	0.952	0.633
Wald statistic	138.136	14763.903	990.09	200.082	45216.335	652.928	278.85	20279.986	732.457
Time FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N	926	926	926	926	926	926	925	884	925
	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	906	906	906	906	906	906	905	863	905
	0.732* (0.443)	0.732* (0.443)	3.952*** (1.320)	0.158 (0.219)	-0.426** (0.212)	0.104** (0.045)	51.441*** (16.278)	3.073 (3.311)	50.937*** (17.769)
	0.908	0.908	1.445*** (0.286)	0.835	0.975	0.844	0.586	0.95	0.601
	1705.148	10705.148	565.911	561.837	27644.143	4170.801	176.986	18683.468	-981.965

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

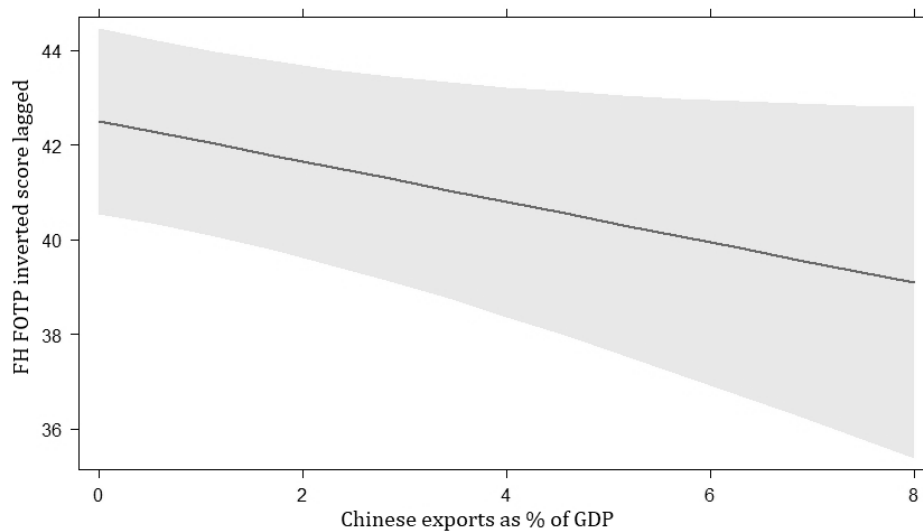
Table 51. PCSE models with V-Dem judicial and V-Dem legislative constraints indices

	DV: V-Dem Jud index				DV: V-Dem Legislative index			
	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Time FE	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Time FE
Chinese exports (% of GDP) lagged	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.004*** (0.001)	-0.008** (0.004)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.006 (0.005)	
Chinese imports (% of GDP) lagged								
Log of GDP per capita lagged	0.055*** (0.012)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.054*** (0.012)	0.029*** (0.009)	0.013 (0.018)	-0.009*** (0.003)	0.014 (0.017)	-0.007 (0.004)
Resources rents lagged	-0.0005 (0.0004)	-0.0003 (0.0002)	-0.001 (0.0005)	-0.001** (0.0003)	-0.00002 (0.0003)	-0.001 (0.0002)	-0.0002 (0.0003)	-0.008 (0.013)
Log of population lagged	0.034** (0.013)	-0.003** (0.002)	0.018* (0.010)	0.037*** (0.010)	0.047*** (0.017)	-0.006*** (0.002)	0.028 (0.020)	0.008 (0.009)
Life expectancy lagged	0.001 (0.002)	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.001 (0.002)	0.0005* (0.0003)	0.004* (0.002)	-0.0001 (0.0003)	0.003 (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)
If UK colony	0.046 (0.053)	0.008* (0.005)	0.055 (0.037)	0.144*** (0.031)	0.191*** (0.062)	0.022*** (0.005)	0.200*** (0.047)	0.252*** (0.027)
If France colony	0.028 (0.053)	-0.011** (0.005)	0.004 (0.030)	0.098*** (0.032)	0.002 (0.036)	0.010 (0.007)	0.058** (0.029)	0.076** (0.036)
Political corruption lagged	-0.412*** (0.049)	-0.024* (0.014)	-0.478*** (0.048)	-0.430*** (0.045)	-0.132* (0.069)	-0.062*** (0.014)	-0.266*** (0.067)	-0.331*** (0.068)
Regime Durability lagged	-0.0004 (0.0004)	-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0005 (0.0004)	-0.001 (0.0004)	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.0002 (0.0001)	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.002*** (0.001)
Ethnolinguistic fractionalization	-0.021 (0.074)	0.044*** (0.010)	0.010 (0.061)	0.033*** (0.066)	-0.111 (0.110)	0.042*** (0.011)	-0.151 (0.151)	0.146* (0.080)
V-Dem Jud index lagged		0.943*** (0.013)		0.935*** (0.017)				
V-Dem Legislative index lagged								
Constant	-0.212 (0.223)	0.039 (0.035)	0.064 (0.193)	-0.294 (0.192)	-0.421 (0.326)	0.210*** (0.052)	-0.043 (0.298)	0.199 (0.226)
R squared	0.827	0.981	0.847	0.976	0.755	0.991	0.792	0.735
Wald statistic	445.117	48945.037	868.096	404.592	247.205	48324.792	468.18	34935.756
Time FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
N	926	926	926	906	877	857	877	852

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Before concluding this section, I will discuss the magnitude of the effect observed throughout the multiple models performed. Figure 69 below represents a plot of the effect of Chinese exports, measured as % of the GDP on the Freedom House's Freedom of the Press scores (model Basic from Table 50, page 224). According to this plot, an increase of 2 units in the Chinese exports in the previous year determines a decrease in the FOTP score of 1 point (from 42.8 to 41.9). Considering that the FOTP scale ranges from 0 to 100, the effect identified, although significant, it is very small.

Figure 69. The Marginal Effect of Chinese exports measured as % of the GDP on the FOTP score (Table 50, model 13)



Overall, the results from Tables 46-51, pages 219-225, show that the impact of the Chinese trade engagement with Sub-Saharan African countries (measured as exports and imports) is not consistent with my initial expectations⁵¹ and do not provide strong support for the main hypothesis that authoritarian diffusion might be happening at the institutional level as a result of trade linkages. This conclusion is justified by the following observations:

- in more than half of the models (65.6%), there is no significant effect of the Chinese trade on levels of liberal-democracy;
- in only 29.7% of the models, I find the expected negative effect; but the effect captured in these models is modest;
- in 3 of the models, the effect of Chinese trade is enhancing the levels of democracy.

⁵¹ In terms of the direction of the effect, significance and robustness across different model specifications and measurements of the DVs and IVs.

Endogeneity

The issue of endogeneity represents a concern for studies investigating the relationship between economic variables and democracy. Although the issue of reverse causality cannot be fully removed, the literature has indicated that there is limited evidence of China choosing only to invest in authoritarian regimes (Sanfilippo 2010; Brand et al. 2015; Fuchs and Dreher 2015; Chen et al. 2016; Mourao 2018). Many scholars have investigated the reasoning of Chinese economic engagement in developing world, finding evidence that China is part of the global race for resources (Zafar 2007; Ebner 2015; Habiyaremye 2016; Abdoukadre and Zhan 2016; Chen et al. 2016). Mourao (2018) has analysed the profile of African country recipients of Chinese FDI and concluded that the distribution of Chinese FDI is driven by economic reasoning as China prefers to allocate its investments to “dynamic national markets with a large population and significant forest area” (Mourao 2018, p. 1). Previously, Sanfilippo (2010 p. 599) has provided empirical evidence that “Chinese FDI to Africa as driven by natural resources endowments and market potential”. Other scholars such as Chen et al. (2016 p. 1-3) have compared the Western and Chinese ODI in African countries, finding that “[Western and Chinese investments] are [both] attracted to larger markets and to countries with natural resource wealth”, but unlike the Western investments which are avoiding “countries with poor governance in terms of property rights and rule of law”, Chinese investments “is indifferent to those governance measures”. Finally, Broich (2017) provides further empirical evidence confirming that the Chinese aid in Africa is not influenced by the regime type of the recipient country, meaning that it is not directed into authoritarian states from the region.

To further discuss this issue, I plot the average level of Chinese trade engagement by the average Polity2 score and FH inverted scores. Based on Figures 70-73, page 228-9, we notice that the top trade partners of the Chinese government in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to be anocracies, according to Polity, and are assessed as being Partially Free by the Freedom House. For example, the highest levels of Chinese exports are directed towards Liberia (69% of its GDP), a country that had approximately a Polity score of 3 and a 3.4 mean of FH’s PR and CL inverted scores, while the highest level of Chinese imports are from Congo (16% of its GDP), with an average -2.6 Polity score and 2.9 mean of FH’s PR and CL inverted scores. Also, out of the of the 45 countries included in the dataset, three countries (Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea and

Swaziland) are rated as autocracies, according to Polity and 12 are assessed as “Not Free”, based on the FH’s status of freedom. The complete tables with the top Sub-Saharan African countries by exports and imports are available in the Annexes J, Table 75-76 (pages 276-279).

Figure 70. Sub-Saharan African countries plotted by level of Chinese exports and their average of Polity score

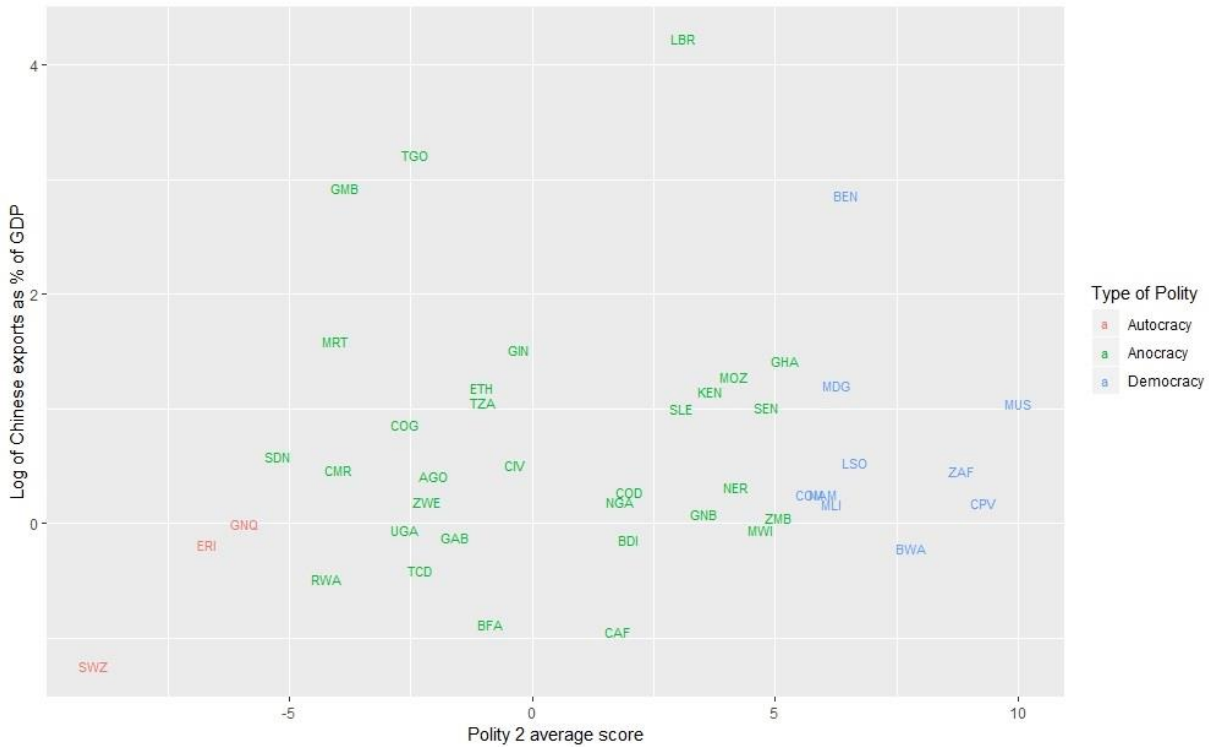


Figure 71. Sub-Saharan African countries plotted by level of Chinese imports and their average of Polity score

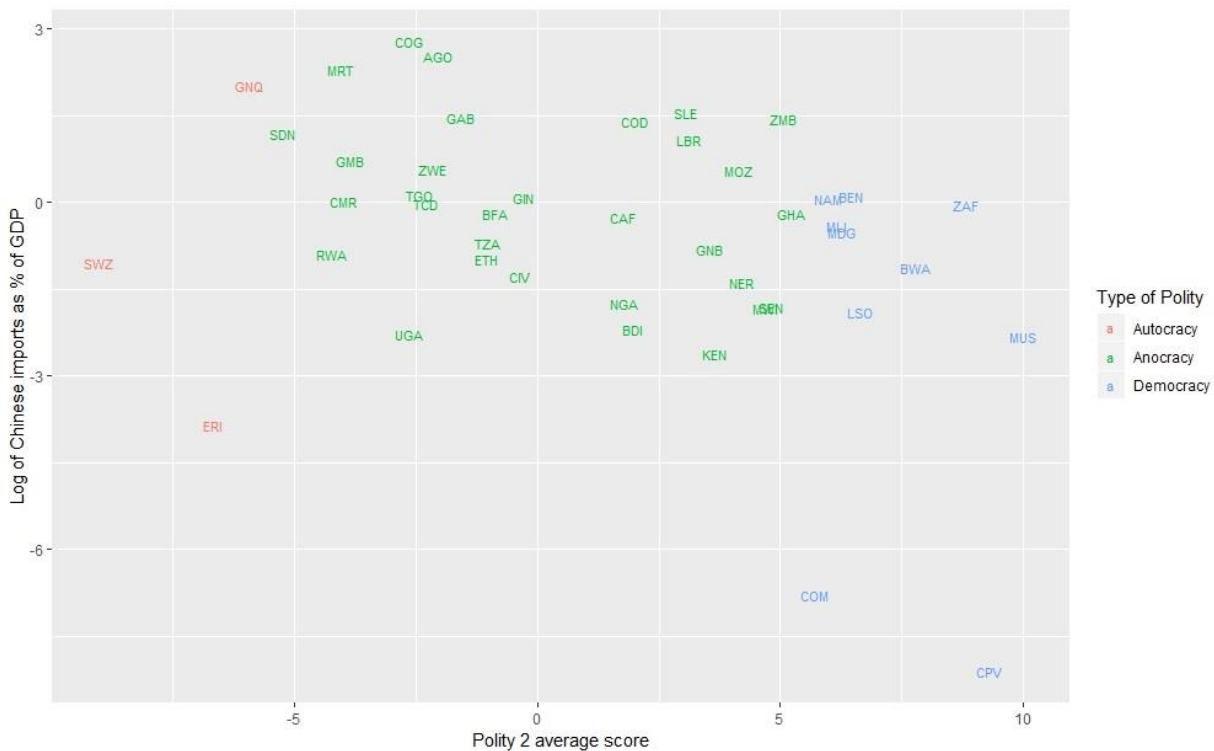


Figure 72. Sub-Saharan African countries plotted by the level of Chinese exports and their average FH inverted scores and the status of freedom

