

CP² Week 3: Structures of the Party-State

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Welcome back



Happy Spring Festival!

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1823-2023 

Assessment I: Learning journal (30%)

- ▶ Read a published peer-review article in leading political science and comparative politics journals to learn how China is researched and compared and answer three questions using up to 1,000 words (max).
 - Choose an article from the list of journals; the article needs to be published after 2010 and explicitly compares China to one or more countries in the world
 - Bring the article to **Week 7** class to share with everyone
 - Read the article answer the questions

- ▶ American Political Science Review
- ▶ British Journal of Political Science
- ▶ Comparative Politics
- ▶ Comparative Political Studies
- ▶ Japanese Journal of Political Science
- ▶ Journal of Chinese Political Science
- ▶ Journal of East Asian Studies
- ▶ Journal of Politics
- ▶ Political Research Quarterly
- ▶ Studies in Comparative International Development
- ▶ World Politics

- ▶ In your words, **explain why the author(s) think China can be compared with the country (or countries)** included in the article. Can you **identify a different country** that can be included using the same comparative logic? Do you agree with such a comparison? Discuss.

- ▶ In your words, **explain why the author(s) think China can be compared with the country (or countries)** included in the article. Can you **identify a different country** that can be included using the same comparative logic? Do you agree with such a comparison? Discuss.
- ▶ **Utilize Google Scholar to explore how other scholars have cited the article you select.** What are some common themes among these articles? Is the article you choose predominantly cited by scholars who specialize in China, or has it also garnered attention from scholars who do not focus on China? Do you believe that the article, while centered on China, holds broader implications for scholars who study countries other than China? Discuss.

Week 3: Party-state Structures

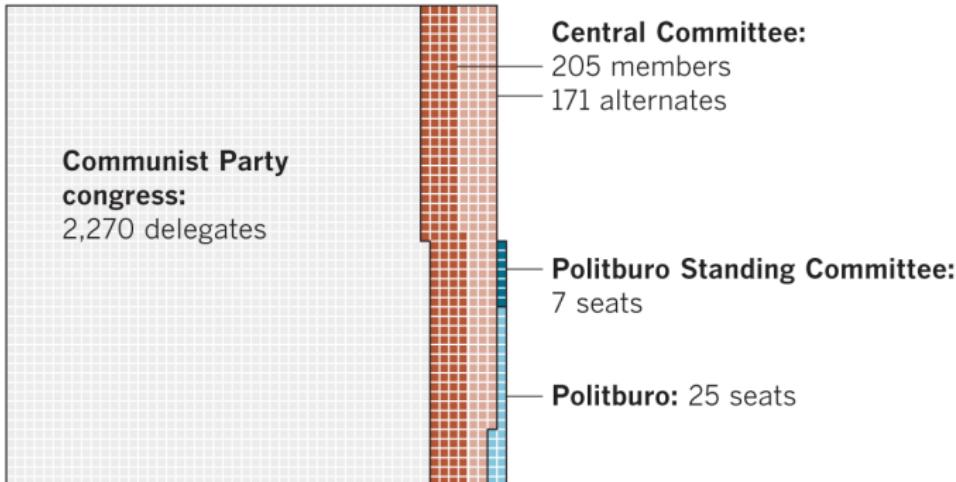


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The Party's Central Leadership

- ▶ The highest decision-making body is the **Standing Committee** of the **Politburo**, headed by the **General Secretary**, under them there are
 - Central Party Offices: General, Organization (*nomenklukla*), Propaganda (Publicity), United Front and Intl Liaison
 - Secretariat (i.e., secretary of individual Politburo SC members)
 - Central Military Commission
 - Central Commission for Discipline Inspection
 - Leading Small Groups
- ▶ The **General Secretary** is "elected" during the First Plenum (or **Plenary** session) of the **Central Committee**
- ▶ The delegates of the **National Party Congress**, which meets every five years, elect the **Central Committee**
- ▶ The **General Secretary** only became the highest leader of China after 1992 under **Jiang Zemin**

