

**Resource Abundance or Personalism ?
Explaining the Variation of Media Freedom Across
Autocratic Regimes**

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Abstract

Mass media play a critical role in politics, since press function as a channel for delivering information and communication in a society. Thus, we can expect a variation in press freedom regarding different types of political regimes. Prior studies have shown the negative relationship between autocratic regimes and the degree of media freedom, while some point out the effect of natural resource such as oil which strengthens the power of personalist regimes. We are interested to know whether it is the personalism of autocracy or the resource abundance that has decisive impact on the level of media freedom within a country. We argue that it is the higher level of personalism that causes less freedom of media. To solve this puzzle, in this study, we analyze data on the level of media freedom, the degree of personalism and the amount of oil reserves. The results support our hypothesis and we are able to show that the increase in the degree of personalism leads to the decrease in the level of press freedom. We offer a power-sharing theory, which could explain the causation.

Introduction

It is widely recognized that freedom of speech is an important universal human right as well as a fundamental element in a democratic society. Media serve as a platform for communication and information exchange, and to ensure the information to be exposed to the public. While researchers have shown that democracy leads to higher degree of media freedom than autocracy, we are further interested to examine how personalism in autocracy affects press freedom, to be more specific, we want to ask: why do some authoritarian regimes allow freer media than others? Is it the result of the weakness of authoritarian regimes or is it the result of specific conditions in which freer media becomes an effective tool for dictatorship for their ends? In this research paper, we firstly successfully replicate the study of Egorov et al.(2009) and then look at the relationship between personalism and media freedom. Our results show that the increase in the personalization of the regime leads to the decrease in media freedom. Furthermore, we are able to show that the effect of resource-abundant autocracy on media freedom is mainly driven by the personalization of the regime.

We suggest that different incentives for freer media is created by the calculations

of the dictators who face different degree of threats from opposition within regime and opposition from outside. While all dictatorships are not immune to these two threats, the degree of the importance of these threats and their composition varies across dictatorships. We argue that personalization is the main mechanism that determines the importance as well as the composition of those threats. Personalized regimes are less likely to face a credible threat from ruling elites and they mainly choose to repress media to minimize the two threats as much as possible. However, regimes with less personalized dictatorships have incentive to allow freer media to decrease the risk of rebellion from inside. Since most of the demise of the regimes comes from rebellion mobilized by ruling elites as they have more advantageous position for rebellion, in the calculation of the dictators, preventing rebellion within inside takes greater place than alleviating the risk of rebellion from outside. Therefore, dictators with less personalized power give allowance of freer media to protect their position against the threat of rebellion from the ruling elites. This is a rational strategy for these dictators as long as they are able to decrease total amount of risk stemming from those two menaces. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the degree of personalism in the dictatorship is the main explanation for why some regimes allow freer media while others do not.

Media Freedom and Regime Types

Freedom of expression is not only generally considered as a universal human right but a fundamental element in democracy. Media play a critical role in collecting information and opinions and providing a platform for such information to be noticed by the public. Press freedom is proved to be effective in monitoring government malfeasance by uncovering malpractices by the bureaucrats. Brunetti and Weder (2001) show in their formal model that the increase in media freedom is conducive to combating with corruption from examining cross-sectional country data. News media are the important watchdog to keep an eye on the functioning of government, and that is what makes independent reporting crucial in a democratic society (McMillan and Zoido 2006). Although free media could be considered an essential indicator of democracy, Whitten-Woodring (2005) suggests that

the impact of free media on supervising government depends on the presence of democratic features such as party competition, political participation and governmental constraints. Without these characteristics, government is less susceptible of public opinion, so the news media would become less influential on the public accountability of the government.