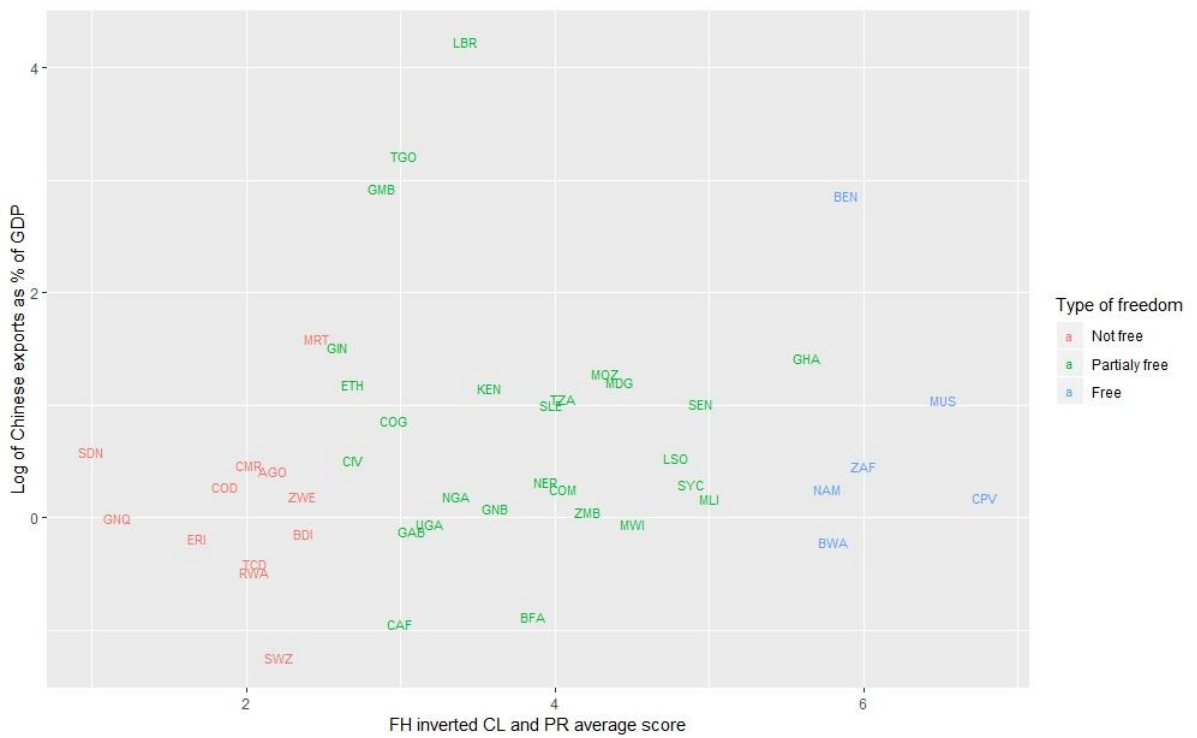
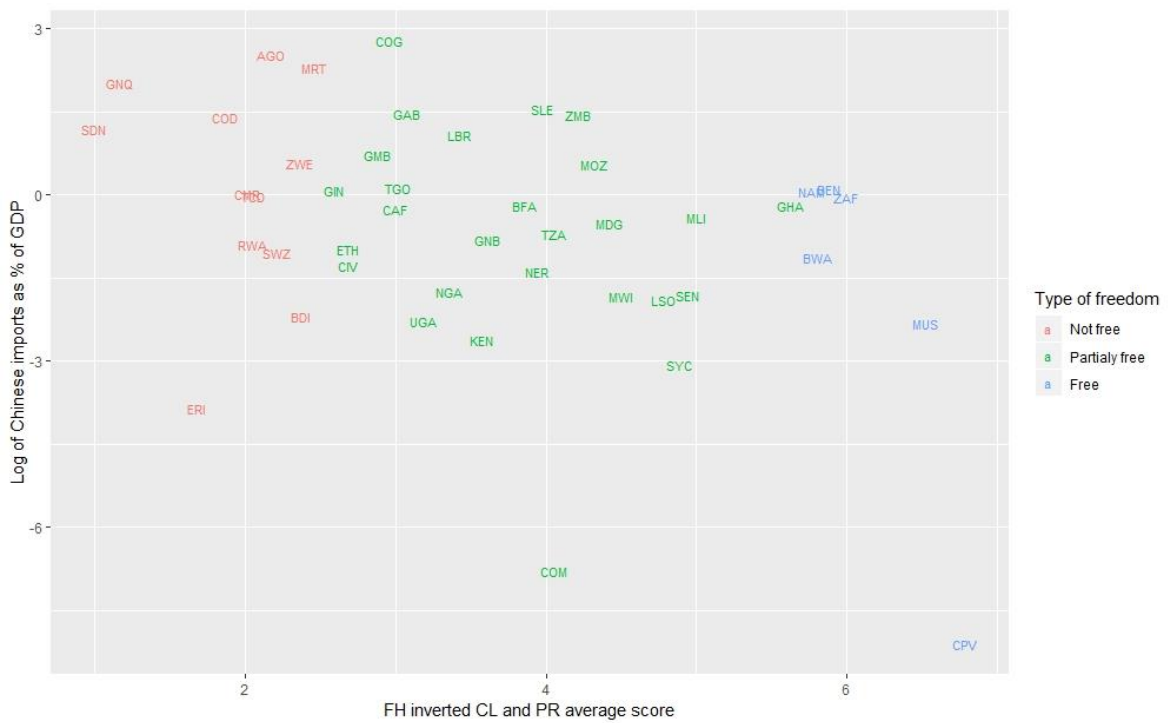


Figure 73. Sub-Saharan African countries plotted by the level of Chinese imports and their average FH inverted scores and the status of freedom



Additionally, I use the same regression model (linear PCSE with AR(1) Prais-Winsten correction) to investigate the concerns of potential reverse causality by testing the impact of the maximalist measures of liberal-democracy (Polity and V-Dem

Liberal democracy index) on the levels of Chinese trade engagement (imports and exports). Table 52 below shows that the impact of Polity2 and V-Dem Liberal Democracy index on Chinese import from and Chinese export to Sub-Saharan African countries is not significant in any of the models. We should be cautious while interpreting these results considering that some of the models have low explanatory power (between 0.16 to 0.2). Overall, these results suggest that regime type is not driving economic engagement decisions.

Table 52. Reverse causality PCSE models with Chinese imports and exports as DV

	Chinese exports as % of GDP		Chinese imports as % of GDP	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Polity2 lagged	-0.015 (0.025)	0.0003 (0.009)		
V-Dem Liberal Democracy index lagged			-0.180 (0.942)	-0.090 (0.475)
Log of GDP per capita lagged	-0.162 (0.201)	0.694*** (0.160)	-0.143 (0.203)	0.710*** (0.164)
Resource rents lagged	0.011 (0.010)	0.027** (0.011)	0.011 (0.010)	0.027** (0.011)
Log of Population lagged	-0.174 (0.178)	-0.045 (0.084)	-0.102 (0.163)	-0.036 (0.101)
Life expectancy lagged	0.126*** (0.044)	0.001 (0.011)	0.134*** (0.045)	0.001 (0.011)
If UK colony	0.875 (0.696)	-0.829** (0.341)	0.946 (0.842)	-0.786** (0.345)
If France colony	-0.371 (0.355)	-0.603 (0.421)	-0.330 (0.358)	-0.573 (0.427)
Political Corruption lagged	0.920 (0.605)	0.682 (0.571)	1.055* (0.604)	0.665 (0.582)
Regime durability lagged	-0.001 (0.009)	-0.006 (0.006)	0.001 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.006)
Ethnolinguistic fractionalization	2.189* (1.124)	0.387 (0.513)	2.052* (1.111)	0.353 (0.517)
Constant	-4.103 (3.377)	-3.698* (1.940)	-5.811* (3.428)	-3.937* (2.283)
R squared	0.16	0.204	0.185	0.203
Wald statistic	14.331	47.374	16.738	46.714
N	925	905	923	903

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

In conclusion, considering the previous findings in the literature that empirically demonstrated the economic interest of Chinese engagement abroad (resources and market access) and the information provided by the descriptive data, there are reasons to believe that Chinese trade engagements in Africa are not driven by the regime type as China has no visible preference to trade with authoritarian countries.

Other models

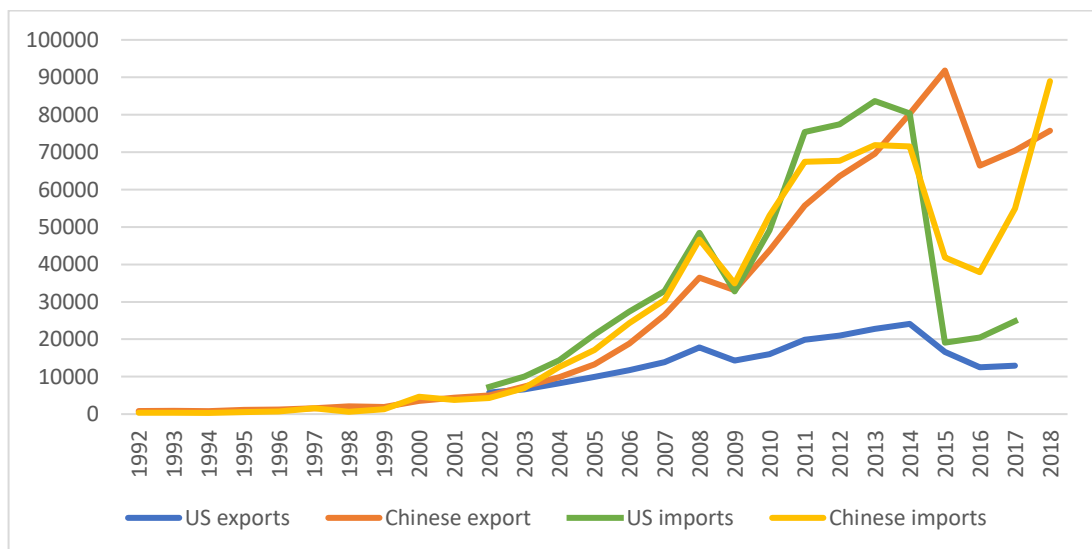
In this section, I extend the empirical investigation of the authoritarian diffusion process by including alternative models that account for a potential omitted variable (presence of Western actors) and linear interdependences across multiple time series (Vector Autoregressive Model). Overall, the results of these alternative models do not

contradict the general conclusion of the main empirical section of this paper, regarding the lack of strong evidence to support the hypothesis that a process of authoritarian diffusion is happening as a result of the increasing Chinese trade engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa.

a) Control for Western actors (US trade)

Sub-Saharan African countries have a long history of diverse connections with the Western world and, thus, account for the presence of the Western countries could address a potential omitted variable issue. For this, I use the dataset provided by the SAIS China Africa Research Initiative, regarding the bilateral trade flows between US and Sub-Saharan African countries. The reason for choosing US as a representative country of the Western world is that it is a world economic actor that has engaged with all Sub-Saharan African countries. Figure 74 below presents the evolution of the total flows of the US and the Chinese imports and exports, between 1992 and 2018. First, we notice that US trade data is available from early 2000s (2002-2017) which means that by introducing this variable in the model, the panel will be reduced with 11 years. Second, compared to the volumes of the Chinese imports and exports which are roughly similar, US imports from Sub-Saharan Africa are visibly higher than the exports indicating that US has been more interested in importing from African countries than exporting to them. Third, both US and Chinese imports have dropped drastically from 2014 onwards with the US imports flows falling with 76% and the Chinese imports with 42%.

Figure 74. The evolution of the US and Chinese total exports and imports (million US dollars)



I create two variables, following the same methodology used for the independent variable: lagged US imports from/exports to as % of the recipient country's GDP constant in 2010. Then, I conduct linear AR(1) Panel Data Model with PCSE and Prais-Winsten correction with the same controls (as in the empirical section) and V-Dem Liberal Democracy as dependent variables in the three different specifications: basic, dynamic (with the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable) and Time Fixed Effects. The results from Table 53 below indicate that the introduction of the US exports variable makes the impact of Chinese export to become insignificant in all models, while accounting for US imports leads to a stronger effect of the Chinese imports in the basic model.

Table 53. PCSE with Control for US trade

	DV: V-Dem Liberal Democracy index					
	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE	Basic	Dynamic	Time FE
Chinese exports (% of GDP) lagged	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.0003 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.004)			
Chinese imports (% of GDP) lagged				-0.012*** (0.004)	0.004 (0.003)	-0.014*** (0.004)
US exports (% of GDP) lagged	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.0002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)			
US imports (% of GDP) lagged				0.0005 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Log of GDP per capita lagged	0.019* (0.011)	0.004 (0.003)	0.016 (0.013)	0.018*** (0.006)	0.005** (0.003)	0.023*** (0.007)
Resources rents lagged	-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.001* (0.001)	0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.001* (0.001)
Log of population lagged	-0.001 (0.008)	-0.003*** (0.001)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.008)	-0.004** (0.002)	-0.008 (0.007)
Life expectancy lagged	0.007*** (0.001)	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.009*** (0.001)	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.009*** (0.001)
If UK colony	0.132*** (0.027)	0.016*** (0.005)	0.151*** (0.024)	0.060*** (0.019)	0.017*** (0.006)	0.077*** (0.020)
If France colony	0.051*** (0.012)	0.006 (0.005)	0.056*** (0.013)	0.034** (0.017)	0.004 (0.006)	0.025 (0.016)
Political corruption lagged	-0.440*** (0.041)	-0.051*** (0.019)	-0.445*** (0.039)	-0.452*** (0.042)	-0.042** (0.017)	-0.460*** (0.040)
Regime Durability lagged	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	-0.003*** (0.001)
Ethnoligvistic fractionalization	0.101* (0.057)	0.017** (0.008)	0.094* (0.051)	0.142*** (0.032)	0.024** (0.010)	0.183*** (0.027)
V-Dem Liberal Democracy index lagged		0.908*** (0.027)			0.919*** (0.025)	
Constant	0.037 (0.138)	0.030 (0.023)	0.026 (0.180)	-0.057 (0.135)	0.015 (0.028)	0.002 (0.141)
R squared	0.998	0.984	0.901	0.888	0.981	0.886
Wald statistic	823.985	64922.995	1861.624	633.463	64137.327	864.988
Time FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N	516	516	516	491	491	491

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

b) Vector Autoregressive model (VAR)

The empirical investigation of the impact of the Chinese trade flows on levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa is extended by using a Vector Autoregressive model. This model is useful to assess the relevance of different time lags for the independent variable in explaining the variance in the dependent variable. Thus, I first conduct a test to find the optimal number of lags that should be included in the VAR model. Tables 54 and 55 indicate that, by comparing the AIC values, the recommended number of lags for Chinese exports is 3 and for Chinese imports is 1.

Table 54. VAR select exports

AIC(n)	HQ(n)	SC(n)	FPE(n)							
3	1	1	3							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AIC(n)	-6.213	-6.289	-6.330	-6.273	-6.192	-6.107	-6.023	-5.948	-5.864	-5.805
HQ(n)	-6.078	-6.033	-5.955	-5.778	-5.577	-5.371	-5.167	-4.972	-4.768	-4.589
SC(n)	-5.857	-5.617	-5.343	-4.970	-4.574	-4.172	-3.772	-3.382	-2.982	-2.607
FPE(n)	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.003	0.003

Table 55. VAR select imports

AIC(n)	HQ(n)	SC(n)	FPE(n)							
1	1	1	1							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AIC(n)	-6.972	-6.967	-6.949	-6.893	-6.822	-6.751	-6.653	-6.611	-6.567	-6.497
HQ(n)	-6.835	-6.707	-6.567	-6.388	-6.194	-6.002	-5.781	-5.617	-5.451	-5.257
SC(n)	-6.610	-6.284	-5.944	-5.567	-5.174	-4.782	-4.362	-3.999	-3.633	-3.241
FPE(n)	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002

Table 56 below shows the results of the VAR models with Chinese imports with one lag and Chinese exports with three lags. In these models, I include the constant, the linear time trend regressor and all controls that are time variant (e.g. the variables that indicate the Colonial origin and the level of Ethnolinguistic fractionalization cannot be included in the VAR model.) On the one hand, the findings show a significant and negative effect of Chinese exports with one lag, but a positive effect of the Chinese exports with 2 lags. On the other hand, the impact of the Chinese imports is not significant.

