

CONFERENCE WITHIN THE CONFERENCE (CWC) AT SPSA 2019

DOMESTIC POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE AUTHORITARIAN CONTEXT

Although most of the human being have historically and geographically lived under authoritarian rule, majority of the studies in political science have focused on politics in democratic countries. This conference-within-the-conference tries to fill this hole in political science. Why have some authoritarian regimes been resilient (like China so far)? What makes authoritarian governments stay in power? How do institutions help the regime to sustain authoritarian rule, if at all? How do authoritarian regimes face the challenges from popular protests and democratization movements? Interestingly, many authoritarian regimes have faced social unrest, and they have been democratized in some cases while they have survived in other cases. What explanations would account for this variation? And are authoritarian states behave differently in international relations?

To answer these questions, the papers in the panels draw empirical evidence from politics in China, the Middle East, and other authoritarian countries. Panel 1 focuses on how rulers manage public opinion and popular participation to maintain the authoritarian regime, Panel 2 highlights the interactions between domestic politics and international relations in the authoritarian context, and Panel 3 explores the interactions between popular participation and foreign policy making in the context of China-U.S. relations.

PANEL 1: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REGIME RESILIENCE

Chair/Discussant: Hiroki Takeuchi (Southern Methodist University: htakeuch@smu.edu)

The Origins and Evolution of Social Surveillance in China

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There are two requirements for effective social monitoring in an authoritarian context: a precise and detailed enumeration of the groups of regime enemies that need to be monitored and the technological capacity to penetrate these groups. Political destabilization can occur either when groups are not identified as targets of monitoring or when the surveillance apparatus proves unable to successfully penetrate known groups that need to be monitored. This paper focuses on the origins and evolution of social surveillance in China. It makes two central claims. First, with regard to the origins of the surveillance system, it argues that politically destabilizing events in the 1950s stemmed from the failure to subject certain groups (for example, Tibetans) to monitoring. Second, with regards to contemporary China, it argues that despite the widely presumed panoptical surveillance capacity of the Chinese state, some groups (for example, Uighurs) remain poorly penetrated and thus present ongoing challenges for the security apparatus. The paper is based on internal circulation (*neibu*) materials from China.

Election Timing in Autocracy

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Previous work has focused on election timing in parliamentary democracies, assuming that governments are unable to manipulate election calendar of presidential elections. However, experiences in autocracies strongly suggest that autocrats arbitrarily decide the timing of both presidential and legislative elections. Building upon the literature of autocratic politics, we explore the determinants of election timing in autocracies. We argue that dictators who are concerned with the defection of ruling elites are more likely to call off-schedule elections, because elections provide a big chance for the dictator to generate a large scale of mass mobilization which leads to deterring the potential opponents from rebelling against the regime. We also expect that election timing is more likely to be manipulated in presidential elections than in parliamentary ones, because campaigns in presidential elections center on presidential candidates, allowing the dictator to demonstrate his image of invincibility effectively. Our data analysis suggests that autocrats suffering economic stagnation or newly joining elections tend to violate scheduled election dates and these associations become stronger in the case of presidential elections.

Institutional Analysis of Collective Leadership System in China: Authoritarian Politics, Institutions, and Time

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Drawing on theoretical insights from the growing literature on comparative authoritarianism, this paper aims to explain the institutional evolution of the Chinese collective leadership system (*jituan lingdao tizhi*) and offer a fresh, alternative assessment of the current state of Chinese leadership politics. By doing so, this paper also seeks to shed a new light on the extant discussion regarding the conditions under which collective rule arises and endures in authoritarian politics.

Previous studies of collective leadership in China have mainly focused either on the preference and strategy of individual leaders or on structural shifts in the composition and attributes of the political elite. While attempting to synthesize the earlier explanations, this paper seeks to identify the institutional foundation of collective leadership in China and explore how it has evolved over time under the influence of both leaders' strategic choices and the gradual yet broad transformation in the composition of the political elite.

In summary, this paper argues that the collective leadership system in China, bolstered both by the political will to avoid a personal dictatorship and constant institutional reforms in the cadre management system, has managed to endogenously generate a self-sustaining mechanism for its stable operation. Understanding the institutional development of the collective leadership system in China will provide a nuanced perspective into the role of institutions in shaping the political order of authoritarian regimes.