Stier (2015) investigates the relationship between regime types and media freedom, and claims that democracy results in higher degree of media freedom than autocracy. Democratic governments are institutionally constrained and they make use of the media for political persuasion, advertisement and electoral purpose; thus, the government do allow for news production. However, in autocracies, the fact that regimes have immense power with little or no institutional constraints make it easy for the government to repress media. Furthermore, to consolidate the power and ensure regime survival, mass communication is not desirable and should be carefully controlled. Hence, the autocratic regime has incentives to restrict press freedom. Levitsky and Way (2010) also mention in their paper that negative reporting results in reflecting weakness of the government which may threaten the survival of authoritarian regimes, and therefore provides dictators incentives to control total media. Akser and Baybars-Hawks (2012) identify five kinds of constraint measures in media autocracy with an example of Turkish media under the governance of AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/Justice and Development Party), which explains how an autocratic government could restrict critical media. The measures include conglomerate pressure, judicial suppression on journalists, blocking anti-government websites, surveillance of dissenters and accreditation discrimination. Under such means, journalism is not able to perform properly due to fear, restrictions, and blocked access.

Despite the general acknowledgement that free media are a trouble for dictators, it is found that there is certain degree of variation in media freedom in autocracies. Stier (2015) has distinguished different levels of press freedom in autocracies and concludes that coverage is more restrictive in communist and personalist regimes, while communist ideocracies censor media the most. The possible explanation is that the communist party manipulates the media to carry out ideological goals, and the personalist rulers control the press to prevent threats from public mobilization against their weak legitimization.

In our study, we have a focus on the effect of personalist autocratic regimes on the level of media freedom, which is further examined in the analysis section.

Nevertheless, there is growing literature arguing that media reporting can in fact do a favor for authoritarian regimes. Lorentzen (2014) studies censorship in China and finds that authoritarian regimes can be benefited from strategic media control, allowing reporting on minor wrongdoing in the government to watchdog governance, but controlling the amount of such negative news on the government. Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin (2009) propose that dictators could benefit from press freedom under certain circumstances from a perspective of natural resource abundance effect. They argue that in resource-rich non-democracies, media freedom is less likely to appear based on the fact that the dictator enjoys revenues from rents and can compensate the citizens for poor government behavior. While in resource-poor autocracies, dictators need press to monitor his bureaucracy to ensure government efficiency and prevent discontent from the citizens. For another, such dictators have no rents to buy off his people, so he is forced to allow freer media in order to avoid public revolts which will otherwise cause his seat. The mechanism of why some dictators allow media freedom and how it differs are discussed in the next section.

Personalist Autocracy and Media Freedom

In this paper we argue that differences of power sharing among authoritarian regimes leads to different results for media freedom. Media freedom can have two consequential effects on authoritarian survival. On the one hand, it is clear that authoritarian regimes do not welcome free media as in democracies, since freer media alleviate the asymmetrical information problem between autocratic regime and citizens or opposition in favor of the latter. Furthermore, freer media provides citizens and opposition an environment in which it is easier to overcome collective action problems to topple down the regime. On the other hand, leaving a space for free media at a certain degree can provide autocratic regime leadership the mechanism to get information about true preferences of citizens (Roberts 2018). Furthermore, media freedom serve as an instrument for autocratic regimes to monitor their bureaucrats. Supervising bureaucrats is a critical part of improving quality

of governance (Egorov et. al 2009). While autocracies are not as much responsive as democracies, they are not totally immune to bad governance with regards to losing power.

To look at the variation in the media freedom across authoritarian regimes, we assume that authoritarian regimes essentially prioritize to their survival. Different strategies of regimes create different incentives for regimes to use media freedom as a tool for authoritarian survival. Firstly, legislative institutions, parties and elections are claimed to be tools that create a co-optation mechanism for autocratic regimes (Gandhi and Lust-Okkar 2008, Gandhi and Perzeworski 2006). While it is claimed that increase in the number of autocratic regimes that either have legislation or elections reflects the need of authoritarian regimes to show themselves as democratic against the international pressures especially after the cold war (Levitsky and Way 2010), authoritarian institutions and parties take an important role to co-opt with opposition, distribute to rents and keep stable power-sharing mechanisms within ruling elites (Gandhi and Perzeworski 2007, Woo and Conrad 2019, Svobik 2009). Autocratic regimes with institutions does not only increase the chances of autocratic survival (Gandhi and Perzeworski 2007), but they also bring different economic results and different choices in governance of the regime. Gellbach and Keefer (2012) argue that autocratic regimes with legislative institutions, by increasing credibility of the assurance of protection for economic rights, attracts more investment than regimes without legislative institutions. Furthermore, different kinds of repression mechanisms among regimes could be explained by whether the autocratic regimes have legislations. By creating co-optation and monitoring mechanism for opposition, legislative institutions provide an environment in which repression is done in a targeted and a more efficient way rather than in a costly way (Frantz and Kendall-Taylor 2014).