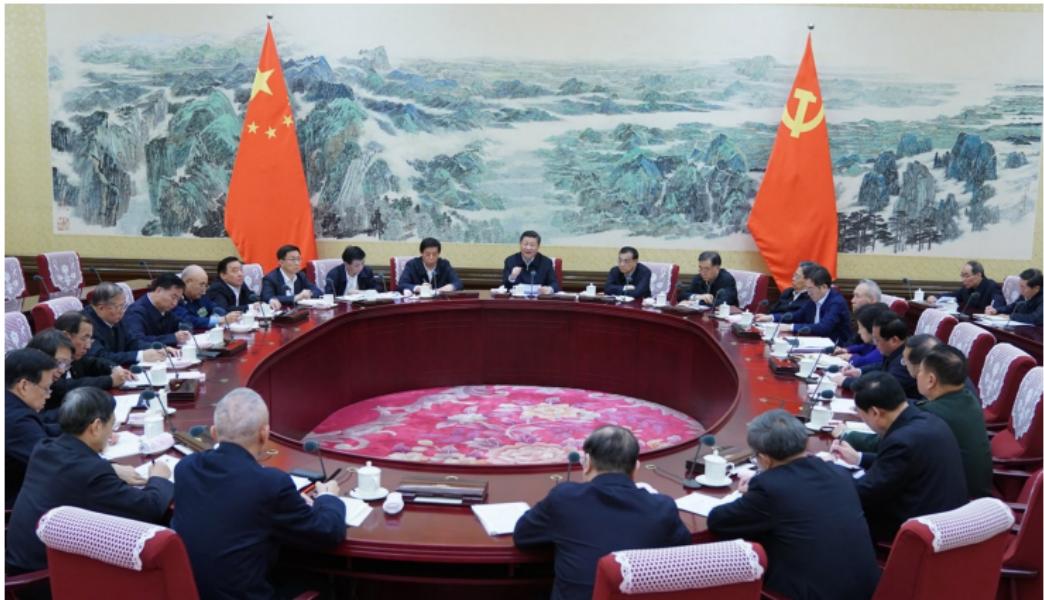
China's Communist Party congress (as of 2012)



Source: Los Angeles Times reporting

Angelica Quintero / @latimesgraphics

The selection process illustrates the notion of "**democratic centralism**"
(see "more candidates than available seats" elections)



Politburo is the apex of the system

中国共产党第二十届中央组织结构图



<http://cpc.people.com.cn/>



The Central State

- ▶ Legislature: National People's Congress (NPC)
 - Meets every year in Beijing
 - Elects the **President** and ruling cadres of other state organs every five years
 - Provides descriptive representation of different social groups and parties
 - Operates daily through the Standing Committee
 - Functions as a legislature through Special Committees
- ▶ Executive: The State Council
 - Headed by the **Premier** (or Prime Minister), appointed by the **President** and approved by NPC
 - Operates through Ministries and different central commissions and Leading Small Groups



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The First Meeting of the 14th National People's Congress in March 2023

Party-state: Key characteristics and debates

- ▶ Party-state is a concept to characterize the Party's leading position in the Chinese political system
 - **Party committee** is present in every government department and office
 - The central Party offices "manage" and coordinate different functional government departments (e.g., Propaganda/Publicity and Ministry of Education)
 - Leading Working Groups reported to the Party center
 - Key central leaders also have posts in the State (e.g., the Politburo members)
 - Some key important offices are separately listed but actually the same one (e.g., Central Military Commission)
 - Some key Party and government offices work jointly despite being two different offices (e.g., Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the Ministry of Supervision)
- ▶ Scholars in China and the Party prefer to use the term "**Party-government**" to demonstrate the Party's extensive presence in the Chinese bureaucracy and government administration

Institutionalization of the Party-state over generations

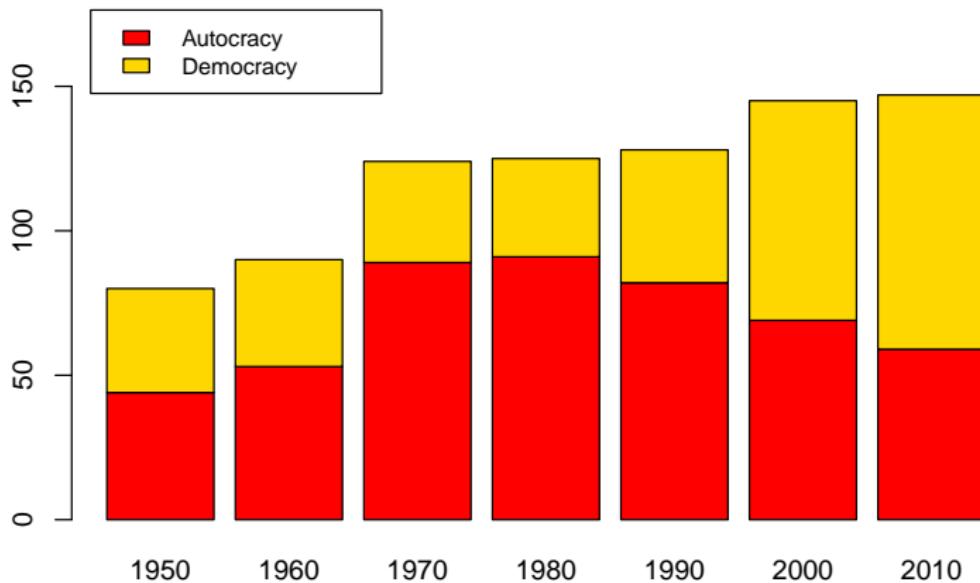
- ▶ Political succession, developed by Deng and confirmed in the early 1990s
 - Term limit (except the President and Vice-President)
 - Retirement age
 - Successor-in-training
 - Grandpa-designated successor
 - Comprehensive takeover
- ▶ Collective leadership, established by Deng after the Cultural Revolution