Table 56. Var model

	DV: V-Dem Liberal Democracy index	
	(1)	(2)
V-Dem Liberal Democracy index with 1 lag	1.002*** (0.040)	0.918*** (0.016)
China exports (as % GDP) with 1 lag	-0.005*** (0.001)	
China imports (as % GDP) with 1 lag		0.002 (0.002)
Life expectancy with 1 lag	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.0004 (0.0004)
Log of GDP per capita with 1 lag	0.006 (0.009)	0.004 (0.003)
Resources rents with 1 lag	-0.0001 (0.0004)	-0.0003 (0.0003)
Regime Durability with 1 lag	-0.001** (0.0004)	-0.001** (0.0002)
Political corruption with 1 lag	0.015 (0.033)	-0.017 (0.014)
Log of population with 1 lag	-0.004 (0.009)	-0.005 (0.003)
V-Dem Liberal Democracy index with 2 lags	-0.169*** (0.056)	
China exports (as % GDP) with 2 lags	0.004** (0.002)	
Life expectancy with 2 lags	0.002 (0.002)	
Log of GDP per capita with 2 lags	0.009 (0.013)	
Resources rents with 2 lags	-0.0001 (0.001)	
Regime Durability with 2 lags	-0.0003 (0.001)	
Political corruption with 2 lags	-0.031 (0.046)	
Log of population with 2 lags	-0.013 (0.012)	
V-Dem Liberal Democracy index with 3 lags	0.098** (0.040)	
China exports (as % GDP) with 3 lags	-0.001 (0.002)	
Life expectancy with 3 lags	-0.001 (0.001)	
Log of GDP per capita with 3 lags	-0.014 (0.009)	
Resources rents with 3 lags	-0.00001 (0.0004)	
Regime Durability with 3 lags	0.001** (0.0004)	
Political corruption with 3 lags	0.009 (0.033)	
Log of population with 3 lags	0.015* (0.009)	
Constant	0.032 (0.042)	0.054 (0.042)
Linear time trend	-0.00000 (0.00001)	-0.00000 (0.00001)
N	1,000	980
R ²	0.880	0.867
Adjusted R ²	0.877	0.865
Residual Std. Error	0.066 (df = 974)	0.070 (df = 970)
F Statistic	286.790*** (df = 25; 974)	700.192*** (df = 9; 970)

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Following these findings, I redo the models from the empirical section by including 3 lags for the Chinese exports. The recommended number of lags for the Chinese imports is 1 which is the same one used in the initial models. The results of these models are also not consistent across different model specifications (basic, dynamic and with time fixed effect). Also, by including a control for the US exports as a measure of Western actors' presence, the significant effect of the Chinese exports disappears. In conclusion, these findings confirm that there is no strong evidence to support the hypothesis that a process of authoritarian diffusion is happening as a result of the increasing Chinese trade engagement with Sub-Saharan African countries.

Discussion of the results

The results from Tables 46-51, pages 219-225, indicate that the effect of Chinese trade engagement on levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan African states is not consistent throughout the different measurement of the dependent variable and the different model specifications, there a high percentage of non-significance (almost 66%) and even in the 18 models where the IV has expected negative sign and it is significant, the effect captured is small. Based on these reasons, we can conclude that these findings are in-line with the results from the previous papers as they do not provide strong support for the main hypothesis that a process of diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices is happening at the institutional level in Sub-Saharan African countries. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss potential theoretical and empirical explanations for why we might not observe diffusion, such as democratic institutions are embedding, potential data issues and the appeal of the West. First, in order to reduce the potential errors that might exist in the raw data reported by China, I decided to use, instead, a dataset that has been verified by a research team from a US university and led by a renowned expert on the issue of Chinese engagement in Africa, Deborah Bräutigam. Then, the non-results could also be explained by the argument claiming that democratic institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa are in process of embedding. This implies that the elites might not be able to follow their preferences as easily as in the past, and, thus, they are might not be able to accommodate Chinese economic engagement. The last reasonable potential explanation is that the process of authoritarian diffusion might not happen, at the institutional level due to the enduring appeal of the West in the Sub-Saharan African region. Although China might be a

preferred economic partner for Sub-Saharan African countries (Lange 2010), its prestige might not be enough to overtake the prestige of the West due to longstanding historical, cultural and linguistic ties that were created as a result of the European colonialism of Africa. As Tolstrup (2013, p. 733) claimed, “some linkages are extremely difficult to alter and can only be changed after a long period of time”.

a) Data issues

One potential explanation for the non-results could be that there might be some issues with the data used. Availability and reliability have always constituted fundamental issues while empirically investigating the implications of Chinese engagement in Africa. Scholars have previously pointed out the lack of reliable and available data (Asongu and Aminkeng 2013; Carmody et al. 2012) as the Chinese government has refused numerous times to report their official data to the international economic organizations such as the World Bank and OECD (Samy 2010). This determined a debate between critics and supporters of Chinese engagement in Africa on whether or not to explore this data as a mean to go beyond the practice of anecdotal evidence (Asongu and Aminkeng 2013). To fill in this gap, researchers have chosen to gather their own qualitative data through field works (Wang and Elliot 2014; Mohan and Lampert 2013; Carmody et al. 2012; Haglund 2008) or build new databases that would capture, for example, the Chinese finance projects in Africa (China Aid Data) and their trade engagements (School of Advanced International Studies - China Africa Research Initiative or SAIS- CARI).

This paper uses the available data on Chinese trade engagement in Africa reported by the Chinese government and checked by the researchers from John Hopkins' SAIS-CARI. While this is not perfect data, it is the only one available which can be used to investigate the implications of the Chinese economic engagement on levels of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although the Sino-African economic cooperation can be tracked back to the Cold War period, the biggest growing rates of Sino-African trade has been recorded in the past 30 years: for example, the African exports to China grew with 48% yearly between 1999 and 2004 (Broadman 2009, p. 96). Therefore, it is reasonable to consider the investigated period (1992 to 2017) to be, on the one hand, limited by reasons of data availability and consistency and, on the other hand, important for testing the theory.

b) Democratic institutions are currently embedding

Another potential explanation for why diffusion might not be happening at the institutional level is that although democratic regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa have encountered problems in the consolidation process, the democratic transition has successfully managed to create foundation for the liberal-democratic institutions that are sufficiently robust to avoid complete co-option by elites. This argument builds on the optimistic assessments of state of democracy in Africa from the literature, such as Lindberg (2006); Posner and Young (2007); Barkan (2008); Lynch and Crawford (2011); and Cheeseman (2016).

First, Lindberg (2006) stressed the importance of conducting cyclical elections for the enhancement of civil liberties, regardless of whether these elections are free and fair. He supports this theory with an empirical analysis of 232 African elections between 1990-2003 and argues that repeated elections are correlated with an increase in the FH's Civil Liberties scores. In this way, Lindberg (2006, p. 149) paves the way for a more positive view on the future of the hybrid regimes from Sub-Saharan Africa by arguing that "even if they remain largely authoritarian for an extended period—tend to advance democratization because they allow for the holding of elections".

Then, Posner and Young (2007, p. 127), while looking at the role of formal institutions from Sub-Saharan African states, claims that these "are coming to matter much more than they used to and have displaced violence as the primary source of constraints on executive behaviour". Their argument is based on an analysis of several examples of political leadership change and attempts to limit the power of the executive happening through formal institutional means. Based on the analysis of a sample of 227 Sub-Saharan African leaders, they argued that, more recently, the change in political power is perceived to follow the institutional rules in-place. This means that, since 1970, there has been a decreasing trend of leaders exiting the office through violent means (e.g. coups or assassinations) as more politicians are using formal or constitutional ways. In addition to this, Posner and Young (2007) also discuss examples in which the legislature acted against the executive's interest, such as the Nigerian Senate versus President Obasanjo in 2006 and the Malawian parliament versus the President Muluzi in 2003. In terms of future avenues of research, Posner and Young (2007, p. 137) recommend a more extensive look at the role of formal institutions in

constraining the executive power as a mean to “better capture the salient characteristics of African politics today”.

Lastly, compared to the previous scholars, Barkan (2008) has been perceived as having a more tempered optimistic approach (Lynch and Crawford 2011, p. 283) or as being “cautiously optimistic about the possibility for democratic change” in Sub-Saharan Africa (Cheeseman 2016, p. 196). His argument builds on the role of the legislature in the process of democratic consolidation. Based on the comparison of six Sub-Saharan African countries, Barkan (2008) claims that the legislature has become *an emerging player* in some of the countries from the region by exercising its control function over the executive and using its right of legislative initiative.

Overall, this discussion about the optimistic views on the state of democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries has pointed towards particular areas (e.g. electoral institutions and balance of power between institutions), in which Sub-Saharan African countries had improvements and are considered, by scholars, such as Lindberg 2006, to be conducive to more substantive democratization in the future. The lack of evidence for diffusion might suggest that, as these authors have argued, democratic institutions, though subject to instability, are in the process of embedding.

This, implicitly, brings us back to the argument of Møller et al. (2017) regarding the importance of domestic factors in enhancing or diluting the process of diffusion. If the current backsliding trend experienced by democracies in Sub-Saharan African states represents a step in the process of democratic consolidation and not a sign of delegitimation of democratic institutions; this means that the internal environment from Sub-Saharan African democracies might not be susceptible to the prestige of the Chinese institutions and could act as a barrier, rather than a gateway, in the face of the potential diffusion of their authoritarian practices.

c) Appeal of the West remains strong: diffusion at a distance?

The last potential explanation for why authoritarian diffusion might not be happening in Sub-Saharan Africa as a result of trade linkages with China is that the appeal of the West remains strong across Sub-Saharan African countries. The results of the Afrobarometer survey data round 6, reported in Figure 16 (from page 60 Introduction chapter), shows that 31.8% of respondents from Sub-Saharan African countries choose US as the preferred model of development that their countries should follow while China is the second-best model, being chosen by 24.6% of the respondents. These

descriptive statistics indicate that, although the Chinese economic engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa has dramatically increased over the past decade and even if China is perceived positively across both the elite and public in this region (Hanauer and Morris 2014), these might not be enough to sever the cultural, historical and linguistic ties that exist between the Sub-Saharan African countries and the Western world as a result of the European colonization of Africa.

The colonial period is at the very root of the process of state formation of the current African states. During this period, the European colonial powers conquered vast parts of the continent, drew artificial borders to divide their own spheres of influence and used a type of colonial rule that facilitated the extraction of resources. But they also imposed their mother language as an official language in these new conquered territories, exported the Western educational system and send Christian missionaries to evangelize the locals, while altering the pre-existing forms of organization and cultural-linguistic identification of the local population (Prah 2009; Ziltener and Künzler 2013; John 2014).

These coordinated activities were aimed to ensure that the colonial powers had total control over the colonies and represented ways to prevent the coagulation of the opposition against the colonial rule. But, for the local population, this involved a forced adoption of new cultural, linguistic and religious identities that will become features of the societies from Sub-Saharan African states, as we know them today. In particular, out of the 49 Sub-Saharan African countries, 19 countries use English and 11 states use French (Chutel 2018) as an official language or language of instruction in school. Also, in terms of religion, almost 600 million citizens of African countries, representing half of the regional population, are Christians, which makes Africa to be the continent with the largest Christian population from the world (Johnson et al. 2018, pp. 20-25; Kazeem 2019).

After the process of decolonization, the former colonial powers made efforts in preserving close relationships with the newly independent states. From an economic point of view, a lot of states from Sub-Saharan Africa inherited weak and patrimonial institutions from the colonial rule and, they soon became receivers of huge amounts of European aid and investments. In addition to this, the former colonial powers created international organizations or forums that would bring together their former colonies, such as the Organization of the Commonwealth including the former British colonies

and the International Organisation of La Francophonie, representing countries that use French language as a lingua franca. They also facilitated educational exchanges which led an increased migration of African students towards Europe. For example, according to Campus France (2016, p. 2), in 2013, France received over 90,000 mobile African students.

Overall, the colonial period has deeply marked the history of the Sub-Saharan Africa continent and put the basis of the strong connections between Europeans and the local populations. All the features that were imposed during the colonial period by the European colonizers and missionaries, nowadays, these are common grounds of cooperation between Sub-Saharan African countries and the former European colonial powers and connect two continents. In this context, the presence of China in Africa, although widely welcomed by the elite and public, and even if it had dramatically increased over the past decade, it might not be able to untie the cultural and historical links that persist for more than 3 centuries between Africa and Europe. This is in line with Ambrosio (2012, p. 395)'s argument that it might be too early to see the China model as "a significant factor precipitating a reverse wave" across democracies.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated whether the increasing Chinese trade linkages with Sub-Saharan African states is diffusing authoritarian practices in the developing world. It explored to what degree the kind and intensity of economic links between China and Sub-Saharan African states determine variation in levels of democracy in these countries. Higher levels of economic linkages (imports and exports) might affect the quality of liberal democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries by diffusing authoritarian practices through different mechanisms of diffusion. This hypothesis has been tested using a panel of 45 Sub-Saharan African countries covered over 27 years. The empirical analysis investigated the impact of Chinese trade engagement (measured as imports and exports) on a plurality of measures of democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries, such as maximalist measures (Polity IV and Liberal democracy component from Varieties of Democracy dataset) and minimalist measures of levels of democracy taken from V-Dem, Cheibub et al. (2009, 2010)'s Democracy and Dictatorship and Freedom House datasets.

Overall, the results of the regression with AR(1) Prais-Winsten correction and panel-corrected standard errors (PCSE) and the GLM models with logit link do not provide strong support for the main hypothesis that a process of diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices is observed, at the institutional level, in the context of trade linkages. These results are in-line with the findings from the previous papers which investigated the process of diffusion as a result of Chinese economic engagement, at the individual level. Finally, the paper addressed the endogeneity concerns regarding the relationship between economic statistics and democracy by performing a linear AR(1) panel model regression with PCSE and Prais-Winsten and using the maximalist measures of liberal democracy as IVs and the Chinese exports and imports as DVs. Overall, this paper contributes to our understanding of the process of authoritarian diffusion at the institutional level, by testing whether external actors can be influential across their border, based on the prestige of their performance and institutions. The diffusion of Chinese authoritarian practices might not be happening due to the enduring appeal of the West in the Sub-Saharan African region.

Conclusions chapter

Summary of thesis

This thesis was motivated by the global democratic rollback trend which has been reflected at both the institutional level, in terms of levels of democracy, and the individual level, in terms of support for democracy (Diamond 2008, 2015; Plattner 2015, 2017; Walker 2016). In practices, this meant that, over the past two years, 71 countries across the world experienced declines in scores for Political Rights and Civil liberties (Freedom House 2018) while 10 states were downgraded to autocracies (Mechkova et al. 2017). The democratic rollback was observed across both developed (e.g. US) and developing countries (e.g. Venezuela), but for the latter, the trend can be even more dangerous as their liberal-democratic institutions and the public support for the regime have not yet consolidated. Thus, it represents a topic of interest for academia (Gat 2007; Diamond 2008, Kapstein and Converse 2008; 2015; Plattner 2015; Weßels 2015; Walker 2016; Bermeo 2016; Foa and Mounk 2016; Kuehn 2017; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Rakner 2019), policy practitioners and media commentators (see Friedman 2008; Rachman 2016; Ogilvy 2017; The Economist 2018) who shared substantial concerns regarding the problems posed by this phenomenon for the present and future of democracies across the world.

The process of democratic recession has coincided with the weakening of the global prestige of liberal-democratic norms (Gyimah-Boadi 2015; Hall and Ambrosio 2017) as well as, the emergence of authoritarian regimes as global economic powers (Gat 2007; Diamond 2008, 2015; Walker 2016; Foa and Mounk 2016; Walker 2016; Plattner 2017). This coincidence has raised the following question: is the rise of authoritarian powers related in any way to the faltering democratization process from the developing world?