Secondly, different strategies among authoritarian regimes and authoritarian stability could be explained by different degrees of power-sharing between the dictator and the ruling elites (Geddes et al. 2018, Svobik 2012). While institutional arrangements can be the result of how the regime is established and their presence can be thought as a result before establishment of the regimes, there are also significant amount of institutional arrangements and party creations that are implemented after the dictatorship

is established (Geddes et al. 2018, pp.107- 108). Therefore, rather than thinking institutions as a exogenous factor that creates different strategies, it is more reasonable to think that legislative institutions and the presence of party or parties are results of the power-sharing struggle and they are, therefore, endogenous to power-sharing struggles in the authoritarian politics. Even if some authoritarian regimes have legislative institutions , the effect of legislative institutions can be minimal as in the era of Hafez Al-Assad in Syria, since power-sharing in Syrian dictatorship was strictly dominated by the Hafez Al-Assad. Therefore, we mainly look at whether power is shared or not by dictators and its results on media freedom.

The dictator and its ruling elites constitute to leadership of the authoritarian regimes. While both sides firstly aim to improve, at least to keep the same level of position in the power-sharing. Since the “dictatorships lack an independent authority that would enforce mutual agreements – including the rules according to which formal institutions are supposed to operate” (Svolik 2012, p.39), we can assume ever present struggle of power which carries possibility of violent end for one of the sides within the leadership (Svolik 2012). In the power sharing struggle, we can see two possible results which are the regime with a leader holding enough power that minimizes the threat of ruling elites and the regime in which ruling elites have sufficient and credible threat against the dictator (Svolik 2012). To reach two possible situations stated above, power-sharing struggle between the dictator and the ruling elite is the decisive factor. Most of the authoritarian regimes have been created by coalition of different actors. However, position of dictator as the last resort or the first among equals provides advantage to him against his allies, after the regime is established (Geddes et al.2018, p.69). Since actors’ power and security stem from their credible threat against others, institutional and formal agreements are not as binding as in the democracies and they cannot create discount factor to take into account longer term calculations for future. Therefore, usurpation of power is the most reliable tool to stay. Position of dictators in the leadership also creates asymmetric information disadvantageous to ruling elites. Unfavorable position of the ruling elites exacerbates with the problem of collective action against the dictator when dictator tries to usurp

power (Svolik 2012, pp.57-63). To create a credible threat against usurpation of power by mitigating the problem of collective action, ruling elites are more successful when they are not factionalized and they have ability to establish and keep authoritarian institutions such as legislature and parties (Geddes et al. 2018, Svolik 2012).

As stated above, we assume that all dictators firstly aim for survival of their tenure and the regime. We come up with a model that includes mainly three actors which are respectively dictator, ruling elite and the opposition. Interactions between those actors and power-sharing structure of the dictatorship provide different incentives to dictator about what strategies a dictator should choose for the survival. Firstly, all dictatorships have two essential threats which are from within regime and from outside such as mass opposition, and rebellion (Geddes et al. 2018). However, nearly 70 percent of the non-constitutional exits from coup's and therefore, it is clear that "predominant political conflict in dictatorships appears to be not between the ruling elite and the masses but rather one among regime insiders" (Svolik 2012, p.5). The reason for this situation is mainly the ruling elites who are not pleased or opposed to the governance of dictator have better position to access and capacity to reach means of threat. Furthermore, the former have also more certain information about the probability of success in the case of rebellion than opposition from outside (Geddes et al. 2018 pp.31-33). Those factors are essential to rebel in dictatorships since the punishment of a unsuccessful rebellion or disclosure of discontent generally leads to the violent ends for both of the actors. Therefore, it is reasonable to hold that while both of the threats can be hindered by the dictatorship, calculation for the strategies of survival puts more weight on threat from inside than threat from outside.