Defining authoritarian regimes (Geddes et al 2015)

- ▶ An executive achieved power through **undemocratic means** (anything other than direct, reasonably fair, competitive elections)
- ▶ The government achieved power through democratic means, but subsequently **changed the formal or informal rules**
- ▶ The **military** prevented parties that substantial numbers of citizens would be expected to vote for from competing and/or dictated important policy choices

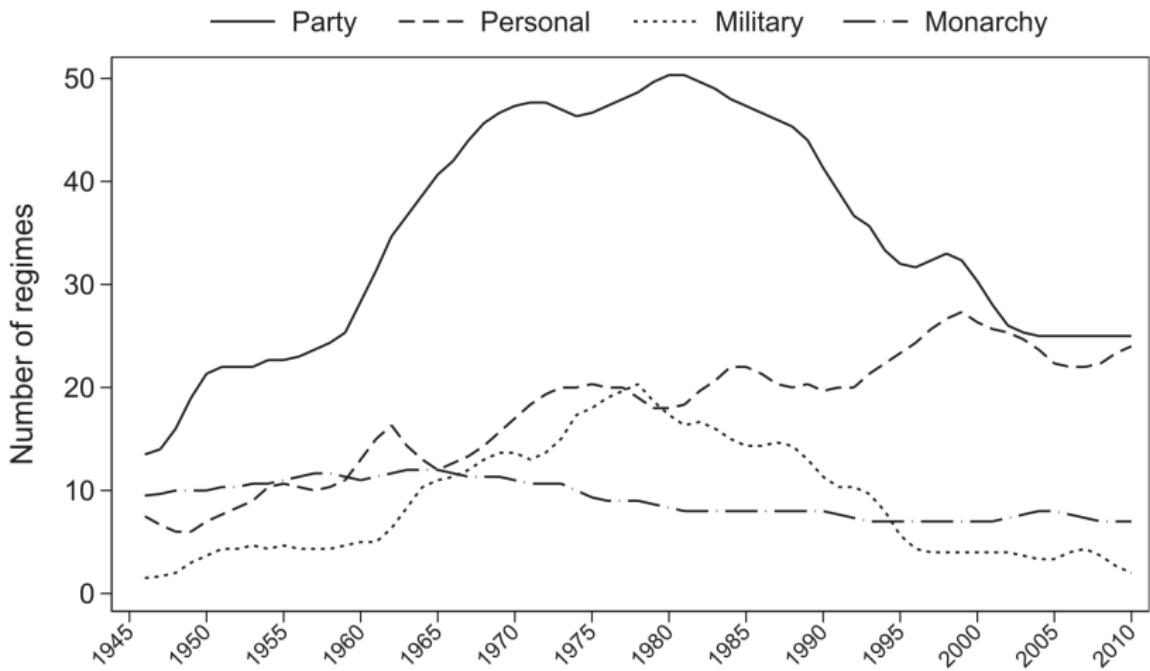


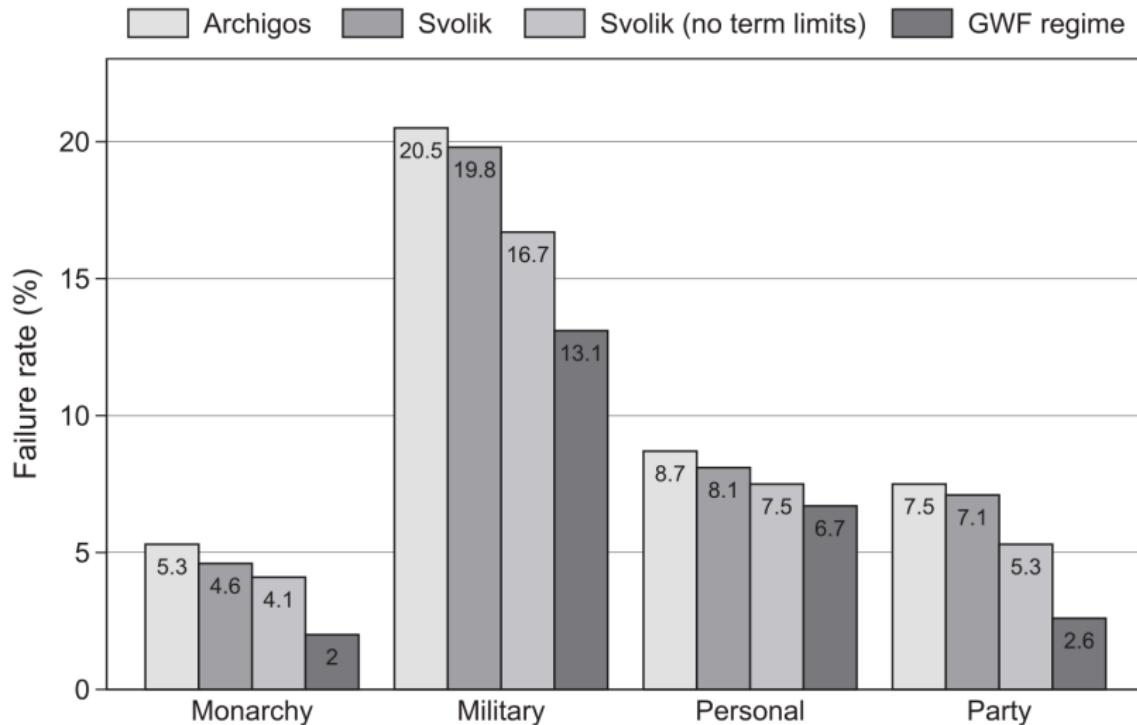
Autocracy vs. Democracy in the World (Geddes et al)