Can Repression Increase an Authoritarian Regime's Public Support? Evidence from a Survey Experiment

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Repression is a governing tool widely used by authoritarian regimes. Extant studies assume that repression is useful to the extent of generating fear that deters citizens from siding with the opposition in subversive activities. In this paper, I argue that the fear of repression can also yield a bandwagon effect; exposure to repression fear may prompt some citizens to side with the regime. I test my argument using a survey experiment, in which the Hong Kong-based respondents are exposed, by random assignment, to images of state repression. Using machine-learning techniques, I find heterogeneous responses toward the treatment. In particular, a sizable number of respondents in the treatment group show elevated interest in joining the ruling coalition.

PANEL 2: AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chair/Discussant: Yao-Yuan Yeh (University of St. Thomas: yehy@stthom.edu)

Wrecking Reimes, Empowering Dictators: The Impact of the ICC Arrest Warrant of President Bashir on Sudan's Foreign Policy

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The dramatic shifts in Sudan's foreign policy alignment since 2011 has been attributed to Bashir's search for expedient foreign relations with the Arab Gulf States in order to first mitigate the risks associated with Sudan's worsening economic crisis and second mend ties with the West, most notably the United States. Despite the fact that Sudan's geopolitical posture has succeeded in having the US lift its economic sanctions in October 2017, the Bashir regime's foreign policy behavior has caused a great deal of anxiety to the United States and the Gulf States. This paper argues that Bashir's ICC indictment issued in 2009 has played a significant role in shaping Bashir's foreign policy. In fact, as this paper shows, the primary goal of foreign policy formulation has shifted its focus from "regime survival" to "leader protection" from the ICC arrest warrant. The paper finds that the focus of Sudan's foreign policy to protect the president can best explain the controversial and contradictory decisions that characterized Sudan's foreign policy in the last five years.

Where Is the Other Half of the Sky? The Power of Gender in the China Dream

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This paper examines how women have fared in the new era of reform categorized as the "China Dream" under the leadership of President Xi Jinping. The 19th Party Congress that concluded October 18, 2017 set forth a plan to usher in a new era focusing on the rise of China both economically and militarily. Xi consolidated power, eliminated rivals in an ambitious anti-

corruption campaign, and tightened control over civil society. These moves resemble actions taken by Mao Zedong during the height of his rule, yet the difference is that authoritarianism is somewhat incompatible with the desire to deepen economic development. Moreover, globalization has made it more difficult for the state to restrict information and insulate China from external forces. I have argued the Chinese Communist Party's power relies on its ability to deliver to its people economically, keeping them happy and consuming without ideas of political change. This has been particularly difficult with the various democracy movements and color revolutions that have challenged or displaced authoritarian regimes worldwide.

One group of individuals who both are overlooked and represent a potential challenge to the state in this process are women. However, this line of inquiry on challenges to the political authority/power of the Party/state cannot easily be examined in a direct way, therefore must be addressed indirectly by analyzing the force women pose as a group both economically and socially. The different areas that are part of this project involve examining the role of women in the economy, NGOs that relate to women's issues, and the position of women in politics. As part of a larger project, this paper will focus on the middle section and the development of civil society around women's interests. More specifically, the areas of domestic violence and sexual harassment have received significant attention among women's groups, and serve as a nice comparison to the American context.

In this paper I argue women have lagged behind men and face enormous difficulties in their private sphere life, have few acceptable outlets to express these concerns, and lack the representation politically to give them a larger formal voice. While they do not represent the largest nor even the most powerful threat to the state, they are one piece of the development puzzle that has been ignored and as a group they are experiencing challenges that make them a catalyst for change.

The Evolution from Authoritarian Dominant-Party System to Strongman Politics: The Case of Egypt

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While many studies have observed how the regime of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's differs from those of Mubarak, Sadat and Nasser, scholars have not yet conceptualized the transformation of Egypt's political system since 2011. This paper utilizes the literature on authoritarianism to argue that Egypt's political system after the fall of President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 has evolved from a dominant-party electoral system to personalized politics in a military state. The paper explores the dynamics of internal and external politics, the structural basis of regime consolidation, and the transformation of patron-client relations networks by which Sisi gained absolute power after the military overthrew Muhammad Morsi in July 2013. With the Muslim Brotherhood crushed and forced into exile, and the non-Islamist forces severely repressed and fragmented, there is little prospect for a mobilized and organized opposition to challenge Sisi's rule.