First, the traditional explanations of the process of democratic transition and rollback are not enough in order to answer this question. Previous studies have mainly looked at internal factors, such as economic (level of economic development, see Boix and Stokes 2003), socio-demographics (civic and democratic culture, see Almond and Verba 1989) or political (e.g. government performance, see Kapstein and Converse 2008). The scholars that have investigated the role of external factors (e.g.

globalization and external actors (Rodrik 2018; Pevehouse 2002) have yet to address the emergence of authoritarian economic powers.

Then, the democratic diffusion theory is useful in explaining the process of democratization which is seen as having happened in geographic and temporal waves. The main argument of this literature is that being in the proximity of democratic regimes enhance the prospects of democratic transition. Scholars have studied the process of democratic diffusion as happening through different types of mechanisms, such as proximity, linkage, prestige, demonstration, learning etc. Proximity and linkages are the most well-known and studied channels of diffusion. On the one hand, scholars have described proximity as the “tendency for neighbouring countries to converge toward a shared level of democracy or non-democracy” (Brinks and Coppedge 2006, p. 464). On the other hand, linkages refer to the “density of ties and cross-border flows” between countries (Levitsky and Way 2006, p. 379). Empirically, scholars (e.g. Obydenkova 2007; Lankina et al. 2016) have investigated the impact of economic linkages, such as trade and aid, to understand the effects of EU’s democratic promotion in Eastern Europe.

Although the democratic diffusion literature offers a strong theoretical and analytical framework, useful in understanding the process of democratic transition, it has not addressed the recent democratic rollback trend. Instead, this research argued that the authoritarian diffusion represents the proper theoretical framework necessary to investigate the puzzle of the rise of authoritarian power in the context the democratic recession process. The authoritarian diffusion literature can be characterized by two directions of study: one which looks at the diffusion of authoritarian practices across authoritarian regimes and, another one that is less-developed and investigates the diffusion across different regime types or from autocracies to democracies.

This research contributes to this second strand of the authoritarian diffusion literature by attempting to provide an answer to the previously mentioned question of whether or not the emergence of authoritarian powers is related in any way to the process of democratic recession in the developing world. In doing that, it aimed to fill in several gaps from the literature: China as an alternative diffuser that is less studied than Russia, disentangling the mechanisms of diffusion (e.g. linkages, prestige, demonstration and learning) and the practices and attitudes that being diffused (e.g.

non-democratic and illiberal), studying diffusion at the individual and institutional levels, Sub-Saharan Africa as an under-research area and whether diffusion happens at a distance due to the increasing economic interconnections between areas across the world.

This research argued that the Chinese economic engagement in Sub-Saharan African is a suitable case to explore these gaps as China is an emerging global power, proving an alternative model of development to the Western liberal-democracy while Sub-Saharan African democracies reflect the overall global trend of democratic recession. To test this argument, I proposed a multilevel investigation of the process of authoritarian diffusion as a result of the Chinese economic linkages with Sub-Saharan Africa. The investigation was organized following the three papers model.

First, Paper 1 has investigated the authoritarian diffusion process, at the individual level, by testing the demonstration mechanism of diffusion. It hypothesized that the presence and counts of Chinese finance projects might affect people's attitudes towards liberal-democracy by demonstrating the authoritarian practices which have been proven to be economically successful as part of the China model. The argument of this paper was that the citizens of the Sub-Saharan African states might adopt authoritarian attitudes and practices due to the practical example of their successful implementation as part of the many Chinese financed projects across Sub-Saharan Africa as these projects become real-life demonstrations of the authoritarian aspect of the China model by allowing the locals to observe how Chinese companies operate (e.g. fast results although poor human rights protection).

This paper tested this argument by conducting multilevel analysis, where the dependent variable was a composite measuring attitudes towards liberal-democracy, which was created through a Bayesian factor analysis and Markov Chain Monte Carlo method of aggregation. The independent variable was distance from a Chinese project to the closest Afrobarometer cluster and, as the number of Chinese financed projects located at different buffer areas around the respondents' cluster (25km, 50km and 75km) and 1st level and 2nd level administrative divisions.

The results of the empirical investigated showed no strong evident in support of the main hypothesis as there was a high percentage of non-significance for the proximity and counts coefficients (47% out of the total 72 models), the direction/significance of the effect changed across measurements and rounds, even

when the expected significant effect was found, its magnitude was small and the additional analysis (Chinese SEZs and country-by-country) did not uncover any specific patterns that might provide support for the hypothesis.

The discussion of the non-diffusion results included different potential theoretical and empirical explanations that might justify these results, such as issues with the data, the projects not clearly demonstrating the features of the China model and even when these Chinese practices are demonstrated, these are not presented in such a way that can be distinguished from the those of the West. After concluding that empirical concerns were most likely not the cause of the non-results, I argued that both the two remaining theoretical explanations are reasonable justifications for why we don't observe diffusion. These explanations are connected and indicate that the Chinese model might not be demonstrated effectively due to issues in communicating complete information about the authoritarian practices which are part of the Chinese authoritarian model. First, the increasing geographical distance between China and the Chinese companies, implementing the aid projects abroad, leads to less information about the China model being conveyed to the local population as Chinese companies become capitalist actors interested in maximizing their economic benefits even at the costs of not properly implementing the aid project and not demonstrating how the China model works in practice. Second, building on the recent studies showing that the differences in labour practices of Chinese and American companies active in Africa, are not due to the country of origin, but because of differences in the characteristics and types of companies (see Rounds and Huang 2017), the paper advanced the explanation that the non-diffusion results might be there even if these projects were successfully implemented, as the China aid projects might not clearly demonstrate the link between the authoritarian features of the China model and this successful implementation. In this context, further investigation was required in order to find out whether diffusion might happen if the informational gaps between the diffusion actors are filled.

Paper 2 represented an attempt to test whether providing clear information about the features of the China model that contributed to its high growth performance, might lead a process of authoritarian diffusion happening at individual level. Thus, this paper represented a test of the learning mechanism of diffusion by conducting a survey-experiment in Kenya, a typical African country that has encountered challenges in consolidating its democratic regime and has experienced an increase in Chinese

economic engagement. The argument of the paper was that if Sub-Saharan African citizens hold materialist and utilitarian values, learning about the Chinese practices, may negatively affect their attitudes towards liberal democracy. Compared to the previous paper, here I was able to test not only the diffusion of the authoritarian aspects of the China model, but also the meritocratic or performance-based aspect of leadership selection.

The results showed that learning about the features of the China model that contributed to the high growth performance of the Chinese economy, negatively affected the respondents' attitudes towards the electoral selection of politicians. This means that the respondents that received the treatment showed a higher preference than those who did not, for choosing their politicians through performance-based appointment rather than through an electoral process. Still, I do not find diffusion on the authoritarian aspects of the China model which indicates that what might be diffused at the individual level is not autocracy, but meritocracy. This finding is interesting, in the context in which, previous survey data indicated⁵² an increasing trend in the public support for democratic alternatives, especially, the rule by experts. Scholars, such as Foa and Mounk (2016, p. 13) have expressed concerns regarding the fact that the preference of young generations from the US for rule by expert has increased with of up to 50%, in 2011. Similarly, Figure 4, from page 16, has shown that a similar trend can be observed when aggregating the World Values Survey data at the global level: 54% of the respondents from Round 6, support the rule by experts' political alternative to democracy.

Regarding the discussion of the results, the paper includes several empirical and theoretical explanations that could explain these results. I, first, rule out the possible empirical issues, and then, suggest that the most plausible reason for why we might not observe authoritarian diffusion at the individual level, is that cultural distance between China and Sub-Saharan African countries, creates a barrier in the process of diffusion. Thus, the non-effects are not explained by empirical issues but by difficulty in learning across cultures.

Paper 3 investigated the process of authoritarian diffusion, at the institutional level, by testing whether higher levels of economic linkages (trade flows) are negatively affecting the levels of liberal-democracy in Sub-Saharan African countries.

⁵² See pages 13-15 from the Introductory chapter.

The argument of this paper was that the Chinese authoritarian practices might be attractive to elites from Sub-Saharan African countries first, due to, the prestige of the Chinese model that achieved a high growth performance without political liberalization and, second, as Chinese economic engagement comes with no political strings attached, they might enable the African elites to revert to autocratic preferences and destabilize democratic institutions.

I tested this argument using PCSE and GLM models, but the results did not provide strong support for the main hypothesis, indicating that increasing trade engagement might not lead to the diffusion of Chinese practices at the institutional level. The paper discussed different possible methodological and theoretical justifications for why we might not observe diffusion. First, to avoid potential errors that might exist in the raw data reported by China, I employed a dataset that has been verified by academics using the trade data reported by each Sub-Saharan African state individually. Other explanations for the non-result could be that democratic institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa are in process of embedding. This implies that the elites might not be able to follow their preferences as easily as in the past, and, thus, they are might not be able to accommodate Chinese economic engagement. The last reasonable potential explanation is that the process of authoritarian diffusion might not happen, at the institutional level due to the enduring appeal of the West in the Sub-Saharan African region. Even if the Sino-African economic engagement has increased over the past decades, facilitated by the complementarity of the actors' economic interests, this might not be able to sever the longstanding cultural and historical links that exists between Sub-Saharan Africa and the West. Thus, it might be too early to assume that the prestige of the China model is strong enough to surpass that of the West.

Future directions of research

This research has shown that authoritarian diffusion is not just a product of economic linkages with other factors, such as cultural distance and historical ties, also seeming to matter. Given the findings and limitations of this research, I argue that future studies in the authoritarian diffusion literature should consider improving the state of the diffusion study, from a both theoretical and methodological point of view.

First, from a methodological point of view, future research should consider the benefits of using mixed methods research. This research has employed a quantitative methodology which has a limited reach in terms of understanding, for example, the diffusion of norms, which could be more easily probed through elites interviews. Also, as previously argued by Tolstrup (2015b), there is a need for a case comparison that could shed some light on the issue of country level processes which might affect the process of diffusion. Then, building on the limitation of this research, future studies should consider studying diffusion over a long-time span, considering that the diffusion effect might not be visible in one or two decades.

Second, from a theoretical point of view, future research should consider the role of cultural factors and not only the economic ones. In regard to China as an actor of diffusion, studies might look at the soft power aspect of the Chinese engagement, such as the role of Confucius institutes and media (CCTV) in breaching the cultural distance between China and its economic partners. Then, regarding the mechanisms of diffusion, international socialization is an understudied channel of diffusion which recently has gained a lot of attention as the emerging authoritarian powers have promoted new international institutions rivalling the existing ones. Thus, an in-depth study of the Chinese international initiatives (E.g. One Belt One Road) would be interesting in order to understand the role of these Chinese led-organizations in socializing political leaders.

Overall contribution of the thesis

Overall, this research contributes to the authoritarian diffusion by studying the process systematically at two level of the society and by individually testing different mechanisms of diffusion. It shows that not only economic factors matter, but also the cultural ones. This conclusion is warranted by the findings of the three papers, indicating that strong economic linkages are not sufficient to lead to a process of authoritarian diffusion. This is because geographical distance between the diffuser and the receiver increases the informational gaps and cultural distance between the actors of diffusion, making it difficult to sever longstanding cultural ties that might act as a barrier to the process of diffusion.

Annexes

Annexes A: Introductory chapter

Figure 75. The extended evolution of the US V-Dem liberal democracy index

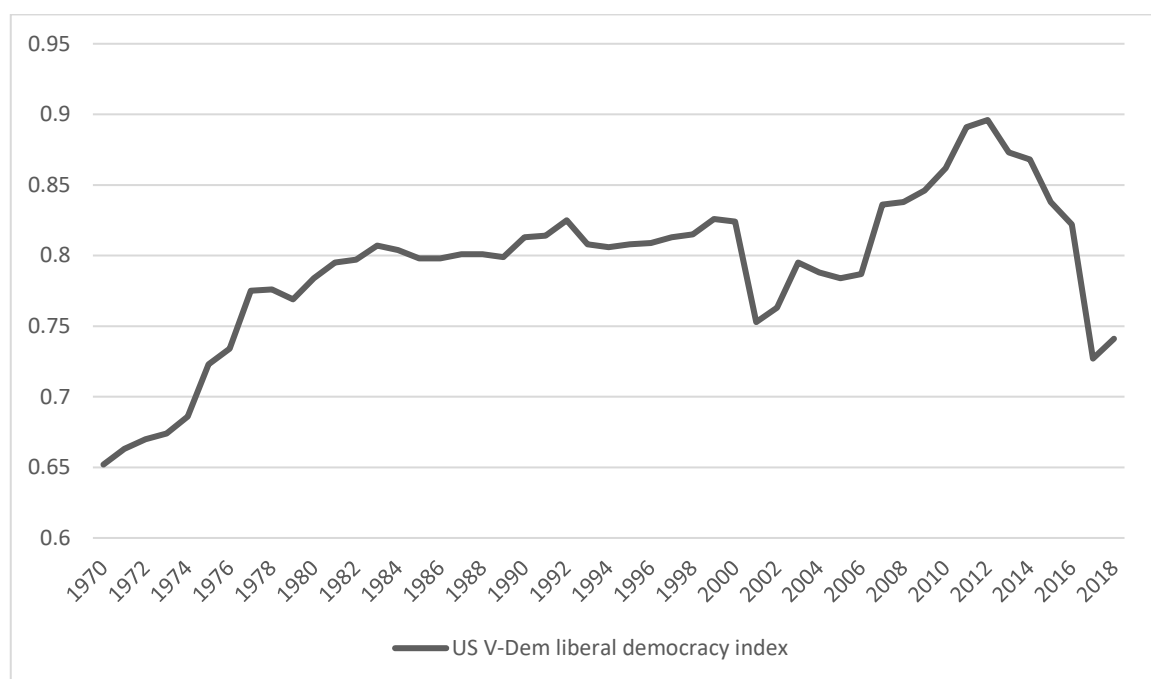


Table 57. The Evolution of Freedom House's Political Rights and Civil Liberties inverted scores in Kenya (1995-2005)

Year	Inverse FH PR	Inverse FH CL
1995	1	2
1996	1	2
1997	2	2
1998	2	3
1999	2	3
2000	2	3
2001	2	3
2002	4	4
2003	5	5
2004	5	5
2005	5	5

Annexes B: Afrobarometer questions

Table 58. Afrobarometer questions used and rescaled

Aspect of liberal democracy	Original question from the Afrobarometer	Responses to Afrobarometer questions transformed/rescaled
Democratic rule	<p>Government vertical accountability</p> <p>Q33/Q31: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.</p> <p>Statement 1: It is more important to have a government that can get things done, even if we have no influence over what it does.</p> <p>Statement 2: It is more important for citizens to be able to hold government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>Statement 1 - non-democratic</p> <p>Statement 2 - democratic</p> <p>New scale (Gov_account_vertical):</p> <p>1 -strongly non-democratic (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>2 - non-democratic (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 - democratic (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>5 - strongly democratic (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>Responses 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
	<p>Choose leaders through elections</p> <p>Q34/Q32: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.</p> <p>Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections.</p> <p>Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we</p>	<p>Statement 1 - democratic</p> <p>Statement 2 - non-democratic</p> <p>New scale (Free_elections):</p> <p>1 -strongly non-democratic (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>2 - non-democratic (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p>

	<p>should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 997=Not asked, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 - democratic (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>5 - strongly democratic (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>Responses 9=Don't know, 997=Not asked, 998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
	<p>Multipartism</p> <p>Q35/Q33: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.</p> <p>**Statement 1: Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in the country.</p> <p>**Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that [Ghanaians] have real choices in who governs them</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>Statement 1 - non-democratic</p> <p>Statement 2 - democratic</p> <p>New scale (Parties):</p> <p>1 -strongly non-democratic (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>2 - non-democratic (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 - democratic (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>5 - strongly democratic (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>Responses 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
	<p>President term limits</p> <p>Q41/Q39: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2</p> <p>**Statement 1: The Constitution should limit the president to</p>	<p>Statement 1 - democratic</p> <p>Statement 2 - non-democratic</p> <p>New scale (Term_limit):</p>

