

PS811 Exercise 3

Mingcong Pan¹

¹ University of Wisconsin-Madison

Author Note

This is a submission for exercise 3 of PS 811 at UW-Madison.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mingcong Pan, Postal
address. E-mail: my@email.com

PS811 Exercise 3

Readings for Political Science 856, Field Seminar in Comparative Politics

The following readings are drawn from PS 856, Week 5 Regime Types: Definitions and Trajectories.

Przeworski (2010)

In his book introduction, Przeworski (2010) goes through the history of democratic ideals and democracies and discusses various definitions of democracy and democrat, among which he tends to rely on the definition of the self-government of the people. He notices the divergence between what protagonists said and what they did and tries to solve the conundrum by appealing to protagonists' personal interests. This book is among those working on the limits of democracy: the author draws several challenges faced by contemporary democracy and its limitations. Though this introduction is very general, there are some places that he can improve. The author mainly takes personal interests as the driving force of protagonists' actions, but people's ideology certainly also plays a role. The author discusses democracy's limitation in terms of achieving equality, participation, representation, and liberty without comparing to other regimes' capacity in these areas.

Svolik (2012)

Contrasting with Przeworski (2010), Svolik (2012) works on the definition and typology of authoritarian regimes. He identifies two conflicts fundamentally shape authoritarian politics—the one between ruler and the people being ruled and the other between dictators and his ruling coalition. He criticizes earlier typologies and develops his own typology. Svolik strongly prefers a dichotomy of democracy and authoritarianism. I can see his point but still don't fully agree—if we consider the democracies and the authoritarian countries that are very close to the arbitrary dividing line, they are more similar to each other than the most democratic and authoritarian states.

33 **Grzymala-Busse (2017)**

34 Working under the concept of democracy, Grzymala-Busse (2017) discusses the case of
35 populisms and their impact. She argued that populisms have several forms but with similar
36 roots. She raises three worries associated with global populisms, especially the possibility
37 that populisms can erode and undermine both democratic institutions and informal liberal
38 norms. Her work carries importance under the current wave of global populisms. If she can
39 summarize her thinking in a more formal and structural way, she may be able to test her theory
40 or predictions empirically and it may help people to build their works on hers. But I can
41 understand what she can find is restricted by the way she chose to proceed with this article.

42 **Lindberg, Coppedge, Gerring, and Teorell (2014)**

43 With definitions defined and typologies invented, social scientists cannot conduct
44 empirical research without measures of democracy and autocracy. The introductory paper
45 on the V-Dem project briefs us the uniqueness of V-Dem as a cross-country database on
46 democracy measures for a long time period. V-Dem measures democracy from five
47 dimensions—electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative and egalitarian—with both thin
48 and thick versions. They argued V-Dem is the only dataset combines all five. V-Dem also
49 includes the sub-components of those aggregated measures. As a result, it enables us both to
50 “drill down” the aggregated macro pattern and “zoom in” particular time periods. V-Dem is
51 an excellent database while it has one shortcoming that may be shared by other similar
52 cross-country databases—the incomparability of country experts’ subjective scores on
53 different countries, especially when they are scored by different country experts.

54 **Boix and Stokes (2003)**

55 In their 2003 paper, Boix and Stokes (2003) falsifies the previous literature by doing
56 three robustness checks on their paper and argue that both the “exogenous” and the
57 “endogenous” theories work at the same time—development increases the possibility of

democratic survival and also increases the possibility for authoritarian countries to transit into democracies. Their analyses are reasonable, but they fail to control for country-specific factors which may both affect development and democratization.

Svolik (2008)

Svolik (2008) digs a bit deeper in the sense that he distinguishes between two cases: democracies that survive because they are consolidated and those democracies that are not consolidated but survive due to other reasons. Different from earlier studies that mainly take democracies as homogenous, his work assumes the existence of both consolidated and unconsolidated countries in the democracies we observed. This work still suffers a bit from his insistence of using a binary measure for democracy—such kind of measures are arbitrary and may lose a lot of information. And his definition of consolidated democracy is also a bit weird: a consolidated democracy in his analyses is permanently immune from authoritarian reversals but in fact a consolidated democracy can transit into unconsolidated one and also may subject to authoritarian reversals.

