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Wealth, power, and authoritarian institutions: comparing dominant parties and parliaments in Tanzania and Uganda

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discourses simply as legitimization strategies, to which the author often refers and which change over time? And how does the book's analysis of greatness fit with the existing literature on the history of Russian nationalism? Perhaps the history of the idea of great power is the history of Russian nationalism, or one element of it. In terms of the application of the typology, it could have been used more effectively to structure the narrative, which is difficult to follow at times. Moreover, an evaluation of the evidence supporting the particular type of greatness discourse in an overview of the multiple (dense) subsections of each chapter would have been very useful.

In the conclusion, Reshetnikov's analysis implies that Russian greatness discourses seem to comprise a set of fantasies that lock the Russian state in a vicious circle. The author argues that the discourse of greatness is mainly aimed at legitimizing the domestic regime and targets the domestic audience in order to mobilize it. The mobilization effort needs an enemy to blame for its failures to achieve greatness, and thus the discourse inevitably leads to conflict. The burden of the conflict falls on the population, which leads to a growing mismatch between the stated greatness and objective capabilities (pp. 225–7). As a result, Russia moves even further away from obtaining recognition as a great power, at least internationally. Currently, we see Russia as the property of its leadership, who claim the country's exceptionality and depart further from the internationally shared reality of facts. For Russia's leadership, the question is: for how long will the population of Russia accept the fantasy of some historical greatness, while devoting resources to killing its neighbours?

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Africa

Wealth, power, and authoritarian institutions: comparing dominant parties and parliaments in Tanzania and Uganda. By Michaela Collord. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2024. 320pp. £108.00. ISBN 9780 1 9285 518 3. Available as e-book.

In *Wealth, power, and authoritarian institutions*, Michaela Collord successfully moves beyond hackneyed issues in comparative east African politics. Instead of examining reasons for the relative lack of political violence in Tanzania and protracted armed conflicts plaguing Uganda, Collord redirects our attention towards their diverging institutional trajectories. The author uncovers how ruling elites within Tanzania's Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and Uganda's National Resistance Movement (NRM) pursued distinct forms of material accumulation that had long-term effects on executive–legislative power dynamics. Collord makes a strong case for political–institutional path dependencies as the result of the ways in which party leaders have accumulated and invested wealth.

In 1967 Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere put forward the Arusha Declaration that emphasized the political elements of socialism and self-reliance. In the years

that followed, TANU coalesced into an ‘institutionalized coalition’ that channelled material resources into party institutions and utilized those resources to further strengthen party structures (pp. 6–7 and 41–2). TANU was renamed Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in 1977 after merging with Zanzibar’s Afro-Shirazi Party. Party-building enabled the CCM to widen its administrative reach and reduce legislative bodies to subordinate functionaries. In contrast, Collord views Uganda’s NRM as a ‘bargained coalition’ in which wealth accumulation was far more decentralized. Material assets accrued into the hands of political barons who deployed it to construct patron–client networks (pp. 7, 41–2 and 48). NRM leaders mobilized these networks to compete for parliamentary seats, cabinet positions and government tenders. Hence, Collord claims that Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has more in common with former Kenyan president Jomo Kenyatta than with Paul Kagame in Rwanda (pp. 80–5 and 101–6). This is a fascinating comparison, but it has its limits. As Collord states, elite factional rivalries gradually tore Kenyatta’s Kenya African National Union apart, whereas in Uganda, Museveni played political factions off against each other more effectively and has remained in power for nearly 40 years (p. 131). In addition, loyalty to Museveni remains a requirement for access to state spoils, whereas disgruntled Kikuyu elites in Kenya managed to carve out and retain access to material assets despite open hostility to President Daniel arap Moi’s ruling coalition. Collord might also have underlined the fact that Museveni has far greater prestige as the leader of an armed liberation struggle than his political opponents.

Collord concentrates the bulk of her analysis on the institutional repercussions of diverging politicized accumulation. She posits that, while centralized resource accumulation made it much harder to construct an autonomous legislature in Tanzania, fragmented elite enrichment has made it almost impossible to instil party discipline in Uganda’s parliament. Indeed, NRM MPs have a vested interest in strengthening parliamentary autonomy to further consolidate their wealth. Greater legislative powers make them more marketable to political financiers eager to purchase their services. However, Museveni has thus far managed to tackle these challenges with a carrot-and-stick strategy that has contributed to a balance of forces within the NRM that favours him. How, when and if this balance will fundamentally shift remains to be seen.

Collord’s discussion of authoritarian discontinuities in Tanzania is more historically grounded. Administrative mismanagement and economic decline precipitated market-oriented structural reforms after 1985. Although Nyerere retained the CCM chairmanship until 1990—and did his best to slow down the transition to a free market economy—he could not prevent the emergence of a capitalist elite. Rather than reimpose party discipline, certain Tanzanian presidents played off corporate–political networks against each other as a means of dissipating political challenges to their supremacy. Such machinations kept Jakaya Kikwete in power (2005–15), yet severely weakened party coherence. Nonetheless, Collord is careful to note the resilience of central party structures. During John Magufuli’s restorationist administration (2015–21), the CCM reverted to traditional statist policies,

premised on government investments and tight regulatory controls on capital flows (pp. 251–6). Future presidents may well revert to similar methods to consolidate personal control over the Tanzanian economy.

Finally, Collord is sceptical regarding correlations between legislative strengthening and democratization. Although political processes in Tanzania and Uganda have widened to include more people, most parliamentarians were promptly captured by narrow interest groups. Politically connected corporate magnates continue to obtain economic advantages at the public's expense. On occasion, trade unions and civil society groups manage to leverage factional tensions among political elites to their advantage, but not in ways that make mass social uplift a top priority. Unless and until they distribute wealth downward, parliaments will not be drivers of fundamental change. In Collord's view, procedural political reforms in postcolonial African states allow elites to pursue exclusive enrichment by other means. Progressive forces must penetrate political and administrative institutions to achieve meaningful change.

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Western Asia

What really went wrong: the West and the failure of democracy in the Middle East. By Fawaz A. Gerges. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2024. 336pp. £25.00. ISBN 978 0 30025 957 5. Available as e-book.

In *What really went wrong*, Fawaz Gerges tackles the pressing question of why authoritarianism remains so deeply entrenched in the Middle East, decades after the emergence of its modern state system. Gerges argues that the region's crisis of governance is largely rooted in its relationship with the West, and specifically a series of US neo-colonial interventions that followed the retreat of colonialism in the 1940s and 1950s (p. 247). The book forms part of a growing body of literature in political science that de-exceptionalizes the Middle East and challenges longstanding notions of the region and its people as uniquely prone to violence and civil strife. Instead, Gerges sheds light on how western interventionism at the height of the Cold War—fuelled by pervasive anti-Soviet ideology and liberal capitalism—laid the foundations for the region's democratic failure.

The book starts with a detailed account of US Cold War foreign policy, tracing the ideological commitment of figures like President Dwight Eisenhower to force newly decolonized and non-aligned states to choose a side. Gerges also delves into their related preoccupation with 'taming' nationalist leaders in states that could threaten US economic interests, especially in terms of access to oil. The author shows how these drivers fuelled US interventionism in countries like Egypt and Iran, and the deliberate undermining or direct overthrow of their leaders. More crucially, Gerges highlights how these interventions hindered the turbulent processes that could have allowed democratization, accountability and greater political freedoms to flourish in the region. In effect, the author illustrates how