

The Two Logics of Autocratic Rule

Johannes Gerschewski



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In *The Two Logics of Autocratic Rule*, Gerschewski argues that all autocracies must fulfil three conditions to survive: the co-optation of key elites into their inner sanctum, the repression of potential dissent, and popular legitimization. Yet, how these conditions complement each other depends on alternative logics: over-politicization and de-politicization. While the former aims at mobilizing people via inflating a friend-foe distinction, the latter renders the people passive and apathetic, relying instead on performance-driven forms of legitimization. Gerschewski supports this two-logics theory with the empirical analysis of forty-five autocratic regime episodes in East Asia since the end of World War II. In simultaneously synthesizing and extending existing research on non-democracies, this book proposes an innovative way to understand autocratic rule that goes beyond the classic distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. It will be of interest to scholars and students of comparative politics, political theory, and East Asian politics.

Johannes Gerschewski is a research fellow at the Global Governance Unit, WZB Berlin Social Science Center. He works on democratic and autocratic rule, concept building, and questions of political ideologies. His research has appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Perspectives on Politics*, and *Comparative Political Studies*. He was awarded the 2013 Frank Cass Award and received in 2016 the Gero-Erdmann Prize for Comparative Area Studies.

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Acknowledgments

As an undergraduate student, I read in a book's introduction that it should have been a better book, but the time to improve it had been over. If memory serves it was a book by Ludwig Wittgenstein, but I actually could not find it again. Back then, I remember that I thought what a witty and self-ironic sentence this was to begin a book with. In the past months, however, I have come to realize what it really means to finish a book manuscript.

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Abbreviations

AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, Myanmar
AREA	Autocratic Regimes in East Asia dataset
BMR	Boix, Miller, Rosato Dichotomous Coding of Democracy, 1800–2015 dataset
BSPP	Burmese Socialist Program Party
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CEC	Central Executive Committee, Singapore
CIRI	Cingranelli and Richards Human Rights dataset
CLD	Civil Liberties Dataset
CPM	Communist Party of Malaya
DD	Democracy and Dictatorship dataset
fsQCA	fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GWF	The Geddes Wright and Frantz Autocratic Regimes dataset
ICRG	The International Country Risk Guide
ISA	Internal Security Act, Malaya/Malaysia
KINU	Korean Institute of National Unification
MP	Member of Parliament
NDC	National Defense Commission, North Korea
NEP	New Economic Policy, Malaysia
NLD	National League for Democracy, Myanmar
PAP	People's Action Party, Singapore
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Mexico
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo dataset
PTS	The Political Terror Scale dataset
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
QoG	Quality of Government dataset
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program dataset
UMNO	United Malays National Organization, Malaysia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WPK	Workers Party of Korea, North Korea

Part I

Introduction

Autocracies as “Organized Certainty”?

Autocrats try to organize certainty. They do everything they can to minimize threats to their existence. They are afraid of losing power and control and strive to rule out chance. Consider the following note found during my archival research:

In N, there was a pencil in the polling booth, but the pencil was not sharpened. An older woman who – after having received the ballot paper – asked politely what she should do with it was rudely led to the ballot box and was forced to throw in the paper.¹

The note describes blatant electoral fraud. A woman who wanted to cast her vote was instead forced to hand in an empty paper. Fraud, intimidation, and fear are the most obvious and widespread instruments with which every autocratic regime attempts to maintain control over what is happening in society. Autocrats want to eliminate the possibility of deviance among their citizens.

The irony of this archival note is that the author of this note was a former official of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) who was stationed in the GDR embassy in North Korea. He wrote this memo in 1967 and sent it back to East Berlin.² At this time, both countries were deeply autocratic and did not shy away from using all types of electoral fraud. Elections in both countries were manipulated, noncompetitive, not free, and not fair. Nevertheless, the observed electoral fraud in North Korea was deemed important (and unsettling) enough to report back home to Berlin.

¹ My translation; document is PA AA MfAA, C 1088–70: “Information über die Innen- und Außenpolitik der KVDR 1962–1963, 1965–1967,” no place, 1967. The archive is the Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Ministry of Germany in Berlin. It also houses today the archival documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR).

² If I may, I would like to insert a personal note here. The address to which this memo was sent in 1967 was Luisenstr. 56, the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that is now the intellectual home of the Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and where parts of this manuscript were written.

In 1991, Adam Przeworski proposed one of the most elegant definitions of what a democratic system is: one in which “parties lose elections” (Przeworski 1991, 10). A democracy is a system of “ruled open-endedness, or organized uncertainty” (Przeworski 1991, 13). For him, the core element of democracies is that losers in the political game comply with the process and accept political outcomes because they trust that in the next round they can gain the upper hand.

In contrast to Przeworski’s famous dictum, autocratic regimes try to do all they can to avoid such ruled open-endedness. They try to organize certainty while knowing that their regimes are inherently vulnerable. They do not want to face the consequences that an electoral loss would imply. Instead, they cling to power and organize elections in such a way that they know the results *ex ante*. While in democracies the crystallizing moment is the minute before the electoral results are publicized, autocrats want to control the electoral results beforehand. German political theorist Ernst Fraenkel defines democratic societies therefore by the way a collective political will is formulated: Democracies are characterized by a general openness and pluralist competition between alternative ideas. The political will is therefore the “a posteriori result of a delicate process” (Fraenkel 1991, 300, own translation). The outcome of this process is not foreseeable in democracies. In contrast, autocratic rulers want a priori control. They want to minimize the threats of overthrow or loss of political authority. That is why the woman in the archival note was forced to cast her vote with an unsharpened pencil. That is why autocracies around the world manipulate their elections. They fear surprises.

Yet, it should be highlighted that autocracies do face trade-offs. While they want to organize certainty, they are nevertheless inherently uncertain. Andreas Schedler has emphasized this uncertainty in his eminent work (Schedler 2013). When autocracies such as the GDR and North Korea manipulate elections, they lose information. When they force a citizen to cast an empty vote, they do not know what she really thinks about her rulers. Elections are always barometers of discontent. If autocratic rulers curtail participation, they curtail information. In other words, if they create certainty at one level, then they simultaneously create uncertainty at another.

Some autocracies rely on long-term, planned, and institutionalized solutions, while others react in hectic and improvised ways, resulting in ad hoc arrangements. Yet, they all need to tackle the trade-offs in one way or another. In this book, I argue that the threats to the survival of autocratic regimes can emanate from three sides: from ordinary citizens, from the opposition, and from within the elite. They want to legitimize their rule to control the masses. They want to repress the

opposition so that they do not organize dissent. Meanwhile, autocratic regimes also want to maintain intra-elite cohesion and co-opt potential rivals. Legitimation, repression, and co-optation are the three key tasks of all autocratic regimes that this book tackles, both theoretically and empirically.

In the best of all worlds for autocratic regimes, they would be able to control all three open flanks. But they cannot. Usually, autocracies simply do not have the resources and power capacities to do so. It requires enormous material and symbolic capital to control the people, the opponents, and the elite simultaneously and sufficiently. Instead, existing resources need to be distributed across rivaling purposes, facing quasi-structural built-in trade-offs. If you repress popular discontent, you risk losing legitimacy. If you co-opt certain elites, you may alienate others. If you justify your rule by favoring certain societal groups, you will exclude others and breed opposition. The ultimate puzzle for autocrats, therefore, is how to harmonize conflicting goals given – economically speaking – a hard budget constraint.

This book contributes to existing scholarship in three ways. First, it develops an innovative theory of autocratic rule. Based on an original synthesis of previous work – ranging from the 1940s to today – it proposes that autocratic regimes try to organize certainty by relying on either a logic of over-politicization or a logic of de-politicization. Second, it emphasizes configurational thinking and the complementarity between causal factors. It explicitly argues with combinations of factors and not with the relevance and weight of individual ones to explain regime stability. Third, it systematically tests the new theory against forty-five autocratic regimes in East Asia since the end of World War II. In the following, I will outline these points.

A Macroscopic Explanation

In political science parlance, the combination of factors that stabilizes autocratic rule is a configuration, that is, an arrangement of components that work together in a specific way. The aim of this book is to develop a theoretical expectation of what these specific configurations could look like – and then to test them to see if they also hold empirically.