Haber and Menaldo (2011)

Instead of working on democratic transition and consolidation, Haber and Menaldo (2011) study whether natural resources fuel authoritarianism. Their work is more like an applied statistical exercise in which they reject the resource curse story. They also control for country-specific and time-invariant factors by fixed effects in their panel analyses—an advancement on previous studies. The sample of their analyses changes several times from the 53 resource reliance countries in their earlier analyses to the 18 major oil and mineral producers in their time-series analyses to world panel in their panel analyses. It causes confusion and worries about unrepresentative samples. The instrumental variable (oil reserves) they use to instrument total oil income is problematic since oil reserves is correlated with geographic factors and they may affect regime via channels in addition to the one through total oil income.

84 Magaloni (2008)

85 In her 2008 paper, Magaloni (2008) uncovers the dictator's dilemma in the sense that
86 dictators cannot be free from the threats from potential rivals by standard power-sharing
87 arrangements. On top of this, she proposes party as a device for dictators to make credible
88 commitments and she also finds some empirical evidences. However, in her analyses she does
89 not control for other factors that may affect authoritarian survival. This weakens the power
90 of her empirical evidences.

91 Truex (2017)

92 Differentiated from purely democratic or authoritarian regimes, Truex (2017) explores
93 China as a case of "consultative authoritarianism." He conducts an experiment to test to
94 what extent the exposure to online participation portals will change people's view on the
95 government and the regime. His experiment is straightforward, but the problems also arise
96 from the straightforward design: he finds that the treatment group who view the screenshot
97 of the portal tend to report higher assessments on the government and regime, but this effect
98 may be due to people's self-censoring activity after seeing this government information in
99 authoritarian China which they may take as a dangerous signal. His interpretations on his
100 empirical patterns are only of the multiple explanations and he cannot prove or falsify any of
101 them. For example, the weaker change in party members' assessments may also due to the
102 fact that they have been very loyal to the party and as a result have little room to
103 change/improve their assessments.

104 Chung-Hon Shih (2008)

105 In authoritarian countries, political leaders face the information collection problem.
106 Chung-Hon Shih (2008) criticizes previous explanations on how leaders monitor the loyalty
107 of followers, and he identifies personal ideological campaigns as a channel for loyalty
108 monitoring. However, his empirical analyses on Jiang Zemin's campaign is totally

109 disconnected with his theory in two ways. Firstly, his empirical exercise finds that certain
110 government newspapers cover more of Jiang's campaign without justifying why the campaign
111 itself is a channel for monitoring loyalty. Secondly, his interpretations of the variations in
112 report coverage are problematic. For example, richer areas report less on Jiang's campaign
113 may be a simple modernization story rather than the case that richer areas have more
114 alternative methods to express loyalty as the author argues.

References

- Boix, C., & Stokes, S. C. (2003). Endogenous Democratization. *World Politics*, 55(4), 517–549. <https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2003.0019>
- Chung-Hon Shih, V. (2008). “Nauseating” Displays of Loyalty: Monitoring the Factional Bargain through Ideological Campaigns in China. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(4), 1177–1192. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608081139>
- Grzymala-Busse, A. (2017). Global Populisms and Their Impact. *Slavic Review*, 76(S1), S3–S8. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2017.152>
- Haber, S., & Menaldo, V. (2011). Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism? A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse. *American Political Science Review*, 105(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000584>
- Lindberg, S. I., Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., & Teorell, J. (2014). V-Dem: A New Way to Measure Democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 25(3), 159–169. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2014.0040>
- Magaloni, B. (2008). Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(4-5), 715–741. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414007313124>
- Przeworski, A. (2010). *Democracy and the Limits of Self-government*. Cambridge University Press.
- Svolik, M. (2008). Authoritarian Reversals and Democratic Consolidation. *American Political Science Review*, 102(2), 153–168. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055408080143>

- 137 Svolik, M. (2012). *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge
138 University Press.
- 139 Truex, R. (2017). Consultative Authoritarianism and Its Limits. *Comparative*
140 *Political Studies*, 50(3), 329–361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414014534196>