

# Why Do Authoritarian Regimes Provide Welfare Programs?

Sanghoon Park <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of South Carolina  
Department of Political Science

April 7, 2020

# Research Question

- Existing studies of welfare assume fully democratic regimes.

# Research Question

- Existing studies of welfare assume fully democratic regimes.
  - Compensations
  - Median voters
  - Power resources

# Research Question

- Existing studies of welfare assume fully democratic regimes.
  - Compensations
  - Median voters
  - Power resources
- How can we explain the following questions?
  - Why do authoritarian regimes provide welfare?
  - Are there variations of authoritarian welfare states?

# Welfare Regimes in Autocracies

- The structure of class coalitions presses govt. toward specific types of welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990).
  - For example, red-green alliance of Sweden → universal
- Leaders maintain coalitions of supporters by public, private goods (Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow and Smith 2003).

# Welfare Regimes in Autocracies

- Autocracies have different coalitions (Gandhi and Lust-okar 2009; Levitsky and Way 2010).
- Autocrats also have incentives to provide public goods (Olson 1993; Wintrobe 1998)

# Welfare Regimes in Autocracies

The problem is:

# Welfare Regimes in Autocracies

The problem is: ***who is the target?***



# Classes

In authoritarian regimes,

- Welfare = Co-optation
- Extent of welfare depends on class.

Assumption: individuals in similar strata have converging preferences over social policies.

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

# Classes

## 1 **Urban middle** and **urban working** classes

- Urban classes → Higher leverages (Dahlum, Knutsen and Wig 2019).
- Different social life → Different welfare demands

## 2 **Party elite** and **military**

- Specific institutions create class of elites with distinct interests, incentives.

# Class Coalitions

- Different classes → Different welfare demands.
  - Democratization literature emphasizes threats of middle class.
  - Working class prefers more extensive welfare than middle.
    - Working class more sensitive to change in distribution of wealth, welfare.

# Class Coalitions

- Different classes → Different welfare demands.
  - Democratization literature emphasizes threats of middle class.
  - Working class prefers more extensive welfare than middle.
    - Working class more sensitive to change in distribution of wealth, welfare.
- $H_1$ : Urban working class has greater influence on universal welfare programs than middle class.

# Party Institutionalization

- Recent works focus on capacity of parties to provide public goods.
  - Autocrats with institutionalized parties → universal welfare programs (Rasmussen and Knutsen 2019).
  - Institutionalized party helps distribute resources.

# Party Institutionalization

- Recent works focus on capacity of parties to provide public goods.
  - Autocrats with institutionalized parties → universal welfare programs (Rasmussen and Knutsen 2019).
  - Institutionalized party helps distribute resources.
- $H_2$ : Higher levels of party institutionalization increase welfare programs universality.

# Class Coalition & Party Institutionalization

- Institutionalized parties can aggregate the demands of working classes in a more organized and efficient way.
- Autocrats can handle the class coalition using institutionalized party.

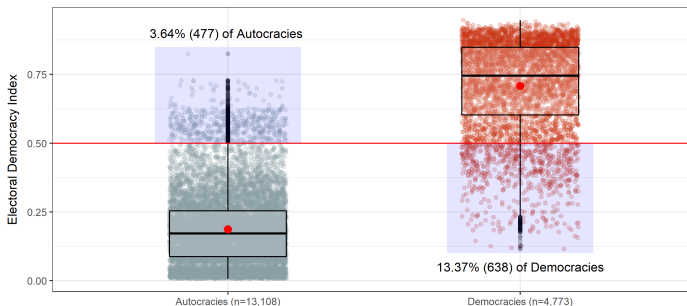
# Class Coalition & Party Institutionalization

- Institutionalized parties can aggregate the demands of working classes in a more organized and efficient way.
- Autocrats can handle the class coalition using institutionalized party.
- $H_3$ : Influence of urban working class on universal welfare is greater when party institutionalization increases.



# Sample Selection

## Authoritarian Regimes:



**Figure:** The distribution of Democracies and Autocracies

# Sample Selection

After the Russian Revolution of 1917:

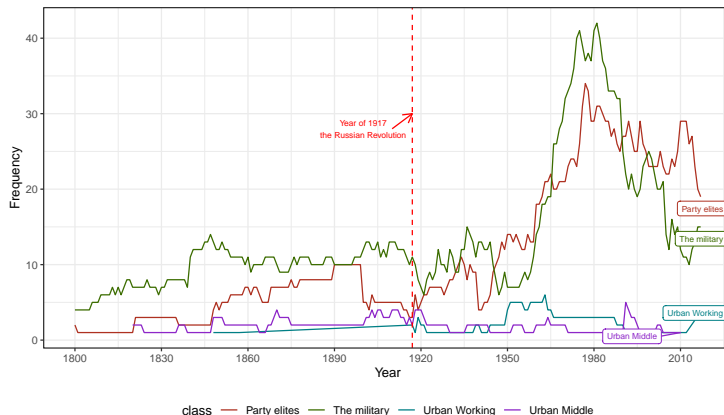
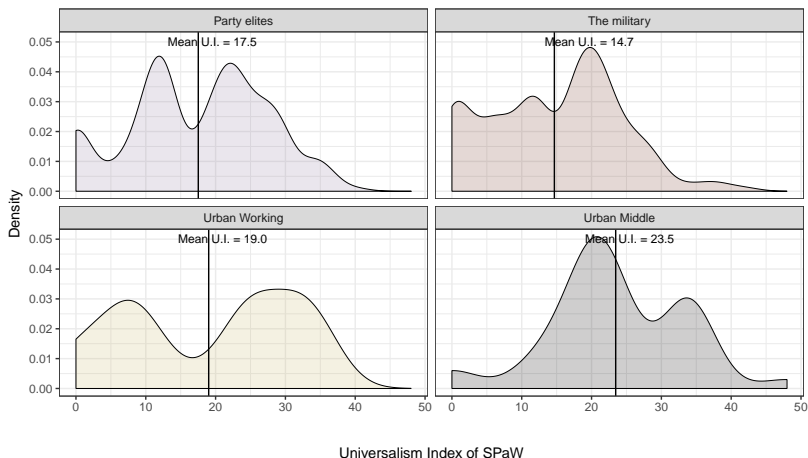


Figure: Time trends of the numbers of states by classes

# Dataset and methods

- Coverage: 95 authoritarian states from 1917-2000 (unbalanced)
- Sources of data
  - Social Policies around the World (SPaW) data set
  - Variety of Democracies (V-Dem) data set
- Variable
  - DV: Welfare programs (social coverage)
  - EV: Class coalitions (urban working, urban middle, party elites, and military)
  - CV: Logged GDP per capita (V-Dem), logged of population, and resource dependence (Miller 2015)

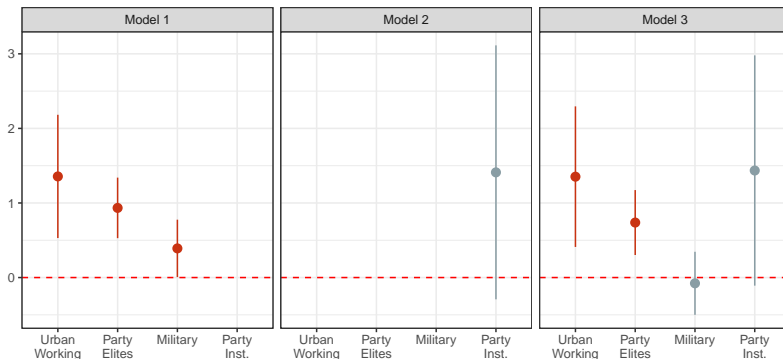
# Dataset and methods



**Figure:** The distribution of universal indices by classes in Autocracies

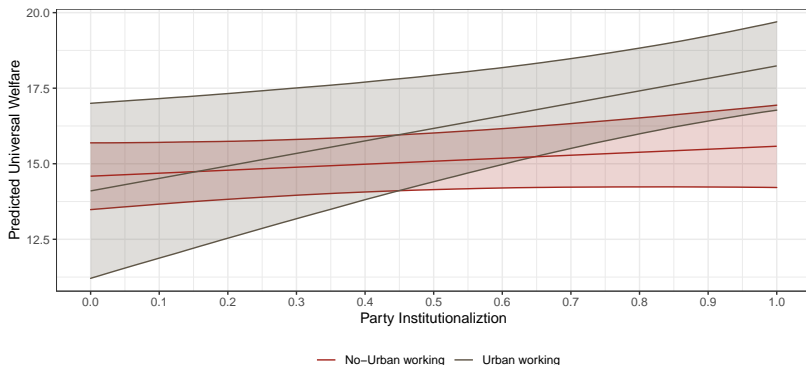
# Empirical Analysis

Universal welfare



**Figure:** Class coalitions, Party Institutionalization, and Welfare Universalism

# Empirical Analysis



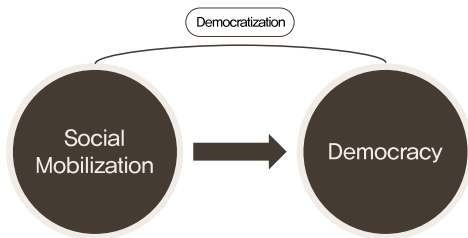
**Figure:** Predicted Universal Welfare of No-urban and urban Working Class by Party Institutionalization (95% CI)