I argue that there are basically two distinct configurations that follow either an over-politicizing logic or a de-politicizing logic. While I discuss these two logics in more detail in the next section of this chapter, a first glimpse might help situate the reader. Generally speaking, I understand politicization as – literally – the process of turning private issues into public ones. Furthermore, I argue by employing the work of Carl

Schmitt that politicization is the process of inflating a contrast, a societal cleavage, be it of ideological, religious, nationalistic, moral, cultural, economic, or ethnic *couleur*, into an absolute distinction, constructing so a friend-foe distinction (Schmitt [1932] 2002). As such, the over-politicizing logic attempts to politicize even previously unpolitical issues and to create an internal foe of such magnitude that repression against this foe seems to be even justifiable. In contrast, the de-politicizing logic tries to do the opposite. It dampens political contestation and pulls public issues into an uncontested realm. While the former logic attempts to activate and mobilize the people, the latter passivates the people, dampens their political ambitions, and seeks to turn them into apathetic followers. While the former relies most often on ideational overcharging of a societal distinction, the de-politicizing logic, in turn, focuses on the regime’s social or economic performance, images of law and order, internal security, and material well-being to keep the people satisfied with the regime’s output. These differences in legitimating *modi* are coupled with the use of different forms of repression as well as different forms of elite co-optation that I spell out later. Yet, what is important to note here is that these configurations are characterized by an inherent complementarity, a certain fit of factors to one another. They follow a distinct but internally reinforcing logic. It is in conjunction – and not in isolation – that these factors form specific configurations that offset potential dangers and maintain autocratic regime stability over a longer period of time.

The theoretical framework presented here places much emphasis on scholarly work put forward as early as the 1940s and 1950s, at what is sometimes called the beginning of modern political science. Yet, it is simultaneously embedded in the recent renaissance of comparative authoritarianism that we observed in the past two decades. Therefore, it can be best understood as a synthesis of classic writings and contemporary academic insights.

In the recent revival of comparative authoritarianism, we have learned a lot about the dynamics of autocratic rule. We know today much more about the inner workings of autocratic regimes than we did twenty years ago. Prominent works have highlighted the role of regime type on the persistence of autocracies. Barbara Geddes and her colleagues have shown that due to differing incentive structures, one-party regimes last longer than personalist and military regimes (Geddes 1999; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014; 2018). This finding has been confirmed and refined by complementary work (Dimitrov 2013; Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Magaloni and Kricheli 2010). We have also observed a strong theoretical focus on the institutional power structure of autocratic regimes and on how *prima facie* democratic institutions like parties, parliaments,

elections, and courts contribute to the stability of autocratic rule (Boix and Svolik 2013; Gandhi 2008; Ginsburg and Moustafa 2008; Knutsen, Nygard, and Wig 2017; Magaloni 2006; Morgenbesser 2016; Schedler 2013; Slater 2010b; Smith 2005; Svolik 2012).

What was once a paradox is today a well-accepted empirical fact that has been shown for spatiotemporally diverse cases: seemingly democratic institutions matter for autocracies! Besides this focus on institutions, it has been demonstrated that autocracies rely on output and performance as much as their democratic counterparts do (Chandra and Rudra 2015; Miller 2015; Roller 2013; Schmidt 2013; Tanneberg, Stefes, and Merkel 2013). On an international level, the role of coercive instruments like sanctions (Escribà-Folch 2012; Escribà-Folch and Wright 2015; Marinov 2005), international administrations and linkages (Tansey 2009; Tansey, Koehler, and Schmotz 2016), and more subtle diffusion processes across countries (Bank 2017; Hanson and Kopstein 2005; Koesel and Bunce 2013; Weyland 2017) have been thoroughly analyzed. These important works have all substantially increased our understanding of the inner mechanisms of autocratic rule.

Comparative authoritarianism has been a field with an enormous time lag. For decades, research on comparative authoritarianism has suffered from a severe data shortage. Only in past years have we witnessed unparalleled data collection efforts that have enabled new analytical insights. However, I am concerned that empirical advancement has outpaced our theoretical and conceptual improvement. Giovanni Sartori cautioned that the opposite should be the case: “the progress of quantification should lag – in whatever discipline – behind its qualitative and conceptual progress” (Sartori 1970, 1038). Today, we find ourselves in a situation in which we are often tempted to use only those quantifiable measures of observable events and institutions that are currently readily available for our concept building. But, as we are reminded, concept building is not a decision by fiat and not a mere “prelude to serious research” (Schedler 2011, 370). It is an integral part of the research cycle. Shaky concepts lead to shaky theories. Babylonian confusion over (thick and thin) concepts is of course not exclusive to the study of comparative authoritarianism. However, I argue that we have reached a point in the field where we should consolidate our conceptual and theoretical knowledge.

In general, helpful scholarly books can be distinguished between prospective and retrospective ones. While the former aims to explore new terrain, identifies innovative trends and pathways, and pioneers research, the latter aims more at pausing and taking stock of our fragmented current knowledge, synthesizing past and current work in order to engage in theory building and to offer a fresh look at what we know about a certain

subject. I think it is fair to say that this book is rather devoted to the latter approach. A major motivation to write this book has been to renew scholarly interest in the classic work on totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. The book tries so to consolidate our knowledge and – by being firmly anchored in the research inventory of nondemocratic rule – aspires to point to future research directions from these consolidated grounds.

And indeed, it is remarkable that despite the huge empirical progress that the field has made in the past twenty years, the central *theoretical* works are still the writings of Juan Linz, Guillermo O'Donnell, and Amos Perlmutter of the 1970s and 1980s, or even German exile scholars like Carl Joachim Friedrich and Hannah Arendt of some two or three decades earlier (Arendt [1951] 1966; Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956; Linz 1964; 1975; O'Donnell 1979; Perlmutter 1981). Of course, the tendency toward grand theorizing with broad reach was more “fashionable” during earlier times. Since then, Comparative Politics has made a general empirical turn. Given the new data abundance that scholars have created since the late 1990s, this empirical turn is a long awaited one. It provides not only fresh answers but also generalizable ones. Viewed from today, the general theoretical (and empirical) explorations of the previously mentioned scholars sometimes seem like a reminiscence of the past. However, to recall the insights of these eminent thinkers and their grand theorizing, connecting them to the most recent empirical studies, and so attempting to harmonize a fragmented field is the major concern of this book.

The book is particularly inspired by Linz's seminal work and follows in his footsteps (1964; 1975; 1977). His work is mostly read as a typology to distinguish between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. Totalitarian regimes are characterized by three features: (1) a monistic power center, (2) an ideology, and (3) societal mobilization. In contrast, authoritarian regimes are “political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism; without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinct mentalities); without intensive nor extensive political mobilization ..., and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits, but actually predictable ones” (Linz 1964, 297).

I follow Linz's macro-theoretical approach but read his work not only as a typology. Instead, I understand his work as a hybrid between typologies and explanations. A close reading reveals that he develops his typology with a steady focus on the question of stability. As such, his work does not only follow the ordering function of typologies (Collier, Laporte, and Seawright 2008; Lazarsfeld 1992) but has in mind what Colin Elman (2005) called decades later an “explanatory typology.” When formulating

the theoretical expectations of the book, it was important for me to make explicit its explanatory purpose. This book presents a comprehensive and novel theoretical framework that should develop explanatory power for all subtypes of autocratic regimes. Instead of focusing on the power architecture or concrete actors, it emphasizes general structures and functions that all autocratic regimes share. It argues that all autocratic systems need to fulfill the key tasks of legitimation, repression, and co-optation to maintain stability.³ These “three pillars” (Gerschewski 2013; Gerschewski et al. 2013) make autocracies of various subtypes not only comparable but also explain their stability over the long run.⁴

As such, the book can be read as an update to what Linz proposed four decades ago. Yet, an original theoretical synthesis should always go beyond what has been written before. This book does so in three ways. First, it deviates from Linz’s original dimensions and proposes new ones. Instead of highlighting monism vs. limited pluralism, ideologies vs. mentalities, and mobilization vs. no mobilization as Linz (1975) previously did, I refer to different forms of legitimation, repression, and co-optation. Second, the theoretical framework presented here is not only meant as a typology; it is also designed to explicitly provide explanatory power. I develop concrete theoretical expectations of why autocratic rule remains stable – and not “only” what autocratic rule looks like. Third, the book carves out two specific ruling logics, over-politicization and de-politicization, that explain the stability of autocratic rule and that – as will be shown later – have the potential to replace the old distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. This book is so both a continuation and a significant further development of Linz’s work in light of newer waves of research. Yet, it shares Linz’s macro-theoretical

³ To some extent, it could be argued that legitimation, repression, and co-optation are key functions of all types of political systems. They are not restricted to autocracies but may apply to democracies as well. I am sympathetic to this line of reasoning. Democracies must also relate to the people, the opposition, and the elite. These are the three key groups in democracies as well and might turn into existential threats. A democracy might so become a vulgarized, populist-majoritarianist ochlocracy (people), might turn into a too polarized pluralistic society (opposition), or a kleptocratic corrupt nepotism (elite). While historical examples abound, a more systematic theorization would be required. Moreover, different concepts might be employed to explain the stability of democratic regimes. In particular, repression might be changed into compulsion or coercion and the use of the Weberian notion of the (legitimate) state monopoly of use of force. But, of course, as Loewenstein (1937) initially formulated and Capoccia (2005) further developed, “militant democracies” do fight against existential threats by antisystem actors as well.