China's Vietnam War: A Domestic Politics Perspective

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This study examines the role elite factional struggles in Beijing played in China's decision to attack Vietnam in 1979. Whereas existing studies have clarified the geopolitical context and the influence of China's international relations with other states, this one explains the domestic political dynamics and rationale that underpinned the decision to "teach Vietnam a lesson." To establish whether causation exists, this study conducts a careful investigation of the relationship between the decision to go to war and the power struggle between Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping. Process tracing, a fundamental tool of qualitative research, is used to contextualize the sequence of the "two-line" factional struggle from 1959–1982, that is, in the lead up to, during, and in the aftermath of the war. Each of six distinct stages in the causal process is carefully described in an effort to elucidate how Chinese domestic politics influenced the decision to go to war. This study concludes that, in addition to international considerations, Deng Xiaoping and his coalition strongly supported the attack on Vietnam because it gave them a political advantage over Hua and his supporters, and because it allowed them to accelerate military modernization and de-Maoification.

PANEL 3: CHINESE AUTHORITARIANISM AND CHINA-U.S. RELATIONS

Chair/Discussant: Martin K. Dimitrov (Tulane University: mdimitro@tulane.edu)

Geopolitics, Nationalism, and Foreign Direct Investment: Perceptions of the China Threat and American Public Attitudes Toward Chinese FDI

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The rapid increase in Chinese outbound foreign direct investment (FDI) in recent years has prompted growing scholarly interest in its economic and political implications for host countries. However, relatively little attention has been directed to how concerns over the rise of China may be shaping public attitudes toward such investment. This paper tests the link between threat perception and preferences for FDI in the United States. We argue that perceptions of the China threat negatively affect how the American public views the impact of incoming Chinese FDI, due to heightened geopolitical concerns and nationalism. Using a survey experiment, we show that respondents are indeed less likely to support Chinese FDI when primed with information that highlights the security and economic threats posed by China than those receiving no such priming. Furthermore, causal mediation analyses reveal that the treatment effects of security and economic threats are mediated by respondents' concerns about the challenges that Chinese FDI poses to national security as well as to American firms and jobs, values and institutions.

Classical Realism in the Case of China: How Politics Within Nations Shapes Emerging Politics Among Nations

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By examining nationalism and the variables which affect its influence, classical realism explains how policy entrepreneurs in an authoritarian regime can aggregate power and centralize control over foreign policy. China's behavior in the South and East China Seas reflects the growing salience of nationalism in its foreign policy, expressed and leveraged by Xi Jinping. Appealing to Chinese grievances over the Century of Humiliation, Xi has not only centralized control over Chinese territorial assertions, but has leveraged the issue to aggregate power to himself. This often involves appealing to national identity and responding to international competition. Our paper suggests China's actions in the South and East China Seas reflects the growing salience of nationalism in its foreign policy. We show that Chinese foreign policy conforms to classical realist assumptions. The paper begins by examining classical realist theory found in Hans Morgenthau. We demonstrate that a realist framework is best suited for understanding Xi's cultivation of the Chinese national identity and the use of maritime tensions to centralize government control.

When the United States Has Become the Epicenter of Uncertainty, What Happens to China-U.S. Relations

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As a result of the election of Donald Trump to be the U.S. President, the United States has become the epicenter of uncertainty against liberal international order. Although the Trump administration's decision-making lacks consistency, unfortunately it has consistency in anti-internationalism, anti-institutionalism, and unpredictability. So what happens in China-U.S. relations? In this paper, I make a game-theoretic analysis to explore this issue. I develop my argument in four steps. First, I suggest that China is concerned with the internal threat of domestic instability, rather than the external threat in international politics. Second, I speculate the worst case scenario in China-U.S. relations under the condition that both China and the United States are confronted with the challenges stemming from their unstable domestic politics. Third, I examine whether China can play a decisive role in the new international order, replacing the United States, which has played the role since the end of World War II. Finally, I turn to the question of who will take over the driver's seat of international order while the United States opts for the backseat after declaring the slogan of "America First." Because this is a one-time situation, one cannot collect sufficient empirical data. Hence, a game-theoretic analysis is suitable for this research.

When Soft Power Turns Sharp: How Chinese Sharp Power Alters Citizen's Perception in the United States

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Since Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig of the National Endowment for Democracy coined the term “sharp power” to describe how authoritarian states such as China and Russia can utilize soft power tools (e.g., news media, cultures, and/or values) to alter public perceptions and behavior in foreign states, this concept has generated debates and concerns both within policymakers and scholars. However, the psychological foundation and an adequate empirical assessment of sharp power remain under-researched. We argue that the impact of sharp power varies in accordance with citizens’ partisanship and their prior perception of the foreign nation. To test our theory, we implemented an online survey experiment in June 2018, with 959 respondents. The respondents were randomly assigned into one of the three groups, a group about Chinese soft/sharp power (Chinese Confucius Institute), another about Chinese hard power (Chinese rising military capability), and a control group with no framing information. Our empirical findings provide strong support for the theory, and our paper ends with substantive policy implications.