	<p>serving a maximum of two terms in office.</p> <p>**Statement 2: There should be no constitutional limit on how long the president can serve.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>1 -strongly non-democratic (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>2 - non-democratic (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 - democratic (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>5 - strongly democratic (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>Responses 9=Don't know, 998= Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
Liberal aspect		
Civil Liberties	<p>Government controls civil organizations</p> <p>Q19/Q16: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.</p> <p>Statement 1: Government should be able to ban any organization that goes against its policies.</p> <p>Statement 2: We should be able to join any organization, whether or not the government approves of it.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>Statement 1 – illiberal Statement 2 – liberal</p> <p>New scale (CV_org):</p> <p>1 -strongly illiberal (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>2 – illiberal (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 – liberal (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>5 – strongly liberal (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>Responses 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
	Media freedom	<p>Statement 1 – liberal Statement 2 – illiberal</p>

	<p>Q20/Q17: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.</p> <p>Statement 1: The media should have the right to publish any views and ideas without government control.</p> <p>Statement 2: The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it consider harmful to society.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>New scale (CV_media):</p> <p>1 -strongly illiberal (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>2 - illiberal (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 - liberal (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>5 - strongly liberal (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>Responses: 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
<p>Rule of law</p>	<p>President accountable to courts</p> <p>Q40/Q38: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.</p> <p>**Statement 1: Since the President was elected to lead the country, he should not be bound by laws or court decisions that he thinks are wrong.</p> <p>**Statement 2: The President must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 997=not</p>	<p>Statement 1 - illiberal Statement 2 - liberal</p> <p>New scale (RL_courts):</p> <p>1 -strongly illiberal (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>2 - illiberal (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 - liberal (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>5 - strongly liberal (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>Responses 9=Don't know, 997=not asked,</p>

	asked, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing	998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs
	<p>Courts make binding decisions</p> <p>Q48A/Q42A: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree: The courts have the right to make decisions that people always have to abide by.</p> <p>1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>New scale (RL_binding):</p> <p>1 - strongly illiberal (1=Strongly disagree)</p> <p>2 - illiberal (2=Disagree)</p> <p>3 - neutral (3=Neither agree nor disagree)</p> <p>4- liberal (4=Agree)</p> <p>5 - strongly liberal (5=Strongly agree)</p> <p>Responses 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
	<p>Trust in the judiciary</p> <p>Q59j/Q52j: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Courts of law?</p> <p>0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>New scale (RL_trust_jud):</p> <p>1 - strongly illiberal (0=Not at all)</p> <p>2 - illiberal (1=Just a little)</p> <p>3 -liberal (2=Somewhat)</p> <p>4 - strongly liberal (3=A lot)</p> <p>Responses 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
Power constrains and division	<p>President accountable to Parliament - Horizontal accountability</p> <p>Q36/Q34: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2</p> <p>**Statement 1: Parliament should ensure that the President explains to it on a regular basis how his government spends taxpayers' money.</p> <p>**Statement 2: The President should be able to devote his full attention to developing the country</p>	<p>Statement 1 - liberal</p> <p>Statement 2 - illiberal</p> <p>New scale (EC_parl):</p> <p>1 -strongly illiberal (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>2 - illiberal (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 - liberal (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p>

	<p>rather than wasting time justifying his actions.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, - 1=Missing</p>	<p>5 - strongly liberal (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>Responses: 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and - 1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
	<p>Opposition parties as watchdogs</p> <p>Q37/Q35: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2</p> <p><u>Round 5</u></p> <p>Statement 1: Opposition parties should regularly examine and criticize government policies and actions.</p> <p>Statement 2: Opposition parties should concentrate on cooperating with government and helping it develop the country.</p> <p><u>Round 6:</u></p> <p>Statement 1: After losing an election, opposition parties should monitor and criticize the government in order to hold it accountable.</p> <p>Statement 2: Once an election is over, opposition parties and politicians should accept defeat and cooperate with government to help it develop the country.</p> <p><u>Possible answers for both rounds:</u></p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with</p>	<p>Statement 1 - liberal</p> <p>Statement 2 - illiberal</p> <p>New scale (EC_oppos):</p> <p>1 -strongly illiberal (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>2 - illiberal (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 - liberal (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>5 - strongly liberal (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>Responses: 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and - 1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>

	Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 98/998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing	
	<p>Media reporting on government Q38/Q36: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2</p> <p>Statement 1: The news media should constantly investigate and report on government mistakes and corruption.</p> <p>Statement 2: Too much reporting on negative events, like government mistakes and corruption, only harms the country.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, -1=Missing</p>	<p>Statement 1 – liberal Statement 2 – illiberal</p> <p>New scale (EC_report):</p> <p>1 -strongly illiberal (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>2 – illiberal (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p> <p>4 – liberal (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>5 – strongly liberal (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>Responses: 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and -1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
	<p>Parliament makes laws Q39/Q37: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.</p> <p>**Statement 1: Members of Parliament represent the people; therefore they should make laws for this country, even if the President does not agree.</p> <p>**Statement 2: Since the President represents all of us, he should pass</p>	<p>Statement 1 – liberal Statement 2 – illiberal</p> <p>New scale (EC_powers):</p> <p>1 -strongly illiberal (4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2)</p> <p>2 – illiberal (3=Agree with Statement 2)</p> <p>3 -neutral (5=Agree with neither)</p>

	<p>laws without worrying about what Parliament thinks.</p> <p>1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1, 2=Agree with Statement 1, 3=Agree with Statement 2, 4=Agree very strongly with Statement 2, 5=Agree with neither, 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer, - 1=Missing</p>	<p>4 - liberal (2=Agree with Statement 1)</p> <p>5 - strongly liberal (1=Agree very strongly with Statement 1)</p> <p>Responses: 9=Don't know, 998=Refused to answer and - 1=Missing are treated as NAs</p>
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Annexes C: Convergence tables

a.) Round 5

Table 59. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Democratic rule" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Government vertical accountability	passed	1	0.678
λ Choose leaders through elections	passed	1	0.941
λ Multipartism	passed	1	0.939
λ President term limit	passed	1	0.537
ψ Government vertical accountability	passed	1	0.860
ψ Choose leaders through elections	passed	1	0.864
ψ Multipartism	passed	1	0.440
ψ President term limit	passed	1	0.454

Table 60. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Civil Liberties" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Government controls civil organizations	passed	1201	0.353
λ Media Freedom	passed	401	0.102
ψ Government controls civil organizations	passed	1	0.063
ψ Media freedom	passed	1	0.235

Table 61. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Rule of law" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ President accountable to courts	passed	1	0.536
λ Courts make binding decision	passed	1	0.435
λ Trust in the judiciary	passed	1	0.448
ψ President accountable to courts	passed	301	0.151
ψ Courts make binding decision	passed	1	0.571
ψ Trust in the judiciary	passed	1	0.472

Table 62. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Power constrains and divisions" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Opposition parties as watchdogs	passed	1	0.834
λ Horizontal accountability	passed	1	0.637
λ Parliament makes laws	passed	1	0.322
λ Media reporting on government	passed	1	0.182
ψ Opposition parties as watchdogs	passed	1	0.755
ψ Horizontal accountability	passed	1	0.699
ψ Parliament makes laws	passed	1	0.666
ψ Media reporting on government	passed	1	0.892

Table 63. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Liberal" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Civil Liberties	passed	1	0.161
λ Rule of Law	passed	1	0.249
λ Power constrains and divisions	passed	1	0.165
ψ Civil Liberties	passed	1	0.226
ψ Rule of Law	passed	1	0.716
ψ Power constrains and divisions	passed	151	0.258

Table 64. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Liberal-Democracy" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Democratic Rule	passed	1	0.053
λ Liberal composite	passed	1	0.283

ψ Democratic Rule	passed	801	0.085
ψ Liberal composite	passed	1	0.359

b.) Round 6

Table 65. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Democratic rule" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Government vertical accountability	passed	1	0.328
λ Choose leaders through elections	passed	201	0.186
λ Multipartyism	passed	201	0.137
λ President term limit	passed	101	0.070
ψ Government vertical accountability	passed	1	0.857
ψ Choose leaders through elections	passed	1	0.089
ψ Multipartyism	passed	201	0.145
ψ President term limit	passed	301	0.239

Table 66. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Civil Liberties" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Government controls civil organizations	passed	1	0.294
λ Media Freedom	passed	1	0.744
ψ Government controls civil organizations	passed	1	0.1138
ψ Media freedom	passed	1	0.840

Table 67. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Rule of Law" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ President accountable to courts	passed	1	0.152
λ Courts make binding decision	passed	1	0.455
λ Trust in the judiciary	passed	1201	0.090
ψ President accountable to courts	passed	1	0.309
ψ Courts make binding decision	passed	1	0.689
ψ Trust in the judiciary	passed	1201	0.135

Table 68. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Power constrains and divisions" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
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λ Opposition parties as watchdogs	passed	1	0.749
λ Horizontal accountability	passed	1	0.225
λ Parliament makes laws	passed	1	0.525
λ Media reporting on government	passed	1	0.192
ψ Opposition parties as watchdogs	passed	1	0.919
ψ Horizontal accountability	passed	1	0.323
ψ Parliament makes laws	passed	1	0.257
ψ Media reporting on government	passed	1	0.159

Table 69. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Liberal" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Civil Liberties	passed	1	0.526
λ Rule of Law	passed	1	0.159
λ Power constrains and divisions	passed	1	0.528
ψ Civil Liberties	passed	1	0.600
ψ Rule of Law	passed	401	0.205
ψ Power constrains and divisions	passed	1	0.457

Table 70. Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic test for "Liberal-Democracy" index

	Stationarity test	Start iteration	p-value
λ Democratic Rule	passed	1	0.387
λ Liberal composite	passed	1	0.547
ψ Democratic Rule	passed	1	0.294
ψ Liberal composite	passed	1	0.694

Annexes D: Extra variation graphs

Figure 76. Distribution of Rule of Law index across regions/ADM1, round 5

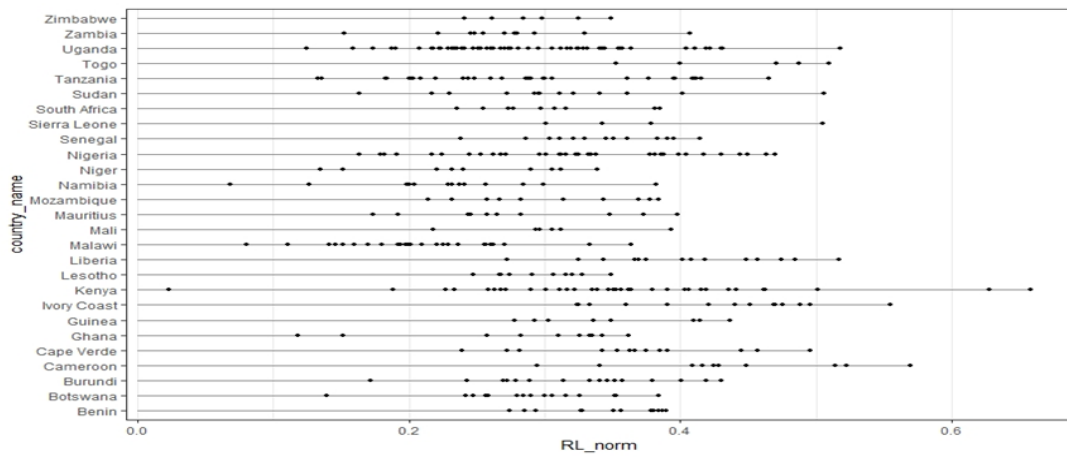


Figure 77. Distribution of Civil Liberties index across regions/ADM1, round 5

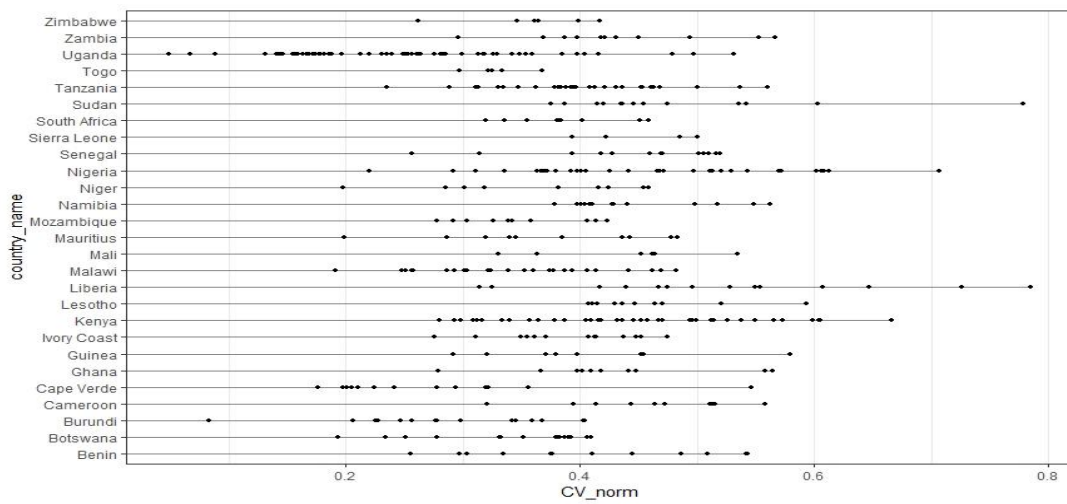


Figure 78. Distribution of Power constrains and divisions index across regions/ADM1, round 5