# Conclusion

- Similar paths: Class coalition → Welfare provision

# Conclusion

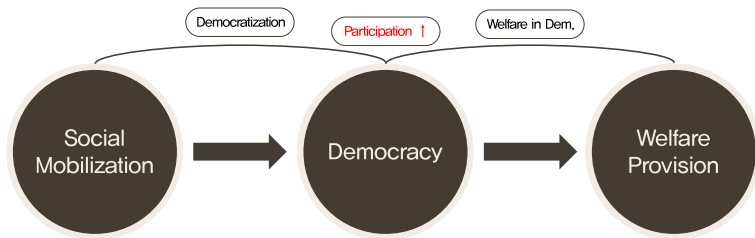
- Similar paths: Class coalition → Welfare provision





# Conclusion

- Similar paths: Class coalition → Welfare provision

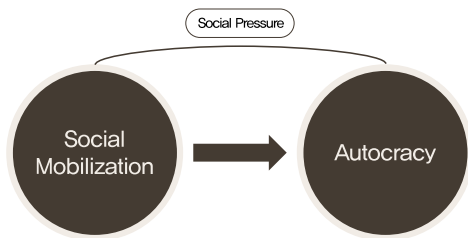


# Conclusion

- However, different mechanisms: Co-optation → Welfare

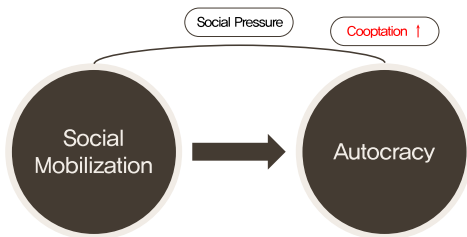
# Conclusion

- However, different mechanisms: Co-optation → Welfare



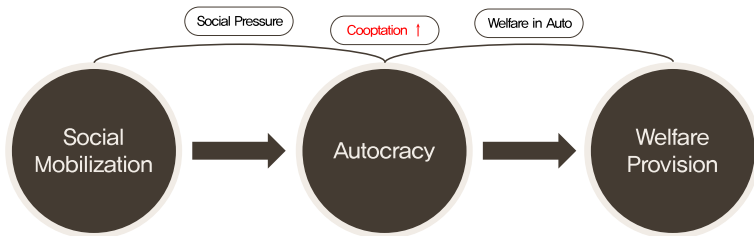
# Conclusion

- However, the underlying mechanisms are different (participation/cooptation).



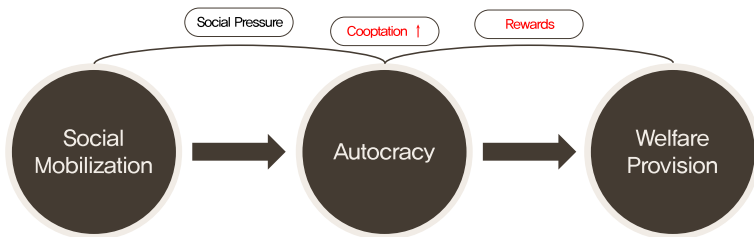
# Conclusion

- However, the underlying mechanisms are different (participation/cooptation).



# Conclusion

- However, the underlying mechanisms are different (participation/cooptation).



# Implication

- 1 In autocracies, class differences exist.

# Implication

- 1 In autocracies, class differences exist.
  - Urban working class is greater than urban middle class in universal welfare
  - Class coalition matters in autocracies



# Implication

- 1 In autocracies, class differences exist.
  - Urban working class is greater than urban middle class in universal welfare
  - Class coalition matters in autocracies
- 2 The relationship is affected by party institutionalization but still holds.

# Implication

- 1 In autocracies, class differences exist.
  - Urban working class is greater than urban middle class in universal welfare
  - Class coalition matters in autocracies
- 2 The relationship is affected by party institutionalization but still holds.
  - Institutionalized parties matter (consistent with recent works).

# Implication

- 1 In autocracies, class differences exist.
  - Urban working class is greater than urban middle class in universal welfare
  - Class coalition matters in autocracies
- 2 The relationship is affected by party institutionalization but still holds.
  - Institutionalized parties matter (consistent with recent works).
- 3 Effect of coalitions are mediated by institutionalized parties.

# Descriptive Statistics

Table: Descriptive statistics

Variables	Obs.	Mean	Std.	Min.	Max.
Universal Welfare	2,187	15.50	10.20	0.00	42.00
Party Elites	2,187	0.27	0.44	0.00	1.00
Military	2,187	0.25	0.43	0.00	1.00
Urban Working	2,187	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Urban Middle	2,187	0.03	0.16	0.00	1.00
Party Institutionalization.	2,187	0.45	0.24	0.02	0.97
Logged Population	2,187	9.00	1.46	5.55	14.01
Logged GDP per capita.	2,187	7.98	0.86	4.90	11.65
Resource Dependency	2,187	5.82	11.43	0.00	100.00
WWI	2,187	0.02	0.12	0.00	1.00
WWII	2,187	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00
Cold War	2,187	0.70	0.46	0.00	1.00