⁴ Let me add that I assume causal asymmetry here. This means that I do not expect that the absence of (a combination of) factors that explain stability leads automatically to its reverse outcome, that is, instability.

Table I.1 *Connecting to and going beyond Linz’s work*

	Linz’s Classical Distinction	The Proposed Distinction
Typological Dimensions/ “Theory Frames”	1. Monism vs. limited pluralism 2. Ideology vs. mentality 3. Mobilization vs. no mobilization	A configuration of 1. forms of legitimation 2. forms of repression 3. forms of co-optation
Resulting Types/ Ruling Logics	Totalitarian vs. authoritarian regimes	Over-politicizing vs. de-politicizing logic
Research Aims	- Typology of political regimes - Implicit explanatory aim	- Typology of political regime logics - Explicit explanatory aim

perspective and his commitment to summarizing a wealth of insights into one coherent framework. Table I.1 provides an overview.

In order to develop explanatory power, the concepts of legitimation, repression, and co-optation go beyond “mere” typological dimensions. Instead, I put a lot of emphasis on careful concept-building and try to do justice to the rich history and substance of these concepts. In this light, I upgrade these concepts and consider them as partial “theory frames” (Rueschemeyer 2009, 2).⁵ Theory frames should represent repositories of previous studies and should “absorb earlier research results” (Rueschemeyer 2009, 15) to consolidate and unify our current knowledge. The theory frames are understood as partial building blocks that inform definitions, conceptualizations, and operationalizations but also spell out concrete working mechanisms and guide theoretical expectations. As such, the theory frames that are proposed here are geared toward generalizations and represent in themselves an “abstraction separated from a concrete case” (Alexander 1987, 2). In line with the previously stated, retrospective ambition of the book, the hope is that these individual theory frames provide an important step from “information about many facts (*polymathia*)” to “well-ordered knowledge (*episteme*)” (Rueschemeyer 2009, 4). Based on these building blocks, the second step

⁵ As some familiar with Rueschemeyer’s (2009) work will notice, I deviate from his idea of theory frames in one important aspect. He uses theory frames more in the sense of general social theory, while I confine them to a specific domain, the comparative study of political regimes. Rueschemeyer structures his work along explanations that are based on actors’ knowledge, norms, preferences, emotions, as well as aggregate explanations based on institutions, social identities, and cultural and other macro-contexts. Yet, I find it suitable to borrow his term as his work stresses the portability of theory frames; an emphasis on their usability for empirical research; and, particularly, an outspoken dedication to synthesizing previous work.

in theory-building consists of productively combining the partial frames into one coherent theoretical edifice. By doing so, I put forward the conjunctural nature of the argument. The book proposes so a new modular theory of autocratic regime stability. It adopts a macro-theoretical approach written in a Linzian spirit.

In the following section, I introduce the three partial theory frames and indicate how and why they jointly form specific configurations.

The Two Logics of Autocratic Rule

The modular theory that I propose here consists of three components that – put together – should explain autocratic regime stability. The three components correspond to the three major sources of autocratic regimes' vulnerability. They are structural in nature and relate to the main function of legitimating autocratic rule, repressing the opposition, and co-opting potential rivals. In the following, I briefly identify the main arguments that stand behind these components. Based on this discussion, I proceed to how these components jointly form configurations that follow either an over-politicizing logic or a de-politicizing logic.

The Three Partial Theory Frames

When crafting the first partial theory frame for explaining autocratic stability, legitimation, the old and almost old-fashioned works on totalitarian regimes are crucial. The role that ideologies play in these regimes cannot be underestimated. For Arendt's socio-philosophical attempt to understand the nature of totalitarianism, ideology was nothing less than essential (Arendt [1951] 1966). For Friedrich and Brzezinski, who aimed at a more structuralist explanation, ideology was the first (and arguably the most important) point in their "six-point catalogue" that summarized the main features of totalitarian rule (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956). Relatedly, an almost forgotten approach comparing these ideologies to political religions deepens an understanding of why and how political ideologies work and can cultivate a following among the people (Aron 1970; Gentile 2005; Maier 2007; Voegelin [1938] 1996).

Despite the passage of time, the overarching questions remain the same today: How do autocratic leaders justify their grip on power? And, how do they generate a following among the ordinary people? To legitimize political rule, autocrats have been using and still use a wide variety of political ideologies, including ethnic and religious claims, and often manipulate collective memory by instrumentalizing historical narratives such as the struggle for independence against colonialism and revolutionary

upheavals. Moreover, with the rise of more performative autocracies, a second route to justify their grip on power is the modernization discourse. If an autocracy delivers in terms of socioeconomic well-being, it is not necessarily the case that it must fall into the modernization trap and be “doomed” to democratize (Huntington 1991; Lipset 1959; Przeworski and Limongi 1997). Instead, Guillermo O’Donnell has already paved the way for the counterargument that economic success, coupled with promises for political order and security, can be the driving force for a coup coalition of technocrats to intervene in politics (O’Donnell 1979; 1988). Economic success does not automatically generate democracy; it can sustain autocratic rule by providing a valuable legitimizing discourse (Collier 1979a). The differences within these legitimating formulae will be leveraged to delineate the different logics of over-politicization and de-politicization. The former exploits tendencies to absolutize political ideas, while the latter concentrates on performance legitimization.

While a regime’s legitimization efforts target the population as a whole and try to instill a legitimacy belief in the hearts and minds of the citizens, repression aims at the opposite. It instills fear among the people and blocks dissent from spreading. Repression, the second component of explaining autocratic stability, is a comparatively well-researched topic. This advantageous research situation can be traced back to major data collection efforts to make information comparable across cases. Well-established datasets like the Cingranelli and Richards Human Rights Dataset (CIRI) or the Political Terror Scale (PTS) have accelerated progress in comparing human rights abuses (Cingranelli and Richards 2010; Wood and Gibney 2010). However, while it might come as no surprise that autocracies use repression to stay in power, we are able to discern a more fine-grained picture by disentangling the different forms and types of repression. This book does so by arguing that we should at least accept the distinction between soft repression, which curtails political rights and civil liberties, and hard repression, which targets a person’s integrity. Autocracies differ in their blend of various forms and types of repression. But what all repressive means have in common is the purpose of undercutting the conversion of what David Easton would call a pre-political “want” into an articulated political “demand” (Easton 1965b, 71–72). Autocracies favor such preemptive repression to prevent pre-political wants from entering the political stage. However, even if the want has already turned into a concrete political demand, autocratic regimes do not shy away from – in a literal sense – repressing that demand.

Finally, the third component is co-optation. As a key source of potential threat to autocratic regime survival, this book discusses the relevance of intra-elite cohesion. For actor-centered research, a classic