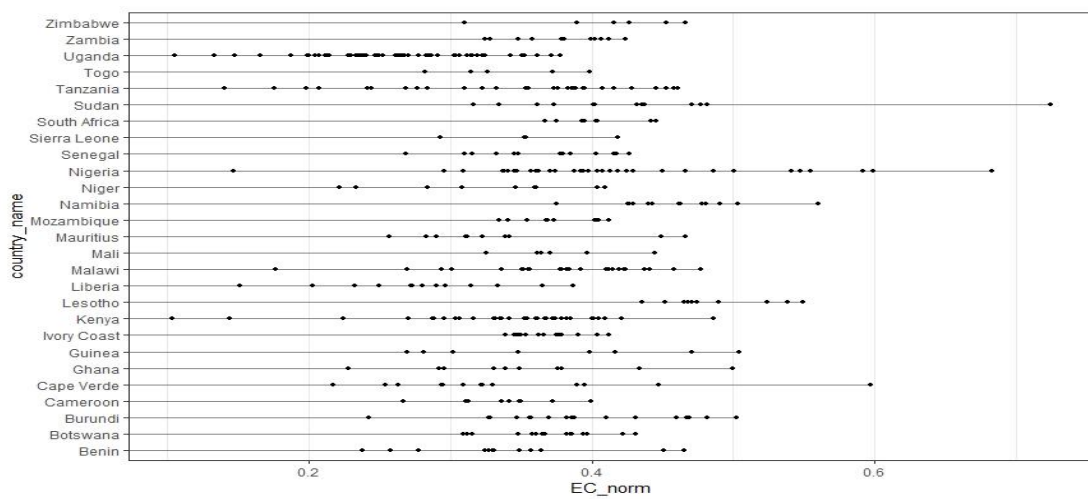


Figure 79. Distribution of Liberal index across regions/ADM1, round 5

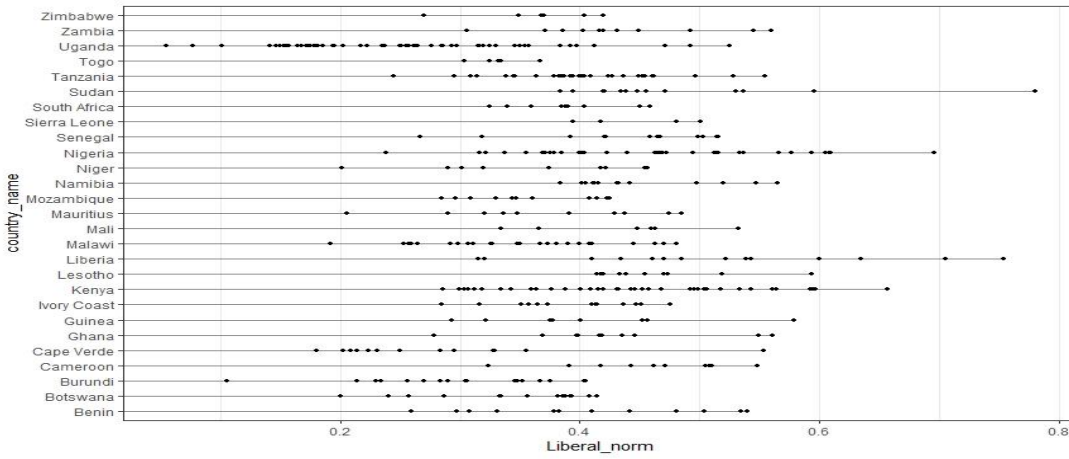


Figure 80. Distribution of Democratic Rule index across regions/ADM1, round 5

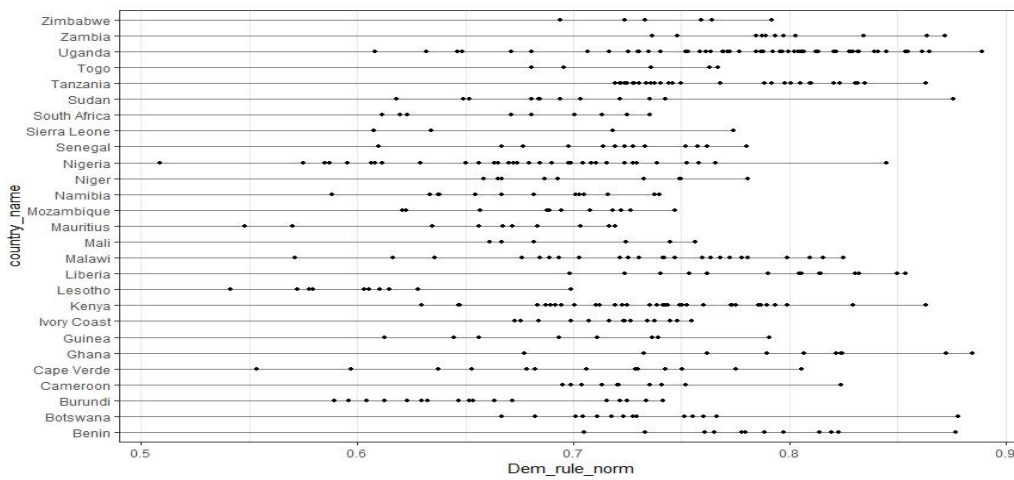


Figure 81. Distribution of Rule of Law index across regions/ADM1, round 6

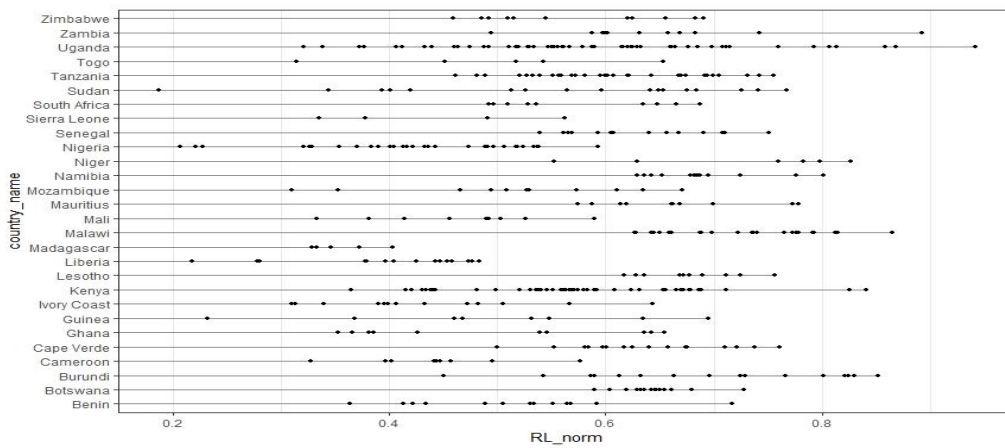


Figure 82. Distribution of Civil Liberties index across regions/ADM1, round 6

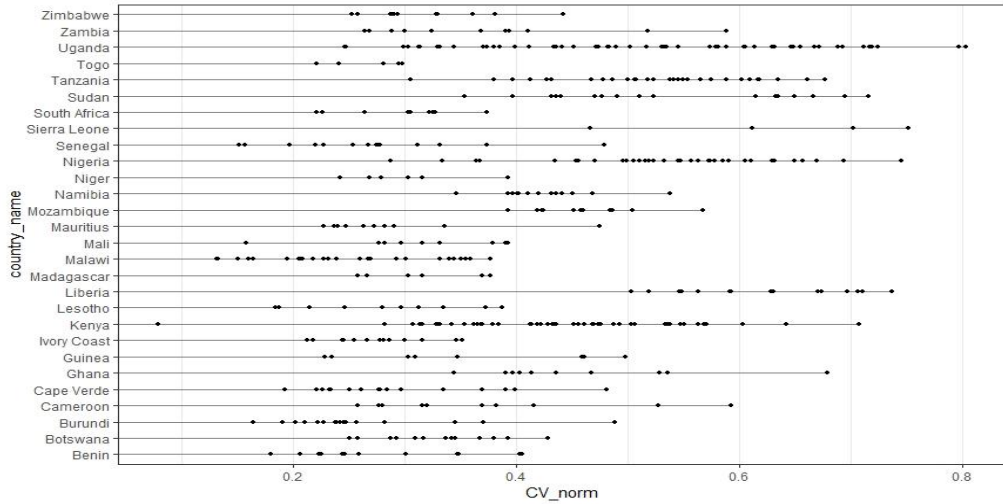


Figure 83. Distribution of Power constrains and divisions index across regions/ADM1, round 6

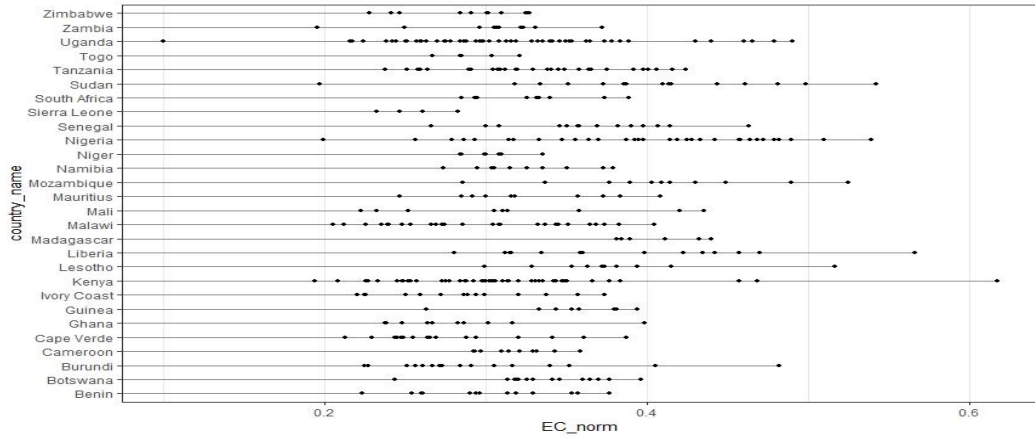


Figure 84. Distribution of Liberal index across regions/ADM1, round 6

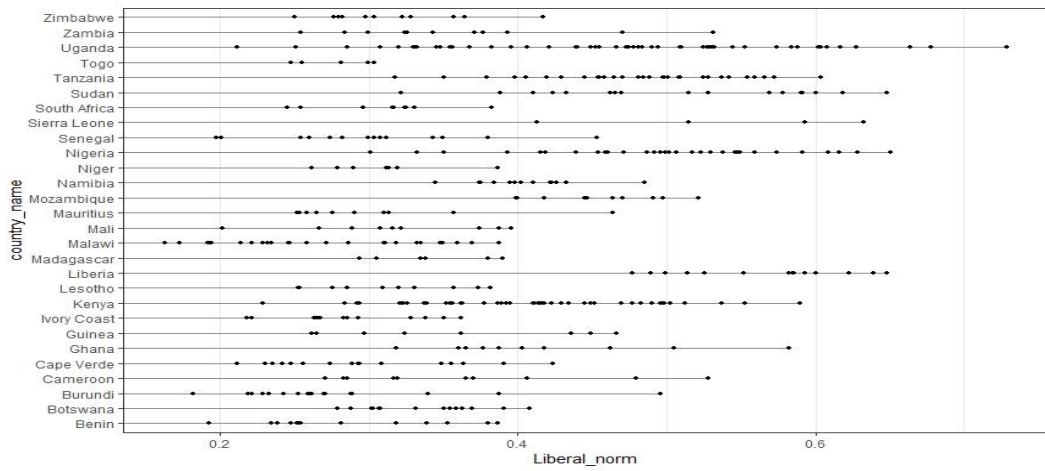
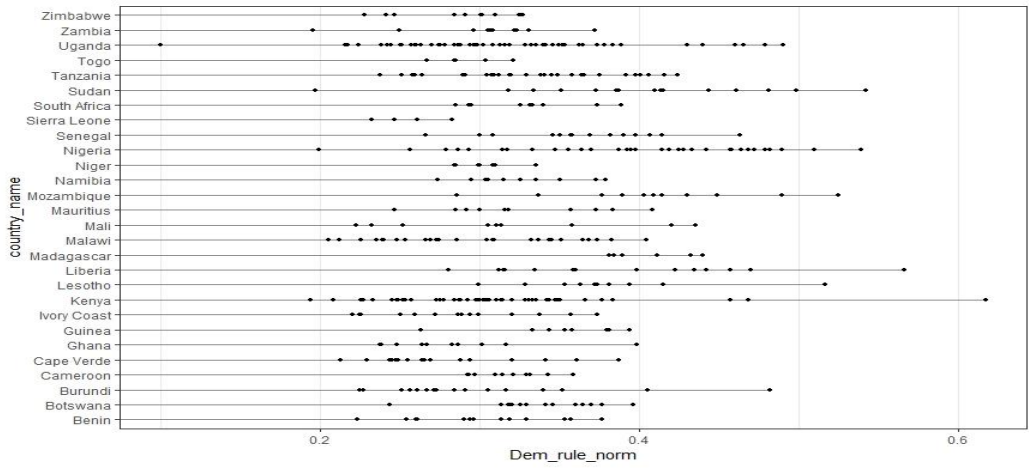
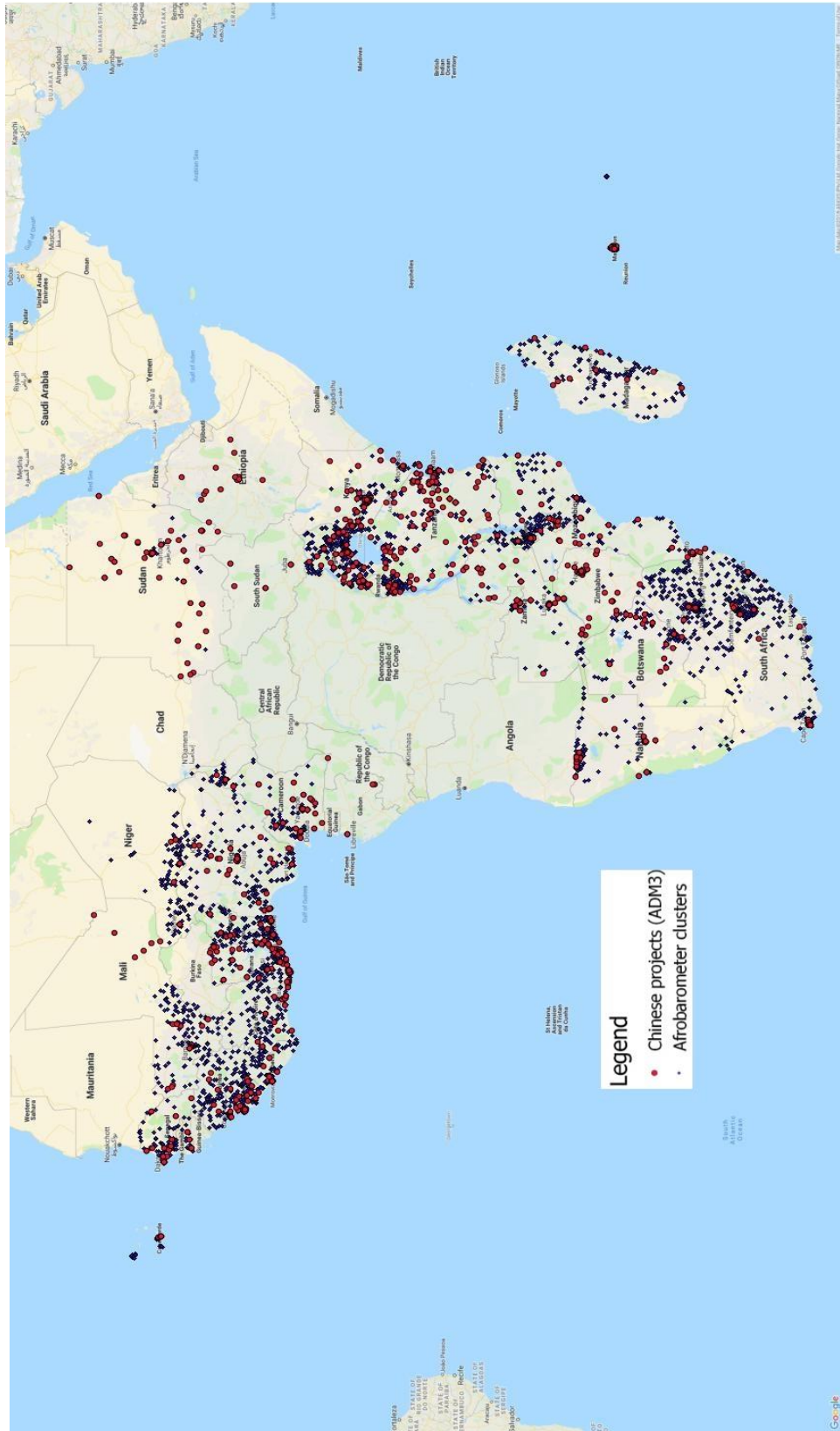