The most effective way to tackle with threats from regime elites is to personalize the regime. Personalized regimes leads a power-sharing situation in which a dictator holds most of the power in the regime and we can say there is little authority in authoritarian decision making and little credibility for the ruling elites. Once the threat from inside is minimized, the dictator can focus and give more weights on threats from outside. Having an environment that both provides more information and a higher chance to overcome

collective action problem by making it easy to detect who is displeased with regime for opposition outside leads to increase in the possibility of both emergence and success of rebellion. Therefore, highly personalized regimes does not allow freer media and invests on repression to minimize the risk of rebellion from outside. Svolik (2010) argues that the increase in the power of repression could also create another problem for the regime. When power of the military is increased, military becomes an actor which poses another threat for dictator (Svolik 2012). However, when the regime is highly personalized, the possibility of independent military elites is highly unlikely. By making top of the military highly dependent on the dictators by reshuffling the cadres in the military and assigning people whose interests are highly similar to dictators, personalized regimes can overcome threats stemming from increased power of military. Therefore, we expect that highly personalized regimes minimize the risk of rebellion from outside by restricting media as much as possible and increasing the repression capacity of the regime.

When it comes to regimes in which an dictator is not able to personalize the regime and have more equal power-sharing division with ruling elites, the calculation of dictator about survival of the regime can present different incentives regarding media freedom. As opposing ruling elites have more advantageous position than opposition from outside for successful rebellion, the weight of the threat coming from inside should be more than the threat from outside for the survival strategy of dictator (Svolik 2012). Since dictators cannot minimize the threat from inside with personalization , they try to decrease this threat with different strategies. The basic tool to counter the threat from inside is to increase the popularity of the dictator among masses. Firstly, sharing the spoils with masses and providing better public good can be done by creating a new party that is controlled by the dictator and giving permit to the locally contested regimes. Geddes et al. (2018) argue that those means are effective to increase the survival of the regime. Secondly, dictator can allow freer media than highly personalized regimes to enhance his/her support from masses to counter the threat from inside. Even if freer media increases the possibility of success for the rebellion from outside by helping to overcome collective action problem, it is still a feasible strategy as long as freer media decreases the

sum of the success probability of two threats. Furthermore, freer media can be less costly than creating new regime party and holding local elections since those strategies threaten ruling elites more openly than allowing freer media to appear.

Briefly, we expect that how power-sharing is held by a dictator and ruling elites leads different strategies for dictator to prevent any rebellion from within and outside of the regime. In the highly personalized regimes, dictators permit less media freedom to minimize the possibility of rebellion outside. On the other hand, dictatorships with less personalization are more willing to give media freedom in order to both enhance the quality of bureaucratic governance and increase his popularity and support from the citizens. They need to minimize threat from inside, so they allow free media in order to gain support from the citizens. Therefore, our hypothesis is formulated as below:

H: The increase in the personalization level of the autocracy leads to the decrease in media freedom.

Data

To systematically test the arguments, our regression analysis mainly relies on the replication data provided by Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin (2009). We employ the Press Freedom index which is originally derived from Freedom House to operationalize our main dependent variable, media freedom. Press Freedom index is re-structured from 0 (no media freedom) to 100 (completely free media) for better interpretation in the dataset. As suggested by Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin (2009), since the detailed data availability starts from 1993, we also select the media freedom data from years 1993 to 2007.

We proxy our key independent variable, personalism, which is the degree to which political power is concentrated in individual leaders by using the indicator created by Geddes et al.(2018). The indicator of personalism is a continuous variable ranging between 0 and 1, where higher values refer to a greater degree of personalism. It in general captures whether the leaders' power is institutionally constraint, the degree to which leaders are able to dominate the assignment to the offices, and whether leaders have approaches to ensure the loyalty of the forces (Fails 2020). To proxy the degree of democracy, which is

also our important independent variable, we use the Polity2 variable computed from the Polity IV data. The Polity2 score has a scale from -10 (greatly autocratic) to +10 (greatly democratic) which is evaluated from the characteristics of the political regime such as the competitiveness of political participation and the constraints on the executive.