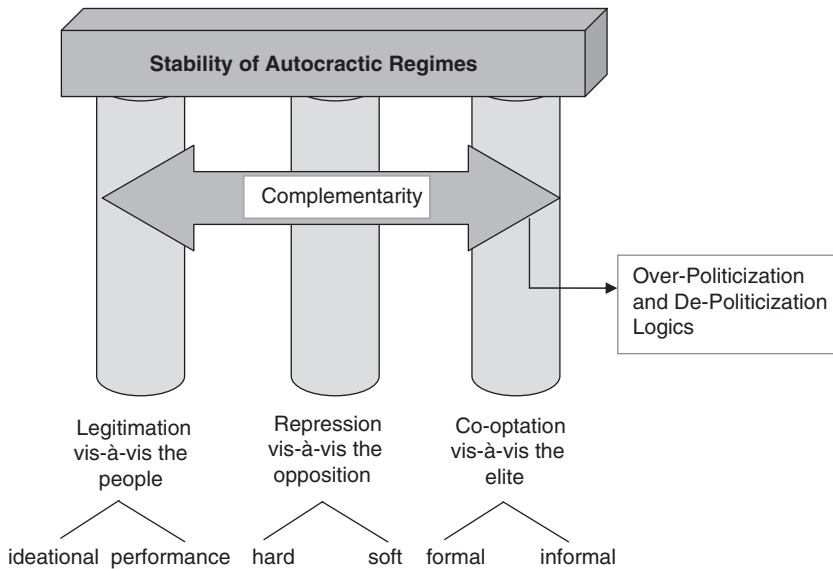


Figure I.1 The stability of autocratic regimes

argument is the split between hard-liners and soft-liners that triggers – and sometimes even causes – democratization processes (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Przeworski 1991). According to this strand of research, eliminating this weak point is vital for autocratic survival. Coups remain the most frequent way that an autocracy ends. To maintain intra-elite unity, therefore, has been, for good reason, at the core of the most recent explanations of autocratic regime stability. A number of important works have dealt with this aspect and have provided important insights. Co-optation via formalized party channels and parliamentary arenas serves as the transmission belt for securing elite cohesion, for increasing credibility, for prolonging time frames – in short, for making politics more predictable – and therefore durable (Brownlee 2007; Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; 2007; Magaloni 2006; 2008; Svobik 2009; 2012). This more recent wave of scholarship has concentrated on formal institutional arrangements. Yet, in the shadowland of informality, patron-client relationships can act as functional equivalents that are more difficult to study in a comparative fashion. Work that stems mostly from the 1970s helps conceptualize and theorize this second route of dispersing benefits to informally tie rival elite actors to the inner sanctum (Eisenstadt 1973b; Eisenstadt and Lemarchand 1981; Erdmann and Engel 2007; Lemarchand and Legg 1972; Scott 1972). Figure I.1 provides a graphical illustration.

The Two Logics: Over-Politicization and De-Politicization

Various forms of legitimation, repression, and co-optation perform basic functions that all autocratic regimes, irrespective of their regime subtype, need to address. Autocracies might differ in their structural power architecture and in the composition of their actors, but they all face the same challenges of meeting the demands of citizens, of the opposition, and of rival elites. An autocracy needs to continuously address these three sources of threat.

However, there are multiple challenges that autocracies are confronted with and that cannot be tackled simultaneously. Instead, power and resources need to be carefully distributed. This book asks the following questions: Are there certain features that go together better than others to explain a certain outcome? What configurations of factors lead to stability? In logical terms, the number of possible combinations is – given two forms of legitimation, repression, and co-optation – 2^6 . Out of these sixty-four logically possible combinations of factors, it will be argued that we can reduce complexity and narrow down this number to two main paths that explain stable autocratic rule: an over-politicization and a de-politicization path.

The key concept employed to address the theoretical and empirical fit between factors is complementarity, borrowed from the literature on economic sociology and the varieties of capitalism debate (Hall and Gingerich 2009; Hall and Soskice 2001b). Although these scholars deal with a completely different object of study, I argue that the concept of complementarity is both sufficiently elastic and encompassing to allow its translation and application to comparative autocracy research. In most general terms, complementarity stresses that some components go together better than others and is therefore well suited for explanations in which certain factors interact with each other and form specific combinations.

I will examine the theoretical expectation of an over-politicization and a de-politicization logic against three distinct understandings of complementarity. First, two factors can be complementary if they make up for mutual deficiencies. In such an understanding, they serve as the missing ingredient and complement each other to a whole. Second, complementarity can be understood not as a contrasting ingredient, but rather in terms of similarity. Both factors are then perceived as being in a symbiotic relationship in which they pull in the same direction. Third, economists have advanced a specific understanding of complementarity that relies on the cross price elasticity of demand. It measures the responsiveness of the demand for one product if the price of another product changes. For

example, pipes and tobacco are complementary goods: if the price for tobacco rises, the demand for pipes falls. In analogy, if for example the price for repression rises, how does the demand for legitimation react? I probe these three distinct understandings of complementarity for the relationships between forms of legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes.

Two configurations for explaining autocratic regime stability stand out. Autocracies can either over-politicize or de-politicize their people. As indicated above, while the former logic activates the people, the latter renders them passive. In the over-politicizing world, autocracies aim at mass societal mobilization and try to win the hearts and minds of ordinary people. They seek to construct and anchor a legitimacy belief in their citizens. This legitimacy belief can rest on full-fledged political ideologies like communism or fascism, but it can also hark back to thin ideologies like nationalism or the politicization of religion and ethnicity. A regime's legitimation efforts justify – and sometimes even demand – the use of soft and hard repression measures framed as vital for the sake of the higher ideological good. Meanwhile, co-optation usually takes place via formal channels in the over-politicizing world of autocracies. The party is emblematic of the “organizational weapon” (Selznick 1952) that secures intra-elite unity.

Standing in stark contrast to the over-politicizing logic is the second logic of de-politicization. In the de-politicizing world, autocracies aim at the contrary. De-politicizing the public means that instead of mobilizing the masses via ideologies, the citizenry is discouraged from political participation and is kept “satisfied.” People are expected to remain apolitical and be excluded from the political arena. Mass political apathy is achieved and assured by socioeconomic performance and public good provision. As long as the regime delivers public goods such as economic growth, social welfare, and law and order, the population is expected to avoid engaging in the thorny business of politics. Legitimation via performance is then complemented by the absence of hard repression, which might ignite protest and become a catalyst that drives people to the streets. In other words, hard repression can break the fragile autocratic contract in which political abstinence is tolerated as long as the incumbent regime delivers.

However, instruments of soft repression that target political participation but do not violate the personal integrity of most individuals are subtler in their design. Across autocratic regimes, we observe a common phenomenon in which political participation seems to be traded for economic prosperity. Soft repression is then tolerated by (large segments of) society as a necessary evil to uphold national order. Shying away

Table I.2 *The two logics of stable autocratic rule*

Following an Over-Politicizing Logic	A configuration of the following components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ideational legitimation AND 2. hard AND soft repression AND 3. formal ways of co-optation
Following a De-Politicizing Logic	A configuration of the following components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. performance legitimation AND 2. soft repression AND 3. formal OR informal ways of co-optation

from hard repression while using the full arsenal of soft instruments of repression is complemented by formal and informal co-optation arrangements, resulting in a de-politicization configuration. This book argues that two basic configurations of over-politicization and de-politicization logics constitute the two logics of autocratic regimes. Table I.2 provides an overview of the two logics whose components are connected with the logical operators of “AND” and “OR.”

Today, Linz’s classic typology of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes has reached its empirical limits and has by and large lost its empirical usefulness. On the one hand, the totalitarianism pole is almost completely empty, while the authoritarian pole is overpopulated. To be sure, totalitarian regimes are found in history, with Nazi Germany, Stalin’s Soviet Union, and Mao Zedong’s China as the most prominent examples. But as of today, only North Korea might fit into this category – and North Korea might have also already degenerated into a “post-totalitarian regime” (Linz and Stepan 1996). The classification of North Korea might be disputable, but what seems clear is that almost all nondemocratic regimes today are nontotalitarian. The discriminatory power of the classic typology in comparative regime research has become almost obsolete. The spectrum of nondemocratic regimes is crowded at the authoritarian pole with the concept of authoritarianism not being capable of drawing analytical distinctions among nondemocratic regimes (Snyder 2006).

It was in 1964 when Juan Linz (1964, 291) voiced a scholarly “uneasiness” about a potential mischaracterization of Francoist Spain as being totalitarian – back then the most widespread concept for describing non-democratic rule. With this essay, Linz laid ground for the illustrious career that the term authoritarianism has had since then. Now, the tide has turned. Totalitarianism has become a concept of the past and authoritarianism has

lost its discriminatory power vis-à-vis other forms of nondemocratic rule. In this situation, a new scholarly uneasiness can be observed. I take this uneasiness as a starting point for developing the two logics of autocratic rule. I propose that the distinction between over-politicizing and de-politicizing regimes is today more adequate and has the potential to develop enough explanatory and discriminatory power to replace the former distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

To recapitulate, the central claim of the book is that autocracies are inherently insecure. Existential threats emanate from three main sources: the people, the opposition, and the elite. By addressing these three groups, autocracies want to organize certainty. They legitimate their rule vis-à-vis the people, repress dissent from the opposition, and co-opt potential intra-elite rivals.⁶ The book develops a macroscopic theory, combining partial theory frames that are built around these key actors into a configurational argument about their specific complementary interaction. It argues that autocratic rule relies on two logics: autocracies follow either an over-politicizing logic or a de-politicizing logic. As a result of the book's abstract theorizing, its comprehensive theoretical framework claims to hold across time and to be applicable for the comparative study of all subtypes of autocratic regimes. The theoretical framework is not bound to specific regions, nor to certain periods of time. Instead, it zooms out of these specificities and provides students and scholars of comparative authoritarianism a general macro-theoretical framework. By so doing, this book aims to facilitate comparative analyses across cases.