Figure 85. Distribution of Democratic Rule index across regions/ADM1, round 6

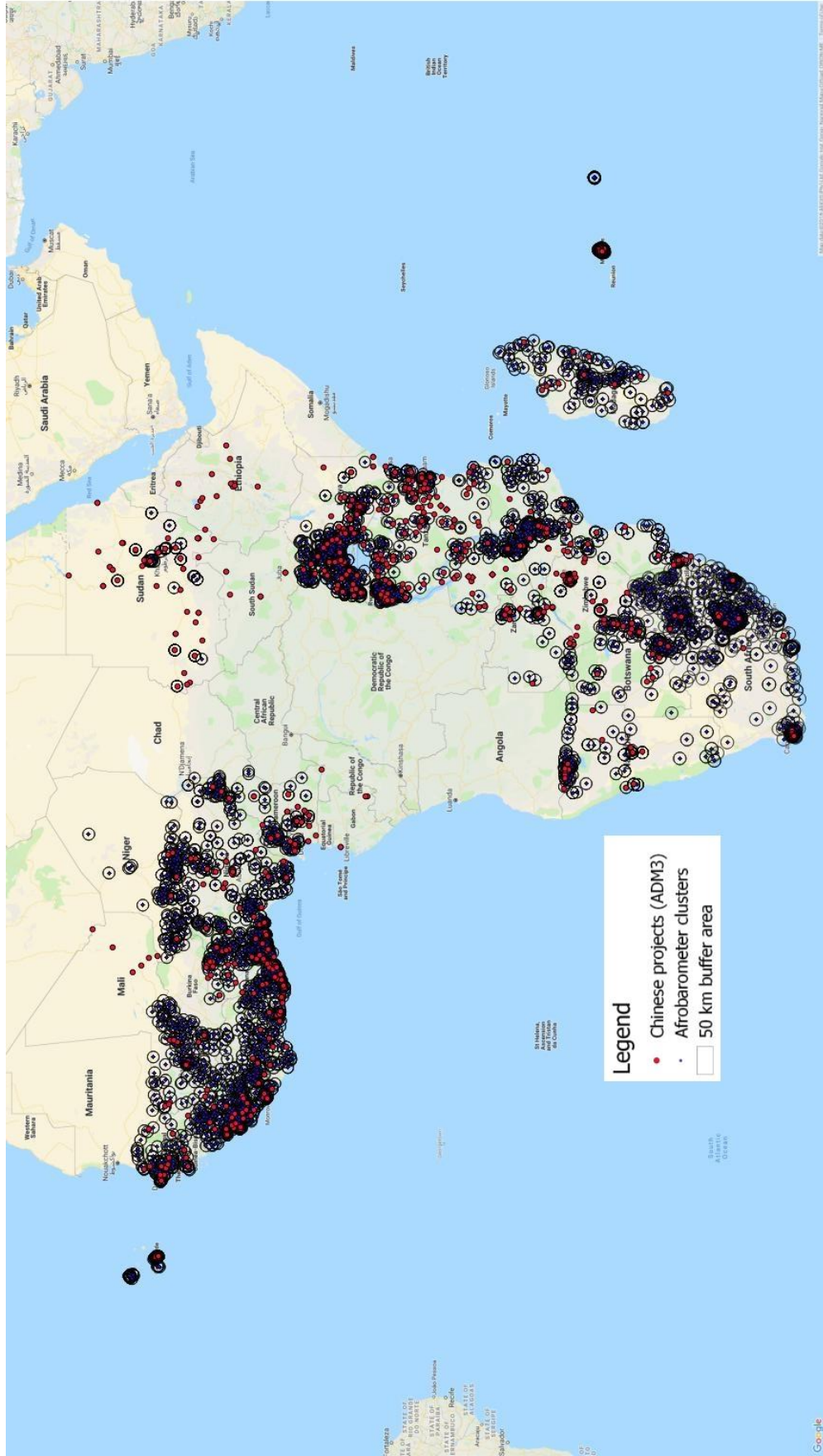


Annexes E: Maps with variation

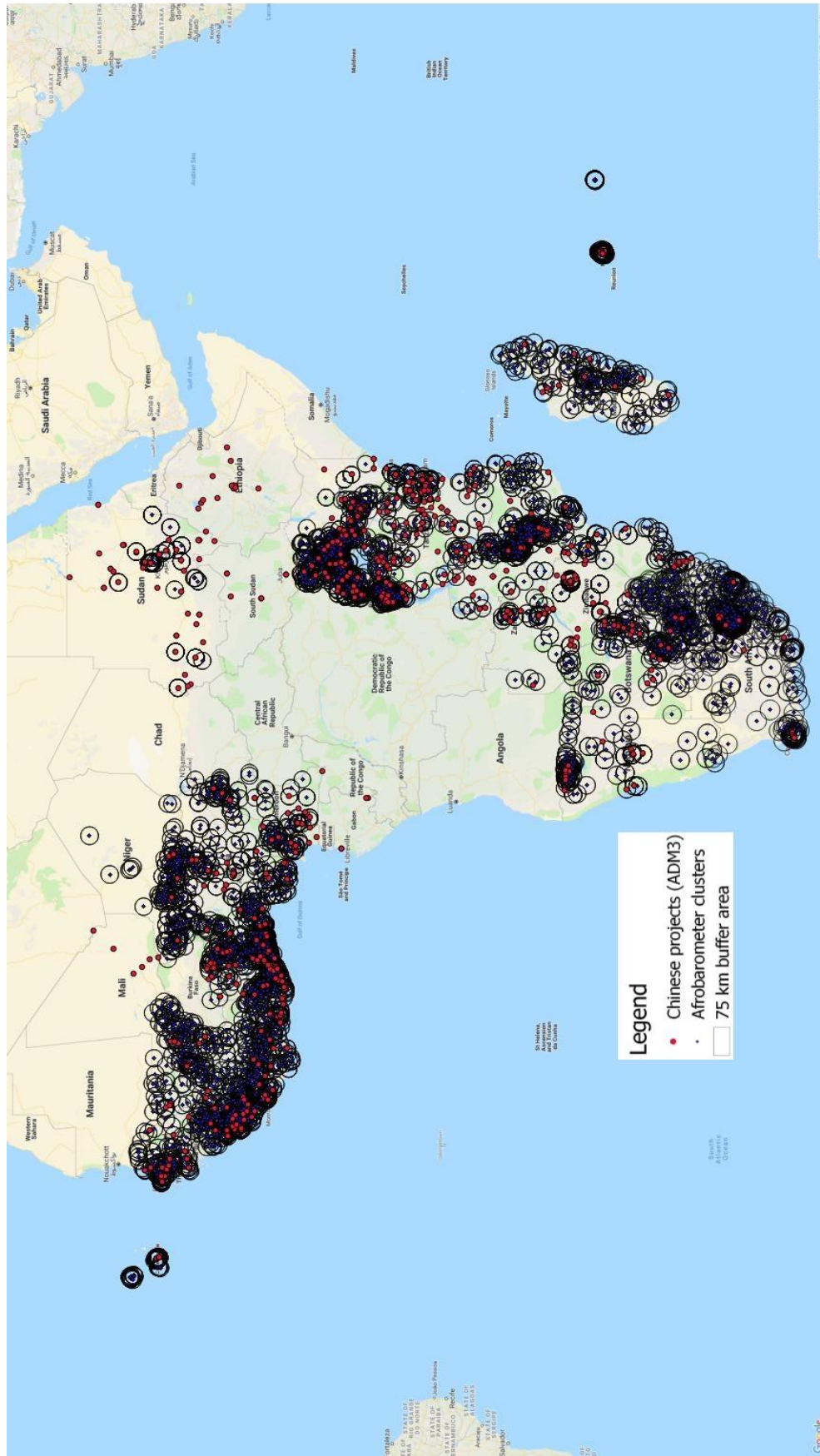
Map 3. Distribution of Chinese projects and Afrobarometer clusters across Sub-Saharan Africa



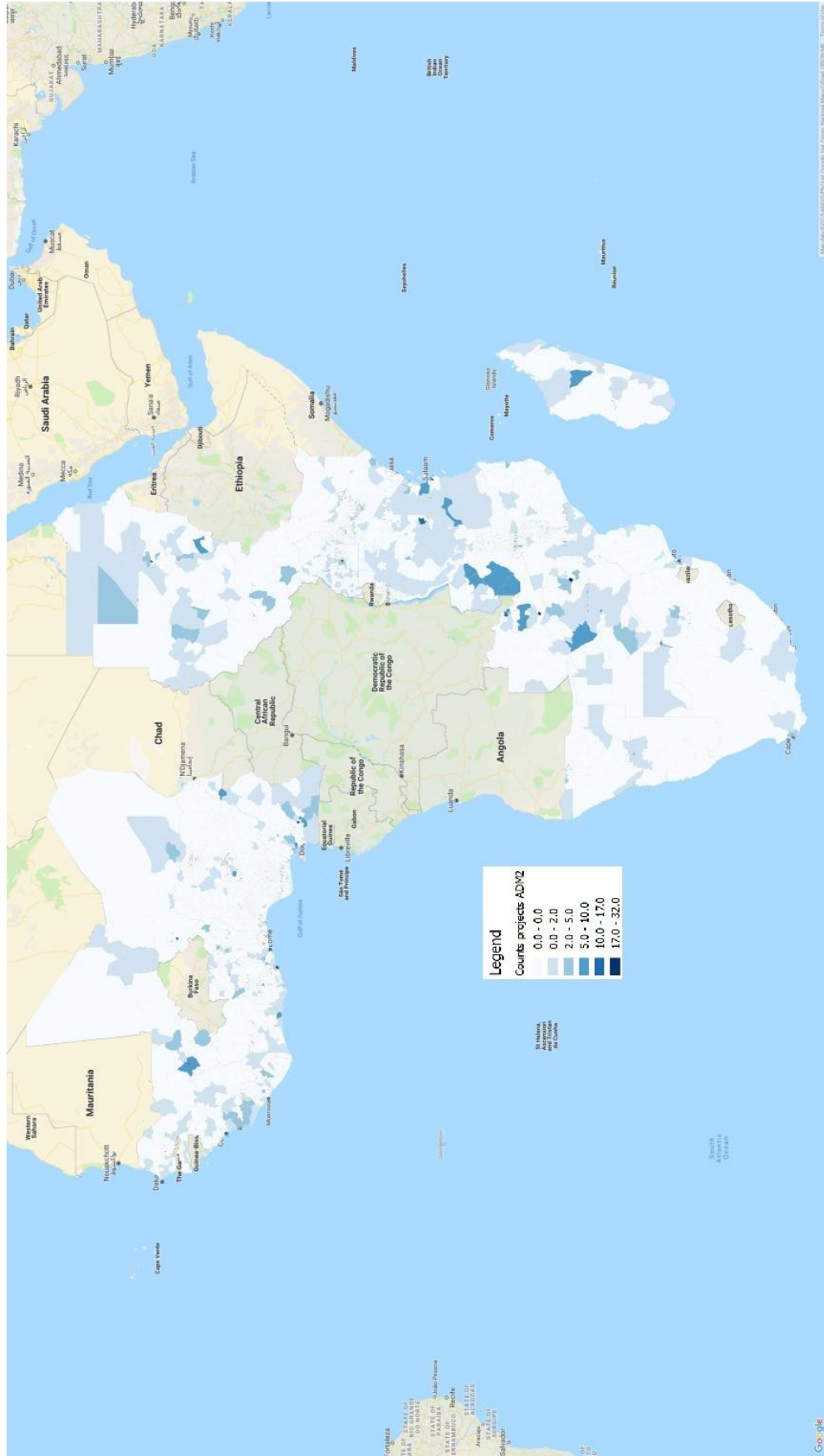
Map 5. Distribution of Chinese projects and the 50 km buffer area around Afrobarometer clusters across Sub-Saharan Africa



Map 6. Distribution of Chinese projects and the 75 km buffer area around Afrobarometer clusters across Sub-Saharan Africa



Map 7. Distribution of Chinese projects at ADM2 level (district)



Annexes F: Round 6 SEZs and non-SEZs

a.) SEZ sample

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.61 (0.02)***	0.60 (0.02)***	0.59 (0.02)***	0.59 (0.02)***	0.54 (0.02)***	0.56 (0.02)***
Distance	-0.00 (0.00)					
Counts 25km		0.00 (0.00)***				
Counts 50km			0.00 (0.00)***			
Counts 75km				0.00 (0.00)***		
Counts District					0.00 (0.00)	
Counts Regional						0.00 (0.00)
Gender	-0.01 (0.01)*	-0.01 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)*
Age	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)***	0.00 (0.00)**
Education	0.01 (0.00)**	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)*	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***
Government Performance	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.01 (0.00)**	0.01 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Safety	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Employment	0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)
AIC	-1591.47	-1609.99	-1614.00	-1613.19	-1541.34	-2183.28
BIC	-1532.76	-1551.28	-1555.30	-1554.48	-1481.44	-2120.41
Log Likelihood	805.73	814.99	817.00	816.60	780.67	1101.64
Num. obs.	2619	2619	2619	2619	2952	3971
Num. groups: cluster	292	292	292	292		
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01		
Var: Residual	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Num. groups: ID_district					253	
Var: ID_district (Intercept)					0.01	
Num. groups: ID_region						55
Var: ID_region (Intercept)						0.01

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

b.) non-SEZ sample

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.67 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***	0.66 (0.01)***	0.67 (0.01)***	0.67 (0.01)***
Distance	-0.00 (0.00)***					
Counts 25km		0.00 (0.00)*				
Counts 50km			0.00 (0.00)*			
Counts 75km				0.00 (0.00)**		
Counts District					0.00 (0.00)	
Counts Regional						-0.00 (0.00)
Gender	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Education	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***
Government Performance	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***	-0.02 (0.00)***	-0.01 (0.00)***
Safety	0.00 (0.00)**	0.00 (0.00)**	0.00 (0.00)**	0.00 (0.00)**	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Employment	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
AIC	-10556.53	-10554.00	-10554.49	-10557.54	-12671.84	-14015.52
BIC	-10476.31	-10473.78	-10474.27	-10477.32	-12589.60	-13932.57
Log Likelihood	5288.26	5287.00	5287.24	5288.77	6345.92	7017.76
Num. obs.	22515	22515	22515	22515	27555	29579
Num. groups: cluster	3169	3169	3169	3169		
Var: cluster (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Var: Residual	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04
Num. groups: ID_district					1332	
Var: ID_district (Intercept)					0.00	
Num. groups: ID_region						373
Var: ID_region (Intercept)						0.00

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Annexes G: Descriptive statistics (Paper 1)

Table 71. Descriptive statistics for Round 5 data

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Liberal Democracy index	26,997	0.36	0.21	0.00	0.19	0.50	1.00
Liberal index	26,997	0.39	0.27	0.00	0.16	0.57	1.00
Civil Liberties index	26,997	0.39	0.28	0.00	0.16	0.59	1.00
Power constrains and divisions index	26,997	0.36	0.21	0.00	0.20	0.49	1.00
Rule of Law index	26,997	0.32	0.25	0.00	0.11	0.37	1.00
Democratic Rule index	26,997	0.72	0.20	0.00	0.59	0.89	1.00
Counts 25km	26,997	3.54	6.66	0	0	3	32
Counts 50km	26,997	4.97	7.47	0	0	8	32
Counts 75km	26,997	6.50	8.46	0	0	10	36
Counts ADM2	24,779	2.31	5.14	0.00	0.00	2.00	30.00
Counts ADM1	26,997	4.79	6.43	0	1	6	35
Gender	26,997			0	0	1	1
Age	26,822	36.83	14.40	18.00	25.00	45.00	100.00
Education	26,944			0.00	2.00	5.00	9.00
Government Performance	25,872			1.00	1.00	3.00	4.00
Safety	26,928			0.00	2.00	4.00	4.00
Employment	26,912			0.00	0.00	1.00	2.00

Table 72. Descriptive statistics for Round 6 data

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Liberal Democracy index	35,260	0.66	0.20	0.00	0.52	0.82	1.00
Liberal index	35,260	0.37	0.26	0.00	0.16	0.64	1.00
Civil Liberties index	35,260	0.38	0.33	0.00	0.12	0.74	1.00
Power constrains and divisions index	35,260	0.33	0.21	0.00	0.18	0.47	1.00
Rule of Law index	35,260	0.55	0.32	0.00	0.34	0.90	1.00
Democratic Rule index	35,260	0.33	0.21	0.00	0.18	0.47	1.00
Counts 25km	26,089	4.48	8.43	0.00	0.00	4.00	34.00
Counts 50km	26,089	6.34	9.59	0.00	0.00	9.00	38.00
Counts 75km	26,089	8.20	10.74	0.00	0.00	12.00	45.00
Counts ADM2	31,807	2.65	6.09	0.00	0.00	2.00	32.00
Counts ADM1	35,260	5.81	7.84	0	1	7	37
Gender	35,260			0	0	1	1
Age	35,104	36.66	14.03	18.00	26.00	45.00	101.00
Education	35,191			0.00	2.00	5.00	9.00
Government Performance	33,903			1.00	1.00	3.00	4.00
Safety	35,182			0.00	2.00	4.00	4.00
Employment	35,156			0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00

Annexes H: Survey-experiment questionnaire

Disclaimer: As the questionnaire was delivered through SMS, the questions and answers have been adjusted to 160 characters in length, in order for both the question and its possible answers to be delivered in one SMS. In designing the questionnaire and treatment, I consulted numerous sources, such as Huang (2015), Grigorieff et al. (2017), Asian barometer, Afrobarometer, Latino barometer and World Bank (2018).

