

Why Do Authoritarian Regimes Provide Welfare Programs?

Sanghoon Park ¹

¹University of South Carolina
Department of Political Science

February 24, 2020

Summary

1 Research Question

2 Theory

3 Data and Empirical Specification

Research Question

- Existing Studies of welfare assume fully democratic regime.
 - Compensations
 - Median Voters
 - Power resources
- How can we explain
 - why authoritarian regimes provide welfare programs?
 - the variations of authoritarian welfare states?

Understanding of Welfare states

Definition

- A state in which organized power is deliberately used to modify the play of market forces.
- Minimum income, social insurance, and universal services
- The structure of class coalitions presses govt. toward specific types of welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1990).
- For example, red-green alliance of Sweden → Universal welfare programs.

Welfare Regimes in Autocracies

- Leaders maintain their coalitions of supporters by public and private goods (Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow and Smith 2003).
- Autocracies are not same in terms of coalition buildings (Gandhi and Lust-okar 2009; Levitsky and Way 2010).
- Autocrats also have incentives to provide public goods to their citizens (Wintrobe 1998)

The problem is ***who is the target autocrats should care.***

Classes

In authoritarian regimes,

- the welfare might be the same as the means to co-opt the classes from selectorate for ruling coalitions.
- The extent to universal welfare programs depends on which class the regime should co-opt.

Assumption of the class: individuals in similar socioeconomic strata are more likely to have converging preferences over social policies.

- Income based: **the middle class** and **working class**
- Institutional based: **The party elite** and **military**

Classes

- 1 The middle class can be heterogeneous group depending on whether it is based on rural or urban area. (Dahlum, Knutsen and Wig 2019).
 - The urban middle class has higher leverage for autocracies as they have motivations and capability for regime transition.
- 2 The working class
 - The rural working class is not free from the urbanization or industrialization.
 - Elites have tried to co-opt both (e.g., the Russian Revolution).
- 3 The party elite and the military
 - Specific institutions create a class of elites with distinct interests and incentives.

Class Coalitions

- The different classes that autocrats need to co-opt → Variety of welfare programs.
 - Previous democratization literature emphasizes the threats of the middle class.
 - This study focus on the working class which have preference for extensive welfare.
 - The working class is more sensitive to the change in the distribution of wealth and welfare since it depends primarily on the labor force.
- Hypotheses (H_1): If all other conditions are the same, the working class's inference on universal welfare programs is greater than the middle class.

Alternative: Party Institutionalization

- Recent works focus on capacity of parties to provide public goods.
 - The more autocrats with institutionalized parties want to maintain power, the more likely they are to run universal welfare programs (Rasmussen and Knutsen 2019).
 - Institutionalized party can help autocrats to distribute resources to their citizens.
- Hypotheses (H_2): If all other conditions are the same, the higher levels of party institutionalization increase the universality of welfare programs.

Sample Selection

Authoritarian Regimes:

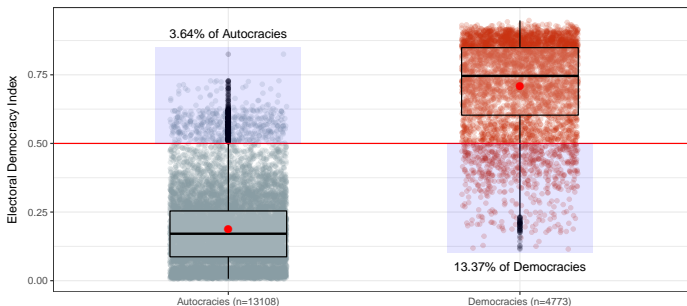


Figure: The distribution of Democracies and Autocracies

Sample Selection

After the Russian Revolution of 1917:

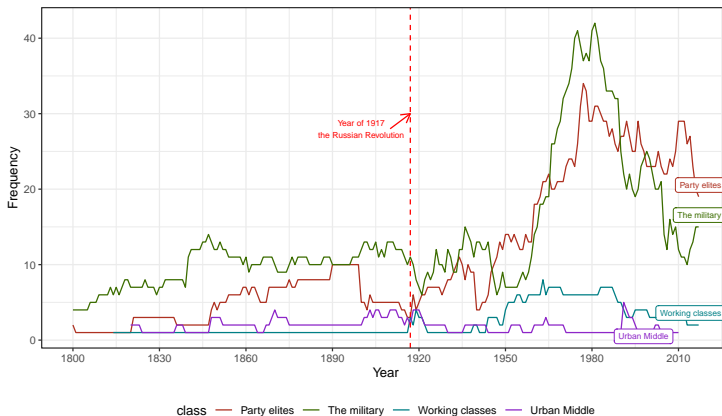


Figure: The distribution of Democracies and Autocracies