Varieties of authoritarian regimes

- ▶ **Personalist**: Access to office and fruits of office depends on much more the discretion of an individual leader; not identical with **Monarchy**
- ▶ **Military**: A group of officers (e.g., junta) decides who will rule and exercise some influence on policy; carrying with the seeds of disintegration on their own while elites in other two types of regime have more incentives to cooperate with each other
- ▶ **Single-party** (or hegemonic party): Access to political office and control over policy are dominated by one party, though other parties may legally exist and compete in elections
- ▶ **Mixed** or hybrid





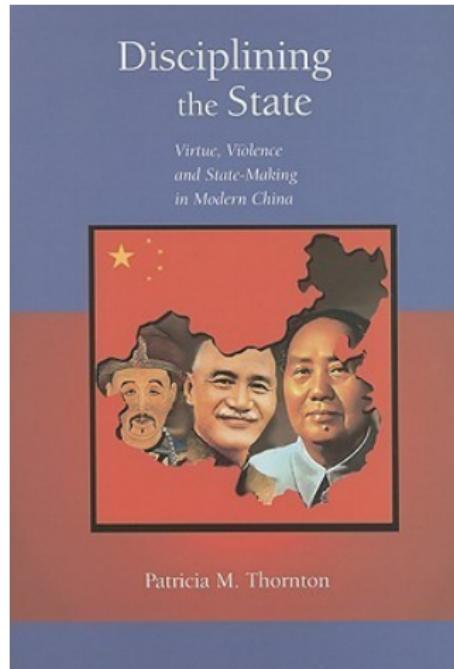
What makes single-party regimes special

- ▶ Key to survival is to make sure elite cohesion through rents and economic success (especially in the case of China)
- ▶ Single-party regimes favor internal and societal co-optation
 - Party holds organizational capacity to control the career paths of officials, organizes the distribution of benefits to supporters, and mobilizes citizens to show support for party leaders in other ways
 - Party cadres simply want to hold their offices and tend to stand by to observe the winners of internal struggle
 - Party has broad basis of popular support and has the institutional and organizational sources to stay responsive and co-opt for greater participation (Ghandi 2008)
- ▶ Caveat: Parties with weak opposition and easy rent access (e.g., the Philippines) tend to be divided and collapse (Smith 2005)

“The Institutional Turn in Comparative Authoritarianism” (Penpinsky 2014)

- ▶ Why institutions matter for authoritarian survival?
 - Institutions are constraints: Elections, parties and legislatures contain factional conflicts while regulating the mobilization of mass support
 - Institutions are dictator's instruments: They do what their creators want them to do (e.g., co-optation and power distribution) and can be adjusted
- ▶ Why institutions are important for the study of comparative authoritarianism
 - Path dependence and increasing returns: Institutions reproduce the political and social order
 - Institutions shed light on problems of redistribution and policy making that motivate regime behavior

Discussion: “Party All the Time” (Thornton 2021)



- ▶ What are some of the key differences between being a ruling party and a revolutionary party?
- ▶ How does CCP manage to succeed both as a revolutionary before 1949 and as a ruling party after the PRC was established?
- ▶ Why do many authoritarian leaders rule through the party? How do they build their parties?

Concluding remarks: More questions to think about

- ▶ Institutional durability and changes in authoritarian regimes
- ▶ One-party dominant regime (e.g., Japan and Italy) and hegemonic party regime (e.g., Mexico and China)
- ▶ Domestic politics and foreign policy

See you next week!