As for the resource factor, we pick oil for the reason that it is generally recognized as the most important natural resource (Egorov et al. 2009), and data on oil is easily reachable which is important for our robustness checks. The oil data is originally from the Statistical Review of World Energy. We notice that there are differences between oil quality and production cost among countries, so in the analysis we control for country fixed effects to address this problem. We control time dummies in the regression analysis as well to account for oil prices changes. Finally, the control variables aim to capture other factors that could affect the degree of media freedom. We control for a country's GDP per capita, population and government expenditure. The data can be obtained from the World Development Indicators.

Analysis and Robustness Checks

Before starting the regression analysis, Figure 1 provides us with a preliminary analysis about the relationship between personalism and media freedom. In Figure 1(a), we can see that mean scores of media freedom and the level of personalism for the authoritarian regimes from 1993 to 2007 across personalist autocracies. The red line is the slope coming from a mean score of media freedom on the level of personalism in a naive regression. As it is shown in the figure, there is a declining trend for media freedom when the level of personalism in the regime increases. In the upper side of Figure(b), we can see the distribution of media freedom scores for countries whose mean score of personalism from 1993 to 2007 is above the median score and for countries whose mean score of personalism is below the median. In the below part, we see the distribution of media freedom for regimes which have oil reserves and regimes which do not have oil reserves. In this figure, there are similar trends which comply both with our theory and Egorov et al.(2009)'s theory. However, we suggest that the negative relationship between oil reserves and media

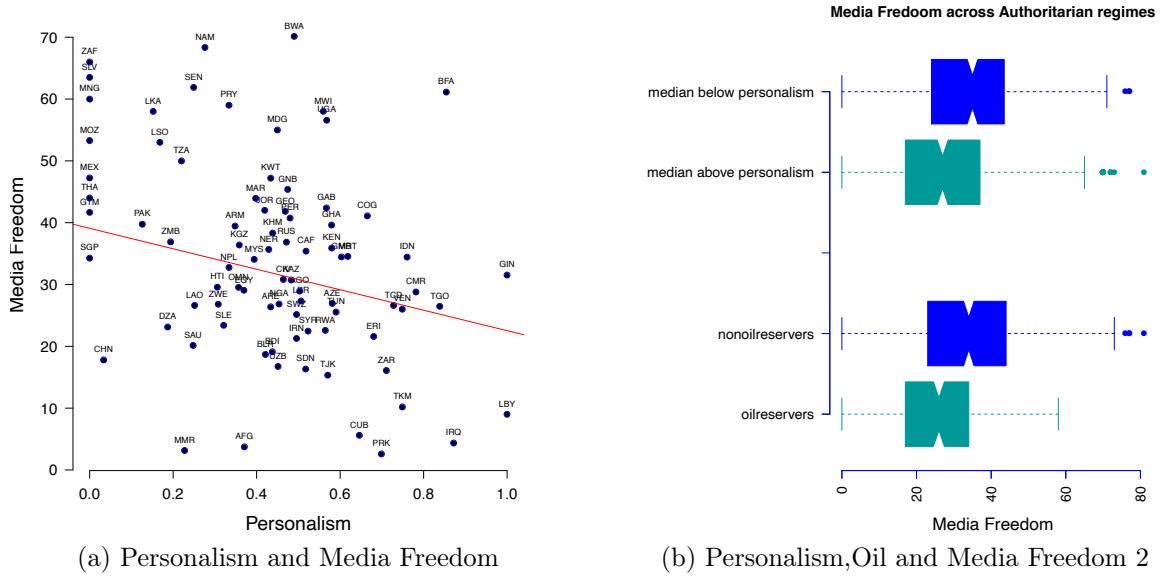


Figure 1: Preliminary Analysis

freedom is driven by personalization. Rather than assuming it is oil that directly causes the low level of media freedom, we argue that oil reserves leads firstly to higher level of personalism and then, the lower level of media freedom is the effect from personalism. The natural resources as direct source of income provides leverage for the dictator to personalize dictatorship (Fails 2019). Thus, dictators become more advantageous to change division of power-sharing in favour of themselves since they become less independent on the regime elites to keep economic stability, repress opposition and give spoils to security apparatuses. Therefore, we expect that inclusion of the personalism variable to the study of Egorov et.al (2009) leads to the insignificant results for the coefficient of oil reserves in the regression analysis. To look at both our expectation and to control other factors such as the size of population, economic development, country specific and year specific, we make linear regression analysis with country and year fixed effects as it can be seen in Table 1.