Testing the Theory: East Asia's Century of Dictatorships

As with any original theory, the proposed theoretical framework requires rigorous empirical testing. In this book, all East Asian autocracies since the end of the Asia-Pacific War in 1945 are analyzed. The analysis demonstrates that the three pillars of stability have not only individual explanatory power across autocratic subtypes but also that the configurations follow an over-politicization or de-politicization logic. These two configurations are empirically the most robust ones, forming the two worlds of autocratic rule.

⁶ I need to state that the tripartition of the people, the opposition, and the elite and the corresponding tasks of legitimation, repression, and co-optation is almost an ideal-typical one. In empirical reality, autocratic regimes also legitimate their rule vis-à-vis the opposition and the elite as much as the addressees vary for the tasks of repression and co-optation. Yet, I maintain that the main target audience of legitimation is the people, of repression the opposition, and of co-optation the elite.

The selection of the empirical cases follows the advice of Valerie Bunce that “the most illuminating comparisons are those that restrain their universe of cases while expanding the range of results” (Bunce 2003, 169). To hold cases comparable, the universe of cases is restricted to an intraregional comparison within East Asia since 1945, which maintains a balance between heterogeneity and homogeneity of cases. In a Millean tradition, one needs heterogeneous cases for causal leverage; on the other hand, one also needs homogeneity for controlling for factors (Gerring and Thomas 2005).

East Asia provides an extremely demanding test for the validity of the two-logics theory, as it has hosted over time a variety of autocratic regimes within one region. Compared with other regions in the world, this heterogeneity of regime types makes it a tough test for the central claims that the theory sufficiently covers all subtypes of autocratic regimes and that a classification of stable autocracies into two worlds makes sense. For example, Eastern and Central Europe were once dominated by communist one-party regimes that deviated to a larger or lesser extent from the Soviet role model. Latin America has had a strong bias toward military regimes, while the Middle East and North Africa have been split almost in half into republics and traditional monarchies. In contrast to these world regions, East Asia unites a greater diversity of autocratic regime types in one region.

To offer an early look at the heterogeneity of East Asia’s autocracies, which will be discussed in the empirical chapters in Part III, let us kaleidoscopically review three empirical cases. First, consider North Korea. After World War II, the Korean Peninsula was divided into the US-led South and the more prosperous North that was under the control of the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities quickly established their template of autocratic rule. Land reform was undertaken, a repression apparatus built, a communist party established, and a new ruler installed. Kim Il Sung, who headed the country for more than four decades, was supposed to have been a safe choice for the Soviet authorities: he had a military record; was among the most sought-after soldiers by the Japanese; and, more importantly, was ideologically trained while in Soviet exile between 1940 and 1945.

Kim Il Sung was supposed to be the puppet leader for the Soviet authorities. However, he followed his own nationalist version of communism. It was in 1955, when for the first time, he publicly mentioned *juche* – a made-up word that became omnipresent in North Korea’s public and private life. The triumph of the *juche* ideology that stressed self-reliance over any other value was astonishing. It might be almost unparalleled worldwide. Within two decades, *juche* was everywhere in North Korea. There was *juche* music, *juche* architecture, *juche* dance;

economic production followed *juche*, and so did the military organization. How could this ideology gain so much ground within so little time? How could it become the most dominant ideology and crowd out any alternative *Weltanschauung*? How was it possible that the North Korean people were publicly crying at Kim Il Sung's funeral in 1994 – and by most accounts these were not fake tears, but genuine sorrow?

Take the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos as a second illustration. While North Korea will serve as a paradigmatic case for the over-politicization logic, the evolution of this regime is a completely different story and evades clear-cut classification efforts. Marcos was elected in 1965 by democratic means but then became an autocratic leader by 1972 (at the latest) when he declared martial law. He set up what Kang has pointedly described as a dysfunctional and “crony” capitalist state in which “Marcos and his cronies could siphon off the proceeds” (Kang 2002, 74–75) and rob the country. His rule is best characterized as a form of neo-sultanistic rule, that is, an extreme form of a personalist regime. The regime's inner sanctum can be described as concentric circles with Marcos and his wife Imelda at the center of power surrounded by his cronies. The further cronies were from the center, the less influential they were – and the less they profited.

Marcos's rule did not rely on ideological appeal and his propagated slogan of a “New Society” never gained traction among the population. Instead, he created a dense network of loyal followers around him. By so doing, he alienated the older oligarchy and created a *nouveau riche* class that was to a large extent dependent on his goodwill. Unlike his neighboring autocrats in South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Singapore, he did not create strong formal institutions but instead personalized power relations. Although successful in the first years with a divide and conquer strategy by which he effectively demobilized the opposition, eventually he came under mounting pressure when the opposition began to join forces and the economy slowed down – depriving him of allocation capacities to uphold his cronyism. Civil society organized, the People's Power Movement grew, opposition parties allied, tensions in the military became stronger, the Catholic Church openly criticized the regime, and US support waned. Marcos, who desperately pressed ahead with snap elections in 1986, wanted to break free from this pressure, but he miscalculated. His blatant electoral fraud was not tolerated. Instead, millions of Filipinos entered the streets for four days of nonviolent protest that ultimately ended with Marcos fleeing the country in a helicopter.

Finally, let us briefly look at the case of Singapore. While North Korea was obsessed with an ideological penetration of society and Marcos's rule was designed only to enrich and aggrandize himself and his

cronies, Singapore is almost quintessential for a performance-driven de-politicization logic. Singapore’s peculiarities are manifold, but what needs to be kept in mind is its strong survival imperative after having left (or rather being expelled from) the Federation of Malaya in 1965. Out of a feeling of economic insecurity, a siege mentality developed and the survival leitmotif was coupled with a strong sense of nationalism, pragmatism, and above all developmentalism in which the fate of the state has been seen in providing socioeconomic success. This founding myth has been reinforced ever since, making it the major legitimacy claim of the regime. The Singaporean regime even takes pride in not being portrayed as ideological, but as overly pragmatic instead and being guided by “moneytheism” (Mauzy and Milne 2002, 51). This term is attributed to former Singaporean foreign minister S. Rajaratnam who also sparked the controversial debate about “Asian values” that asserted a cultural affinity of Confucianism to authoritarianism by highlighting authority and discipline (Rajaratnam 1977). While this debate was obviously self-serving, it also showcases the hierarchical and meritocratic co-optation efforts that the Singaporean regime undertook. Over the years, it was particularly the ruling party, the People’s Action Party (PAP), that developed into a finely calibrated, strictly formalized, and enormously sensitive and responsive intra-elite co-optation arena that – above all – almost fused with state bureaucracy. Key political positions are occupied by a small and selected group of highly educated people. As such, it is a widely shared belief in Singapore that only the brightest minds should pursue an official career in politics – careers that also entail the highest salaries with top officials paid five times more than the US president (Wong and Huang 2010).

These three kaleidoscopic cases illustrate the diversity of East Asia’s autocracies spanning the twentieth century: Marcos’s neo-sultanistic regime only geared at systematically robbing the state without building any ideational basis or relying on socioeconomic performance; Singapore, on the contrary, being emblematic for a de-politicization logic that fosters a nationalism-cum-developmentalism formula; and finally, North Korea, the arguably most ideologized state in the world that over-politicizes its people and that created such a strong personality cult around its long-time leader Kim Il Sung that his death even made people cry in the streets. The autocratic experience in the region is exceptionally diverse – which, in turn, gives comparativists robust analytical leverage.

Beyond methodological considerations that necessitate a rigorous testing ground, the focus on East Asia brings another added value. Cultural differences and linguistic fragmentation had a lasting imprint on the scholarly debate about North and Southeast Asia. To a large extent,

it used to impede comparative studies. Country (or subregion) specialists still heavily populate the field. In the eyes of comparativist scholars, students of East Asia are often too narrowly focused. Yet, in recent years, important and insightful studies have broadened the perspective and have begun to engage more thoroughly and systematically in comparative work (Croissant and Lorenz 2018; Slater 2010b). With regard to autocratic regimes, Greitens (2016), for example, studies the role of the secret police across South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Lee (2015) compares the responses to popular protests in the Philippines, South Korea, China, and Burma. Dukalskis (2017) does not shy away from comparing the creation of an authoritarian public sphere in North Korea, China, and Burma, while Morgenbesser (2016; 2020) explores the role of elections and the “rise of sophisticated authoritarianism” across Southeast Asia. This book follows this younger tradition of comparing across East Asia’s autocratic experience.