Demographic intro

"What is your age? Reply with a number.

1)Below 18 years; 2)18-24 years old; 3)25-34 years old; 4)35-44 years old; 5)45-54 years old; 6) Over 55 years old"

What County do you currently live in? Reply with the name of your County, like: Uasin Gishu.

"What is your gender? Reply with 1 or 2.

1)Male; 2) Female"

Section A (questions are randomized)

"How interested you are in politics and public affairs?"

1)Not interested; 2) Slightly interested; 3) Moderately interested; 4) Very interested; 5) Don't know"

"How would you rate the performance of the current government in handling the economy?"

1)Very good; 2) Good; 3) Neutral; 4) Bad; 5) Very bad; 6) Don't know"

"Who did you vote for in the 2017 general elections? Reply with a number.

1)Jubilee; 2) CORD; 3) Someone else; 4) Didn't vote"

"Which one is the most important?"

1)Maintain order; 2) Give people a voice in important government decisions; 3) Fight raising prices; 4) Protect freedom of speech"

Section B (questions are randomized)

"Do you see China's influence in your country as positive or negative?"

1)Very negative; 2) Somewhat negative; 3) Neutral; 4) Somewhat positive; 5) Very positive"

"Do you have a previous experience of working in or with a Chinese company? Reply with 1 or 2.

1)Yes; 2) No"

"Which of the following projects has been funded by the Chinese?"

1) Amala River Narok Road; 2) Garissa-Wajir Road; 3) Mombasa-Nairobi SGR; 4) Don't know"

"Would you support a Chinese project that create jobs but doesn't cooperate with labour unions?"

1) Strongly oppose; 2) Oppose; 3) Neutral; 4) Support; 5) Strongly support"

Treatment – distributed only to the treatment group

" China developed a unique development model & reduced its poverty rate. In 1981, 88% of Chinese lived on 2\$/day while in 2012, only 6.5% are still very poor.

The Chinese model has achieved high growth performance through a single party which offered continuity of developmental policies.

By limiting individual freedoms and rights, the Chinese government has exerted control over its population and offered a stable social environment.

The Chinese model achieves high growth through a centralised government whose work is outside the influence of other institutions, such as Parliament.

In the Chinese model, the politicians are appointed based on performance and not through elections."

Section C (statements are randomized)

"Read carefully the following questions and decide how much do you agree/disagree on scale from 1 to 9, where 1=strongly disagree & 9=strongly agree:

- Multiple political parties should be allowed to stand for election and hold office. Reply with a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree).

- Political leaders are chosen on the basis on their capability even without election. Reply with a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree).

- It is better to live in a society with order although some freedoms would be limited. Reply with a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree).

- The President must respect the courts' decision even if he thinks they are wrong. Reply with a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree).

- The government should be constantly monitored even if it disrupts its activity. Reply with a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree).

Section D

"To ensure you are reading the questions, please reply with option '4' to: Which sport activities do you prefer?"

1)Cycling; 2) Walking; 3) Swimming; 4) Reading; 5) Other"

Section E (questions are randomized)

"The Chinese political system includes: Reply with a number.

1)One political party; 2) Multiple political parties; 3) Don't know"

"The members of Chinese government are: Reply with a number.

1)Elected; 2) Appointed by the ruling party; 3) Don't know"

Section F

"What is your highest level of education? Reply with a number.

1)Primary school; 2) Secondary school; 3) Post-secondary; 4) University degree; 5) Informal education"

21. "What is your current employment status? Reply with a number.

1)Employed; 2) Student; 3) Homemaker; 4) Unemployed; 5) Unable to work/Retired"

Annexes I: Survey's production statistics

Table 73. Production statistics report

	Treatment		Control	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Surveys Sent	4023	100%	3502	100%
Opt ins	535	13%	434	12%
Completes	200	5%	200	6%
Dropoffs	118	3%	89	3%
Refusals	2	0%	2	0%
Ineligible	217	5%	145	4%
Nonresponse	3486	87%	3066	88%

Annexes J: Paper 3

Table 74 - Freedom House's Civil Liberties and Political Rights' components, scores, ratings and status

Index	Component	No of questions	Maximum score possible	Rating (based on the scores)	Status (based on the ratings)

Political Rights		10	40	36-40 -> 1 30-35 -> 2	1.0 - 2.5 -> Free
	A. Electoral Process	3	12	24-29 ->3 18-23 -> 4	3.0 - 5.0 -> Partly Free
	B. Political Pluralism and Participation	4	16	12-17 -> 5 6-11 -> 6 0-5 ->7	5.5 - 7.0 -> Not Free
	C. Functioning of Government	3	12		
Civil Liberties		15	60	53-60 -> 1 44-52 -> 2 35-43 -> 3 26-34 -> 4	
	D. Freedom of Expression and Belief	5	16	17-25 -> 5 8-16 -> 6 0-7 -> 7	
	E. Associational and Organizational Rights	3	12		
	F. Rule of Law	4	16		
	G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights	4	16		

Table 75 – Top of Sub-Saharan African countries by the level of Chinese exports

No.	Country Name	Country Code	Chinese exports as % of GDP	Average of Polity2	Type of Polity	Mean of FH CL and PR	FH status
1	Liberia	LBR	69.007	3.115	Anocracy	3.4231	Partially free
2	Togo	TGO	25.047	-2.423	Anocracy	3.0192	Partially free
3	Gambia	GMB	18.788	-3.846	Anocracy	2.8846	Partially free
4	Benin	BEN	17.526	6.462	Democracy	5.8846	Free
5	Mauritania	MRT	4.913	-4.038	Anocracy	2.4615	Not free
6	Guinea	GIN	4.559	-0.269	Anocracy	2.5962	Partially free

7	Ghana	GHA	4.150	5.231	Anocracy	5.6346	Partially free
8	Mozambique	MOZ	3.589	4.154	Anocracy	4.3269	Partially free
9	Madagascar	MDG	3.351	6.269	Democracy	4.4231	Partially free
10	Ethiopia	ETH	3.261	-1.038	Anocracy	2.6923	Partially free
11	Kenya	KEN	3.180	3.654	Anocracy	3.5769	Partially free
12	Tanzania	TZA	2.874	-1.000	Anocracy	4.0577	Partially free
13	Mauritius	MUS	2.834	10.000	Democracy	6.5192	Free
14	Senegal	SEN	2.753	4.808	Anocracy	4.9423	Partially free
15	Sierra Leone	SLE	2.729	3.077	Anocracy	3.9808	Partially free
16	Congo	COG	2.379	-2.615	Anocracy	2.9615	Partially free
17	Sudan	SDN	1.801	-5.231	Anocracy	1.0000	Not free
18	Lesotho	LSO	1.704	6.654	Democracy	4.7885	Partially free
19	Cote d'Ivoire	CIV	1.674	-0.346	Anocracy	2.6923	Partially free
20	Cameroon	CMR	1.594	-4.000	Anocracy	2.0192	Not free
21	South Africa	ZAF	1.573	8.846	Democracy	6.0000	Free
22	Angola	AGO	1.510	-2.038	Anocracy	2.1731	Not free
23	Niger	NER	1.367	4.192	Anocracy	3.9423	Partially free
24	Seychelles	SYC	1.352	NA	NA	4.8846	Partially free
25	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	COD	1.315	2.000	Anocracy	1.8654	Not free
26	Comoros	COM	1.287	5.731	Democracy	4.0577	Partially free
27	Namibia	NAM	1.283	6.000	Democracy	5.7692	Free
28	Zimbabwe	ZWE	1.213	-2.154	Anocracy	2.3654	Not free
29	Nigeria	NGA	1.212	1.808	Anocracy	3.3654	Partially free
30	Cabo Verde	CPV	1.195	9.308	Democracy	6.7885	Free
31	Mali	MLI	1.187	6.154	Democracy	5.0000	Partially free
32	Guinea-Bissau	GNB	1.085	3.538	Anocracy	3.6154	Partially free
33	Zambia	ZMB	1.051	5.077	Anocracy	4.2115	Partially free

34	Equatorial Guinea	GNQ	0.996	-5.923	Autocracy	1.1731	Not free
35	Malawi	MWI	0.944	4.692	Anocracy	4.5000	Partially free
36	Uganda	UGA	0.942	-2.615	Anocracy	3.1923	Partially free
37	Gabon	GAB	0.885	-1.577	Anocracy	3.0769	Partially free
38	Burundi	BDI	0.865	1.962	Anocracy	2.3654	Not free
39	Eritrea	ERI	0.829	-6.680	Autocracy	1.6800	Not free
40	Botswana	BWA	0.801	7.808	Democracy	5.8077	Free
41	Chad	TCD	0.666	-2.308	Anocracy	2.0577	Not free
42	Rwanda	RWA	0.615	-4.231	Anocracy	2.0577	Not free
43	Burkina Faso	BFA	0.415	-0.846	Anocracy	3.8654	Partially free
44	Central African Republic	CAF	0.388	1.769	Anocracy	3.0000	Partially free
45	Swaziland	SWZ	0.289	-9.038	Autocracy	2.2115	Not free

Table 76 - Top of Sub-Saharan African countries by the level of Chinese imports

No.	Country Name	Country Code	Chinese imports as % of GDP	Average of Polity2	Type of Polity	Mean of FH CL and PR	FH status
1	Congo	COG	16.1104	-2.6154	Anocracy	2.9615	Partially free
2	Angola	AGO	12.5908	-2.0385	Anocracy	2.1731	Not free
3	Mauritania	MRT	9.7868	-4.0385	Anocracy	2.4615	Not free
4	Equatorial Guinea	GNQ	7.5187	-5.9231	Autocracy	1.1731	Not free
5	Sierra Leone	SLE	4.6488	3.0769	Anocracy	3.9808	Partially free
6	Gabon	GAB	4.2860	-1.5769	Anocracy	3.0769	Partially free
7	Zambia	ZMB	4.1834	5.0769	Anocracy	4.2115	Partially free
8	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	COD	4.0299	2.0000	Anocracy	1.8654	Not free
9	Sudan	SDN	3.2939	-5.2308	Anocracy	1.0000	Not free
10	Liberia	LBR	2.9625	3.1154	Anocracy	3.4231	Partially free
11	Gambia	GMB	2.0455	-3.8462	Anocracy	2.8846	Partially free
12	Zimbabwe	ZWE	1.7737	-2.1538	Anocracy	2.3654	Not free
13	Mozambique	MOZ	1.7159	4.1538	Anocracy	4.3269	Partially free
14	Togo	TGO	1.1332	-2.4231	Anocracy	3.0192	Partially free
15	Benin	BEN	1.1047	6.4615	Democracy	5.8846	Free

16	Guinea	GIN	1.0899	-0.2692	Anocracy	2.5962	Partially free
17	Namibia	NAM	1.0630	6.0000	Democracy	5.7692	Free
18	Cameroon	CMR	1.0206	-4.0000	Anocracy	2.0192	Not free
19	Chad	TCD	0.9750	-2.3077	Anocracy	2.0577	Not free
20	South Africa	ZAF	0.9431	8.8462	Democracy	6.0000	Free
21	Ghana	GHA	0.8180	5.2308	Anocracy	5.6346	Partially free
22	Burkina Faso	BFA	0.8155	-0.8462	Anocracy	3.8654	Partially free
23	Central African Republic	CAF	0.7730	1.7692	Anocracy	3.0000	Partially free
24	Mali	MLI	0.6596	6.1538	Democracy	5.0000	Partially free
25	Madagascar	MDG	0.5904	6.2692	Democracy	4.4231	Partially free
26	Tanzania	TZA	0.4874	-1.0000	Anocracy	4.0577	Partially free
27	Guinea-Bissau	GNB	0.4402	3.5385	Anocracy	3.6154	Partially free
28	Rwanda	RWA	0.4103	-4.2308	Anocracy	2.0577	Not free
29	Ethiopia	ETH	0.3708	-1.0385	Anocracy	2.6923	Partially free
30	Swaziland	SWZ	0.3519	-9.0385	Autocracy	2.2115	Not free
31	Botswana	BWA	0.3209	7.8077	Democracy	5.8077	Free
32	Cote d'Ivoire	CIV	0.2777	-0.3462	Anocracy	2.6923	Partially free
33	Niger	NER	0.2496	4.1923	Anocracy	3.9423	Partially free
34	Nigeria	NGA	0.1729	1.8077	Anocracy	3.3654	Partially free
35	Senegal	SEN	0.1631	4.8077	Anocracy	4.9423	Partially free
36	Malawi	MWI	0.1586	4.6923	Anocracy	4.5000	Partially free
37	Lesotho	LSO	0.1502	6.6538	Democracy	4.7885	Partially free
38	Burundi	BDI	0.1108	1.9615	Anocracy	2.3654	Not free
39	Uganda	UGA	0.1017	-2.6154	Anocracy	3.1923	Partially free
40	Mauritius	MUS	0.0977	10.0000	Democracy	6.5192	Free
41	Kenya	KEN	0.0729	3.6538	Anocracy	3.5769	Partially free
42	Seychelles	SYC	0.0468	NA	NA	4.8846	Partially free
43	Eritrea	ERI	0.0212	-6.6800	Autocracy	1.6800	Not free
44	Comoros	COM	0.0011	5.7308	Democracy	4.0577	Partially free
45	Cabo Verde	CPV	0.0003	9.3077	Democracy	6.7885	Free

Table 77. Descriptive statistics for Paper 3

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Polity 2	1,143	1.373	5.457	-10.000	-4.000	6.000	10.000
V-Dem Liberal Democracy	1,213	0.288	0.188	0.011	0.132	0.421	0.770
Democracy-Dictatorship	764			1.000	1.000	2.000	2.000
Inverse Political Rights	1,169	3.520	1.870	1.000	2.000	5.000	7.000
Inverse Civil Liberties	1,169	3.724	1.438	1.000	3.000	5.000	7.000
V-Dem Polyarchy	1,213	0.422	0.193	0.085	0.278	0.556	0.844
V-Dem Liberal index	1,215	0.511	0.239	0.021	0.317	0.736	0.932
V-Dem Equality	1,215	0.592	0.253	0.017	0.416	0.807	0.954
FOTP inverted scores	1,079	42.298	18.183	6.000	28.000	55.000	83.000
V-Dem Judicial constraints	1,215	0.474	0.265	0.015	0.227	0.698	0.949
V-Dem Legislative constraints	1,155	0.499	0.265	0.029	0.266	0.748	0.943
Chinese exports (% of GDP) lagged	1,156	4.083	13.576	0.000	0.231	2.957	229.742
Chinese imports (% of GDP) lagged	1,156	2.002	5.330	0.000	0.012	1.255	42.839
Log of GDP per capita lagged	1,156	6.972	1.055	5.087	6.184	7.533	9.920
Resources rents lagged	1,152	12.455	11.995	0.000	4.175	16.712	84.240
Log of population lagged	1,164	15.735	1.513	11.167	14.544	16.754	19.067
Life expectancy lagged	1,170	55.735	7.379	27.610	50.664	60.191	74.515
If UK colony	1,215			1	1	2	2
If France colony	1,215			1	1	2	2
Political corruption lagged	1,214	0.670	0.216	0.123	0.556	0.847	0.976
Regime Durability lagged	1,117	10.889	11.377	0.000	2.000	16.000	51.000
Ethnoligvistic fractionalization	1,094	0.651	0.234	0.000	0.463	0.820	0.930

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