The first model from Table 1 shows our replication result from Egorov et al.(2009)'s study. Our results are nearly the same with their study. The interaction effect between polity2 score and oil reserves shows that oil reserves have negative effect on media freedom when the regime is an authoritarian. In the second model, we only focus on authoritarian regimes. When we include the personalism variable, it is seen that the effect of personalism

Table 1: Regression Results with Robust SE

	Dependent variable: Media Freedom	
	(1)	(2)
Personalism		−6.996** (3.106)
Polity2	0.966*** (0.102)	0.774*** (0.213)
Log oil reserves	−1.834* (0.989)	1.120 (1.168)
Log GDP per capita, PPP	2.278 (1.425)	−0.918 (2.533)
Log population	−14.361*** (3.455)	−9.753 (7.525)
Log (govt.exp/GDP)	0.142 (0.899)	−1.148 (1.641)
Polity2 * Log oil reserves	0.153** (0.071)	0.115 (0.076)
Constant	248.366*** (61.933)	201.618 (131.135)
Observations	2,020	740
Country Dummies	Yes	Yes
Time Dummies	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.939	0.868
Adjusted R ²	0.933	0.849
Residual Std. Error	5.882 (df = 1852)	5.886 (df = 645)
F Statistic	169.333*** (df = 167; 1852)	45.077*** (df = 94; 645)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Country fixed effects and time dummies are included but not reported.

is negative and statistically significant. The effect of personalism on media freedom in autocracies can be explained substantively. Holding everything else constant, if a regime with lowest personalization (score of "0") maximizes the personalization of the regime (score of "1"), we expect to see 7 (+-6 with 95 percentage of confidence interval) points decrease in the media freedom. As we show in Figure1(b), the distribution of media freedom scores among regimes above the median and below the median are similar to each other. Therefore, the difference of 7 (+-6 with 95 percent confidence interval) points between the regime with the lowest and the highest personalism shows us substantive difference among those regimes with regards to media freedom.

Furthermore, when we add personalism variable, the effect of oil is no longer significant. Results from model 2 in Table 2 comply with our expectations about the effect of oil on media freedom. Oil-abundant dictatorship has negative effect on media freedom; however this effect is mainly driven by the increase in the level of personalism. Briefly, the more oil the regime has, the more personalized the regime is. Therefore, the more personalized regime is, the less the regime allows freedom of media. The significant effect of oil in model 1 mainly stems from omitting the effect of personalism. When we include to personalism to the model, effect of oil is not anymore significant.

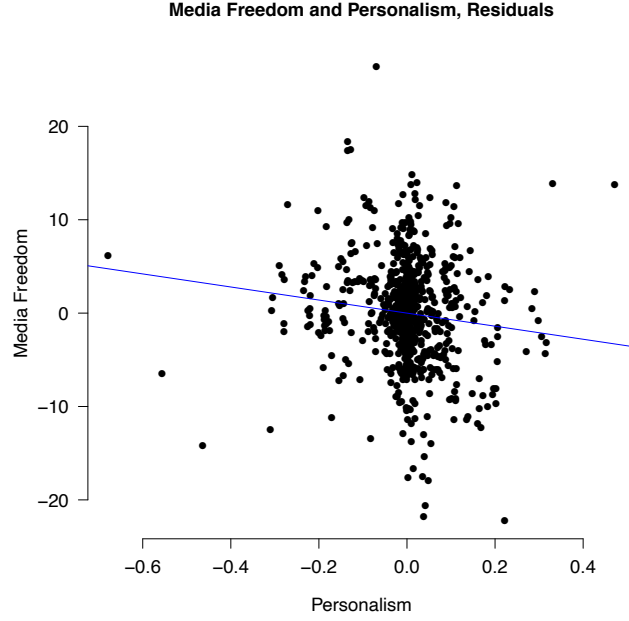


Figure 2: Media Freedom and Personalism

In Figure 2, we show the negative effect of personalism on media freedom. Our results come from the regression of residuals of media freedom on residuals of personalism. Once we control for country specific and year specific effects by taking the regression for residuals, the statistically significant negative effect of personalism on media freedom is clear as it can be seen in the Figure 2. Error terms seem to be normally distributed and do not violate the assumption of random error terms. Therefore, it provides us confidence about not having model specifications.