As we know from Giovanni Sartori, to compare is to control. And if we do not compare, we lose an important yardstick to assess to what extent an explanation in country A is valid for country B. While detailed case studies obviously have their own merits and have been immensely helpful for this analysis as well, we need to overcome what has been called an “anxiety about the region’s comparative obstacles” (Slater 2008, 57). It is in the comparative spirit of the previously mentioned authors that this book tries to overcome this anxiety, weave together insights from different cases, and compare them systematically along one coherent theoretical framework. In this book, the autocratic experiences of forty-five autocratic regimes in thirteen East Asian countries are compared. These thirteen countries are Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, North Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. They span a time frame of more than six decades, from 1945 to 2008.

The empirical section of the book (Part III) demonstrates that the three key functions of legitimation, repression, and co-optation serve as helpful tools for “disciplining” the wealth of empirical case material. They impose a useful comparative structure. Case narratives are then used to portray the different ways in which the Asian autocracies have justified their rule, oppressed citizens, and bound elite members to their inner sanctum.⁷ Building on these case narratives, a specific method is used, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), which is particularly suited for detecting conjunctural causation. This type of causation is

⁷ All case narratives can be found in the online appendix (www.cambridge.org/Gerschewski) to this book.

particularly concerned with how different causal factors interact in concert, rather than looking at the strength of individual factors. As the method’s major merit lies in uncovering configurational paths, it is the appropriate method for the configurational nature of the argument on over-politicization and de-politicization logics. And, indeed, the systematic empirical analysis of Asia’s autocracies reveals strong empirical support for the two-logics theory. Despite the enormous variety of East Asia’s autocratic experience, around four out of five stable autocracies relied on either over-politicization or de-politicization. These two logics explain to a large extent why autocratic rule remains stable.

In sum, East Asia’s autocracies are an ideal testing ground for the macro-theory of autocratic regime stability presented here. With their high regional variety, East Asian autocracies provide a hard test for the wider applicability of the theory. Naturally, the biggest challenge in comparing these diverse cases over time lies in proposing a theoretical framework that is, on the one hand, abstract enough to cover all cases since 1945 and, on the other hand, context-sensitive enough to allow for a case-based comparison. This book attempts to strike a balance between generalizability and specificity. It argues that irrespective of the inner power architecture of these regimes, the three key functions of legitimization, repression, and co-optation are essential for all autocracies, forming two distinct stability configurations. This book can so be read as an attempt to unite and compare East Asia’s autocratic experience under one general theoretical umbrella.

Structure of the Book

The book is structured as follows. After this introduction, Part II, Theory, is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 clarifies what autocracies actually are and how we can approach the explanandum of this book: autocratic regime stability. The following three chapters then present the partial theory frames that are built around the three key groups of the people, the opposition, and the elite. These theory frames condense our existing knowledge by spelling out definitions, conceptualizations, and empirical operationalizations, engaging with concrete working mechanisms and theoretical expectations. These partial theory frames are the building blocks for the subsequent configurational argument.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the role of ordinary citizens in autocratic contexts. Why do people follow the demands of autocratic rulers? How can autocrats win the hearts and minds of people? How do autocrats legitimate their rule? Chapter 2 discusses classic and contemporary answers to these questions, providing an inventory of different explanatory routes

that clarify why people follow their autocratic leaders. As the legitimation dimension lies at the heart of the distinction between over-politicization and de-politicization logics and as it currently still constitutes the biggest research lacuna, it will be discussed in more depth.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to the opposition. How do autocrats organize certainty when it comes to their domestic political opponents? How is this heterogeneous group kept at bay? How are opposition demands repressed in autocratic regimes? Chapter 3 answers these questions by identifying and differentiating the various types, logics, and instruments of repression. Chapter 4 then deals with the third group that existentially threatens autocratic regimes: the elite. It tackles the following questions: How is elite cohesion achieved? How can potential rivals be tied to the regime in such a way that they do not use their power and resources against but rather in favor of regime incumbents?

Chapter 5 brings together the partial theory frames that are presented in the preceding chapters. It provides the rationale behind why the three functions of legitimation, repression, and co-optation are complementary. It examines different understandings of why certain factors go together better than others and why this makes the survival of autocratic rule more likely. Chapter 5 details then the two logics and their underlying rationalities by which autocratic regimes operate: over-politicization and de-politicization.

Part III, the Empirical Test, explores the explanatory power of the theoretical framework. For this purpose, East Asia is chosen as a testing ground. As noted, the heterogeneity of East Asia's experience with various autocratic regime types makes it well suited for comparative work. A careful comparativist needs to develop a good sense of proportions and dimensions. By zooming in too much on one specific case, one risks getting lost among the wealth of empirical information. In this situation, detailed case knowledge trumps a generalization impetus. However, by taking a bird's-eye view and instead analyzing across a large set of discrete empirical observations, one risks losing too much vital information from the individual concrete cases. The drive for generalization then trumps detailed case knowledge. This book takes a *via media*. By relying on individual case narratives of all forty-five autocratic regimes, it aims to be sufficiently case-sensitive while not eschewing cautious generalizations.

To test the theory, Part III is structured along three empirical chapters. Chapter 6 provides the rationale for the case selection. This chapter further elaborates why East Asia is particularly well suited to the comparison of autocratic regime stability. Chapter 7 then uses paradigmatic cases to make plausible the theoretical expectation of the two logics. It is also meant to provide an overview of the forty-five autocratic regimes in

East Asia. It demonstrates descriptive patterns of the regimes and introduces a new dataset. Based on these empirical explorations, Chapter 8 is dedicated to the systematic empirical analysis of why some autocracies remain stable while others collapse. Its major aim lies in demonstrating that certain configurations of factors matter. Using the well-suited configurational method of QCA, it demonstrates that autocracies rely on either over-politicization or de-politicization configurations. These are the two major logics of autocratic rule.

Part IV, the Conclusion, reviews the theoretical usefulness in light of the empirical results. It identifies important lessons that can be learned – both in theoretical and empirical terms – and concludes by highlighting various avenues that future research might want to take.

Part II

Theory

1 Explaining Autocratic Stability

Arend Lijphart's (1999) comparative analysis of democratic government forms is a modern classic. He advances an argument about "patterns of democracy" in which he establishes a distinction between two forms of democratic government, one concentrating power, the other dispersing it: "There are many ways in which, in principle, a democracy can be organized and run; in practice, too, modern democracies exhibit a variety of formal governmental institutions. ... However, clear patterns and regularities appear when these institutions are examined from the perspective of how majoritarian or consensual their rules and practices are" (Lijphart 1999, 1). Like Lijphart's work, this book is interested in patterns and regularities of political regimes. Unlike his work, it focuses on the opposite pole of the regime spectrum and looks at the ways in which autocracies are organized and run. The perspective from which they are examined is how over-politicizing or de-politicizing their rules and practices are.

The explanandum of this book is the stability of autocratic regimes. The starting point for theory development is the vulnerability of all autocratic regimes. As Andreas Schedler (2013, 37) points out, these regimes face "epistemic uncertainties." But even if threats are unavoidable, autocrats do all they can to control or at least to manage these uncertainties. The nature of autocracies is that they want to be in control – even of the unforeseeable. While democracies are "organized uncertainties" (Przeworski 1991, 13), autocracies are attempts to square the circle: They aim at organized certainty.

Of course, in democracies political actors, whether parties or individual politicians, want to stay in power as well. Power, particularly power distribution, is the DNA of politics everywhere. Laswell's (1936) famous dictum "who gets what, when, how?" refers to all kinds of political decisions. Yet, on a structural and polity level, democracies are organized in such a way that involved political actors accept that they do not know *ex ante* the outcome of their political actions. They submit their political interest to the rules of the political game and the uncertainty produced by the

interplay between different actors' institutions (Müller 2021). In contrast, autocracies do not subscribe to these rules; instead, they create their own.