Finally, to check whether or not our results are driven by our specific decisions on choosing variables for our main model, we use different proxies for the oil variables as Egorov et al. (2009) suggest. Table 2 shows that the negative effect of personalism on media freedom are robust across different model specifications.

Table 2: Regression Results for Robustness Checks with Robust SE

	Dependent variable: Media Freedom		
	(Oil Price)	(Oil Production)	(Oil Price*Production)
Personalism	−7.017** (3.110)	−7.441** (3.083)	−7.453** (3.097)
Polity2	0.726*** (0.218)	0.699*** (0.216)	0.692*** (0.218)
Log oil price	0.392 (0.669)		
Polity2 * Log oil price	0.093** (0.046)		
Log oil production		0.652 (0.661)	
Polity2 * Log oil production		0.091** (0.041)	
Log(oil price * oil production)			0.410 (0.524)
Polity2 * Log (oil price*oil production)			0.066** (0.029)
Log GDP per capita, PPP	−0.579 (2.541)	0.003 (2.512)	0.115 (2.507)
Log population	−8.857 (7.607)	−0.853 (6.880)	−0.596 (6.904)
Log (govt.exp/GDP)	−1.123 (1.618)	−0.837 (1.665)	−0.876 (1.636)
Constant	184.326* (104.699)	46.368 (98.648)	41.746 (98.619)
Observations	740	755	755
Country Dummies	Yes	Yes	
Time Dummies	Yes	Yes	
R ²	0.869	0.866	0.866
Adjusted R ²	0.849	0.847	0.847
Residual Std. Error	5.871(df=645)	5.882(df=660)	5.878(df= 660)
F Statistic	45.352*** (df=94;645)	45.452*** (df=94;660)	45.523*** (df=94;660)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Country fixed effects and time dummies are included but not reported.

Conclusion

Prior research has shown that the type of political regimes affects the degree of media freedom within a country (Stier 2015), and this is not only the case between democracies and autocracies, but also among different autocratic subtypes. In this paper we argue that there is a variation of press freedom in authoritarian regimes due to the different characteristic of power sharing. Empirically, we explain the mechanism with a model in which power-sharing struggle between the dictator and ruling elites creates different incentives for the usage of media freedom. We show that dictators from a more personalized regime is less likely to allow free media for the reason that he does not face threat from the ruling elites. On the contrary, a dictator who is not able to personalize his regime is more likely to permit free media in exchange for public support which is essential to his regime survival when the threat of ruling elite is not alleviated by the personalization of the regime. Allowance for free media is conducive for a dictator to gaining good reputation and popularity from the public, and most importantly, to ensuring the political survival.

The most important restriction for our analysis is the problem of endogeneity. We believe that the relationship between personalism and media freedom is a reasonable conclusion according to our models and robustness checks. Since dictatorships have less restrictions on discretion of policy making than democracies, controlling media is less likely to be driven by the demand of citizens. The main incentive to allow freer media should be results of calculation of dictator stemming from different degree of power-sharing between dictator and ruling elites. While our reasoning leads us to think in that way, it would be better to conduct an regression analysis with an instrumental variable to provide statistically convincing causal analysis for further research.

This study aims to add to the existing literature on media freedom and regime types, and we have particular interest in the factor of personalism in autocratic regimes. The research may have implications for understanding patterns of mass media freedom on the regime level, which is still a complex puzzle and requires further research. Alongside our analytic result which supports our hypothesis, we also offer an explanation for the

strongly significant association between personalized regimes and media control, stressing the strategic result from the wrestling in power sharing. As it is proved that higher personalism in autocracy is correlated with less degree of media freedom, we also provide evidence on how personalized dictators control the mass media and impede democracy as well as the implementation of freedom of expression.

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29 January, 2021