Democracies are systems in which losers of political contestation accept that they may lose. After political losses, they do not revolt against the system because they trust in the existing rules and in the fairness of political institutions. They continue their political activities with the hope that they might gain the upper hand in the next election. A democracy is stable if this equilibrium process is self-reinforcing. Autocracies, in turn, are systems in which the risk of losing is deliberately and purposely made unlikely. Autocrats are bad losers – or to be more precise, they manipulate the game to such an extent that they minimize the jeopardy of losing power. In other words, autocratic rule is obsessed with control. Autocrats want to know what the masses think and do. They want to know what the opposition thinks and does. And they want to know what rival elites think and do.

What Is an Autocratic Regime?

There is no history of autocratic political thought. Since the canonical Aristotelian tripartition into the rule of the many, the few, and the one, autocratic regimes have been an integral part of political science (Aristotle [335 BC]1995). Yet, autocracies have not received the same attention as their democratic counterparts. It might be safe to say that the history of political ideas is by and large the history of democratic ideas. There is an abundance of canonized democratic theories, but no agreement on how to bring order into autocratic theory. We know much more about how democracy has taken shape in varying temporal and spatial contexts; how it has evolved into different types, forms, and shades; and how it has become a (seemingly) worldwide success story. The scholarly efforts have found their rich manifestations in numerous classic textbooks (Keane 2009; Sartori 1973; Schmidt 2000; Shapiro 2003). For example, democratic theory distinguishes between liberal, republican, representative, constitutional, economic, participatory, deliberative, critical, and radical versions. Each of these traditions draws upon a long history of political thinkers and has its own founding fathers, be it Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Tocqueville, Mill, Marx, or more modern thinkers like Schumpeter, Habermas, and Weber. In contrast, a *systematic* account of the counterpart, “autocratic political theory,” remains missing.

The conceptual challenge begins already with the basic concept of autocracy. Most theoretical traditions accept democracy as the appropriate umbrella term (with notable exceptions, such as “polyarchy” (Dahl 1971)) and see elections at its core – which, however, is not unproblematic when conceptualizing hybrid and autocratic regimes (Cassani 2014;

Morgenbesser 2014). Yet it is safe to say that compared to the democratic pole in which the concept of democracy disciplines a wide variety of distinct theoretical traditions and empirical (defective) subtypes (Collier and Levitsky 1997; Merkel 2004), the autocratic side remains rather fuzzy. In most of the contemporary literature, autocracy is considered a mere residual of whatever is not classified as democracy (Marquez 2017, 1–22). A positive definition of autocracy is still missing. Nondemocratic rule and autocratic rule are so often used interchangeably.

As stated earlier, for centuries the canonical differentiations of forms of political rule were those Aristotle formulated in the third book of his *Politics* (Aristotle [335 BC] 1995). Paralleling man and polis in his “political anthropology” (Höffe 2007, 34), Aristotle assumed that every human being was naturally a “political animal, coming together in cities for the sake of good life” (Aristotle [335 BC] 1995, III 6). His typology of political rule arrived at the famous three types of legitimate and illegitimate rule. The two categories that he considered were the number of people ruling (rule of one, of few, or of many) and their overall motive (whether rulers pursue the common good of the people or private interests). His morphology of the political yielded three forms of legitimate, that is, common-good oriented, rule: kingship for the rule of the one, aristocracy for the rule of the few, and “constitution”¹ for the rule of the many. Their “perversions” or illegitimate forms of rule that follow only private interest were the tyranny that “aims at the advantage of the monarch,” oligarchy that “aims at the prosperous,” and democracy for the “needy.” Rulers in these three illegitimate scenarios act for their corresponding self-interest and not for “the common profit” (Aristotle [335 BC] 1995, III 7, 1279, b 4).

Without attempting to detail here an exhaustive history of democratic theory, two semantic shifts stand out over time. First, democracy as it is understood today has obviously taken the place of constitution or polity and is no longer regarded as a “perversion” of the rule of the many. This semantic shift has led to a theoretical blank spot, leaving the “illegitimate rule of the many” open in most accounts. There is no modern counterpart to what democracy meant in Aristotle’s terms. Populism may be a modern candidate for this blank spot. Second, the dimension of common good or private interest orientation of the ruler has become obsolete. It is only implicitly present in contemporary theoretical

¹ “Constitution” is often used interchangeably with “polity” for the sake of terminological clarity, as Aristotle uses constitution and government interchangeably. By referring to constitution as a subtype, he faces a typical genus–species ambiguity. For a discussion, see the comment by Robinson in Aristotle’s work (Aristotle [335 BC] 1995, 23–25).

discussions. On the one hand, while democracies (rule of the many) are supposed to almost automatically follow the common interest due to the built-in mechanisms of power sharing and the underlying logic of the rule of, by, and for the people, autocracies (rule of the few or the one) are on the other hand almost always connected to following only private interests. Kingships as well as aristocracies that Aristotle once defined as legitimate have increasingly been questioned to what extent they really serve a common good. In a *normative* sense, political theorists agree today that legitimate autocracies are an oxymoron. The rule of the one or the few does not follow a common good. The idea of a benevolent dictator is outdated. In a strictly *empirical* sense, however, the oxymoron of legitimate autocracies can be dissolved. As will be shown later in more detail, some autocrats are perceived – *nolens volens* – as legitimate in the eyes of the ruled (Gerschewski 2018).

What the terminological discussion of Aristotle's basic types of legitimate and illegitimate rule indicates is the wide variety of autocracies. Terms that are too often used interchangeably have different etymological roots and carry nuanced semantics. Tyranny, despotism, feudalism, absolutism, dictatorship, autocracy, authoritarianism, and totalitarianism constitute potential overarching terms for a multiplicity of subtypes. Of the subtypes, one-party, military, and personalist regimes compete with monarchy, sultanism, theocracy, ideocracy, and the wide variety of "authoritarianism with adjectives." The last group is usually intended to qualify or weaken the authoritarian claim by referring to bureaucracies, economic success, elections, competition, adaptation, deliberation, and a general softness, smartness, or ability to learn and to be responsive. In sum, there is a wide range of autocratic rule that needs to be accounted for.

Of all these rivaling concepts, Giovanni Sartori favors autocracy as the most appropriate umbrella term – and so do I (Sartori 1987, 205). I define democracy and autocracy in the following manner: In democracies, power does not belong to a single person or a group of persons, while in autocracies concentration of power is perceived as a property by a given and identifiable person or group of persons. It is literally auto-cracy, meaning self-rule. It is political rule in which power is monopolized by a single person, a council, a committee, a junta, or a party. The crux, however, is that in autocracies the people, the addressee of power, are not involved in the formation of the political will. Political decisions are dictated by the autocrat to the addressee (Loewenstein 1959, 53). In this light, it is regrettable that an original idea of Carl Joachim Friedrich never found traction in political science. Friedrich proposed that the best-suited antonym of democracy should not be autocracy but rather hetero-cracy, or the rule by others (Friedrich 1957, 14). Given the emphasis on the locus of

power, the use of heterocracy would be appropriate. Arguing consistently from the perspective of the people, the main distinction would then be the source of final authority: the people or the others. Autocracies, therefore, are heteronomous states. As German state theorist Hans Kelsen put it: The addressee of the law differs from the creator of the law (Kelsen 1945). In this sense and following the Friedrich/Kelsen tradition, autocracies are understood here as heterocratic and heteronomous.

Particularly in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, authoritarianism is used more frequently than autocracy. The concept of authoritarianism goes back to the writings of Juan Linz (1964), who understood authoritarianism as distinct from both totalitarianism and democracy. By studying Francoist Spain, he argued that we should introduce a new and distinct regime type. Authoritarianism was therefore coined as a term to capture nondemocratic non-totalitarianism. With the worldwide near-demise of totalitarianism, authoritarianism has often simply been equated with non-democracy. While initially being only a residual category, it has become the norm. Authoritarianism populates almost all of the nondemocratic typological space. Yet, this development has also led to an unwelcome loss of discriminatory power (Snyder 2006; Snyder and Mahoney 1999).²

In light of this convoluted situation, I choose autocracy as the overarching term in this book. It is a better conceptual fit, as it is situated one level above authoritarianism and totalitarianism. The term autocracy captures the whole spectrum of nondemocratic rule without excluding other subtypes. As Chapter 5 details, I propose a new distinction for the autocratic typological space between over-politicizing and de-politicizing autocracies. I advance a two-logics theory that these are the two dominant logics of autocratic rule. Part III of the book then tests to what extent these two logics hold empirically. I seek to explain the stability of all autocracies in East Asia since 1945 and propose that the distinction between over-politicizing and de-politicizing autocracies has the potential to replace the classical totalitarianism–authoritarianism divide.

What Is Regime Stability?

The second key part of this book's explanandum is also not as intuitively clear as it may appear. Not only autocracy but also stability is a multifaceted term. It requires semantic clarification as well (Gerschewski

² Linz and Stepan (1996) later argued to include sultanism and post-totalitarianism as distinct regime types as well. This proposal would ease the heavy one-sidedness of putting too many regimes in the authoritarianism box. However, these two regime forms are not included in standard typologies, as their exceptional architecture of political rule would demand additional typological criteria.

2020b). In political science, at least three understandings of stability coexist (Hurwitz 1973). First, political stability refers to the absence of political violence and turmoil. The absence of strikes, riots, and mass demonstrations indicates this type of political stability. Second, strong cabinets and infrequent government changes are cited as signs of political stability. Third, the maintenance of an incumbent political regime is perceived as an indication of political stability as structural changes are avoided. The absence of coups, revolutions, and uprisings is an indicator for this third understanding of political stability. A regime is said to be unstable “whenever government executive power is subject to irregular seizures, attempted seizures, or widely expected seizures by force” (Higley and Burton 1989, 20). In the following discussion, only the latter two will be considered. Unfortunately, political violence that results from weak statehood capacities or civil wars is outside the scope of this book and will not be considered.

The stability of autocracies is conceptualized here in two ways. First is the focus on the temporal dimension. How long has the regime remained stable? A stable regime is simply a regime that has managed to survive over time. In most of the recent literature, this understanding of stability as durability and persistence is dominant. For example, Geddes (1999) has shown that one-party regimes survive on average 23 years, while military regimes last only 8.8 years. The “autocratic spell” (Svolik 2012), “tenure” (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010), or “regime duration” (Hadenius and Teorell 2007) is almost always measured in years in office. The idea in this conception of stability is straightforward: A long-lived regime is a stable regime.

However, there is an alternative way of conceptualizing stability. If one focuses on the power architecture of a regime, then the key question becomes whether or not a regime had to “accept” significant structural changes at neuralgic moments in time. From this perspective, a stable regime is a regime that does not need to change in the face of challenge. Stability becomes so semantically associated with maintaining an invariant and perpetual regime logic. An alternative to the durability approach described above is therefore to understand regime stability as continuity. The most turbulent times for autocracies are usually when they need to hand over power from one autocrat to the next. It is during these times of leadership succession that the regime is the most insecure.³ If a regime is able to smoothly hand over power while maintaining the same internal

³ It has recently been demonstrated that institutionalized rules for leadership succession are beneficial for the survival of the dictatorship; see Frantz and Stein (2016); Svolik (2018). Yet leadership succession remains a neuralgic point in time.

Table 1.1 *The explanandum: stability of autocratic regimes*

Term	Semantics
Autocratic regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defining features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Heterocracy: rule by others rather than the people, be it a single person, a council, a committee, a junta, or a party (b) Heteronomy: addressor and addressee of laws differ - Autocracy is one typological level above authoritarianism and totalitarianism and covers other nondemocratic subtypes (such as sultanism and post-totalitarianism)
Stability of autocratic regimes	Two understandings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Duration: the longer the regime stays in power, the more stable it is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Measurement via years in office (b) Continuity: the fewer structural changes a regime needs to accept, the more stable it is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Measurement via changes in the polity

power structure, it can be said to be stable. If, however, it backs down to pressure and needs to change its regime subtype, then the regime is less stable. For example, if a one-party regime morphs into a military dictatorship during leadership succession, it is considered less stable than a continuing party dictatorship. If the regime hybridizes, that is, accepts partially democratic institutions,⁴ or if it even fully democratizes in the wake of a crisis situation, it has proven to be even less stable.

In short, stable autocracies are regimes that either persist over time or are able to continue a similar power structure. Table 1.1 summarizes both components of the book's explanandum, the stability of autocracies.

Over-Politicization and De-Politicization in a Nutshell

This book proposes a modular theory for explaining autocratic regime stability. The argument is that autocratic rule faces three open flanks, the people, the opposition, and within the elite. As such, autocracies need to legitimate their rule vis-à-vis the people; repress dissenting voices from the opposition; and co-opt strategic elite members, mostly from the economic and military sector, such that these elites do not use their

⁴ There can also be strategic reasons behind the hybridization of autocratic regimes. Nominally democratic institutions might provide other benefits, including conceding to international incentives or preparing for a life after democratization; see, for example, Miller (2020) as well as Slater and Wong (2013).

resources against the regime. While autocracies would like to organize certainty by ruling out these three existential threats, they usually cannot do so simultaneously. Instead, they need to find a balance, a configuration of factors that produces stability. I set forth that these configurations follow a logic of either over-politicization or de-politicization.

This begs for clarification of what the political and the process of politicization mean in the first place. The study of the etymological origin of the political (Sellin [1978] 2001; Sternberger 1961) begins with the Greek *tá politiká*, which refers to public affairs that affect the *polites*, the citizens.⁵ In its Latin origin, most prominently in the work of Cicero, the understanding of the political as the public becomes evident in the definition of *res publica* that is contrasted with *res privata*. *Politicization*, therefore, means to shift the scales of what counts as political and what counts as private. *Over-politicization* can be defined as a process that turns many issues into political ones, that is, it makes issues public that have been private before, while *de-politicization* can be defined as attempts to move in the opposite direction and pull political issues into the private realm. The distinction between over-politicization and de-politicization mirrors the degree and magnitude of publicness.

For autocratic regimes, examples of over-politicization abound. It can be membership in the “right” sports club or youth organization, or working at the “right” workplace; it can be wearing certain clothing, believing the right ideology, and saying the right things in public. This ideological charging of private matters is instrumentalized to justify harsh repression of the nonbelievers. It is also often used as a guide to structure formal institutions, with the political party usually the most emblematic one.

In contrast, de-politicization refers to the opposite process. It aims at keeping the people outside the political arena. It aims at passive, uncritical, and apathetic followers who are kept satisfied. It aims at what Guillermo O'Donnell (1979, 143) describes aptly as “low-intensity citizenship.” As such, the ideal-typical difference between over-politicization and de-politicization can be captured as the difference between activation and passivation, between mobilization and demobilization, between creating true believers within the broader mass and keeping the masses satisfied and saturated by socioeconomic performance. While activating the masses might justify the use of harsh repression, the passivity of the people should not be obtained by the use of such forms of repression.

⁵ Of course, the Greek origins, particularly in the Aristotelian tradition, have a normative dimension of the political and refer to a common good and the *politike techné* as the art of reaching this common good. In a similar vein, Cicero's *De re publica*, closely following the Greek tradition, outlines a good and just form of rule. One needs to abstract from this normative dimension when dealing with autocratic regimes.

Instead, only softer forms of repression should be used, as harder ones might backfire and destroy the unspoken autocratic contract of “as long as you do not interfere in politics, you will be left alone,” that is, the separation of private and public spheres. Also, while the over-politicization logic favors formal institutional settings, the de-politicization logic tends to rely more strongly on the shadowland of informality and rules via patronage relations to co-opt strategic elites. These bundles of factors constitute the two logics.

Beyond the idea that politicization is a process of turning a private issue into a public one, the work of Carl Schmitt ([1932] 2002) can be employed here as well. Schmitt defined the essence of the political as the distinction between friend and foe, thereby explicitly stating that the foe should not be misunderstood as a private enemy but as a public *hostis* (Schwab 1968). The specifically political is in Schmitt’s work defined as the intensity of an association or dissociation of groups. While economics knows the distinction between profitable and unprofitable, morals between good and bad, and aesthetics between beautiful and ugly, the fundamental political distinction is – according to Schmitt – between friend and foe.⁶

Schmitt further argued that every religious, (ethnic or cultural) nationalist, economic or moral contrast can be politicized if it is stark and strong enough to be turned into a political one and if it develops enough discriminatory power to group people into friend and foe.⁷ While in his original 1927 edition he argued that the political has its own subject matter (*Sachgebiet*), he changed this paragraph in 1932, arguing there that the political has no subject matter of its own, but the political can draw its strength out of every area of human life (Schmitt [1932] 2002, 37–38). All aspects of human life become so politicizable. Coupled with his argument that every political entity can define an internal foe – an idea that he took from Roman state law – on its own terms, it opened doors to the (mis-)use of his writings for creating an internal foe and for providing a justification for fighting against these internal foes.

⁶ Obviously, these dichotomies bear some resemblance to the binary codes that Niklas Luhmann later developed in his systems theory.

⁷ The German original of Schmitt ([1932] 2002, 37–38) reads:

Jeder religiöse, moralische, ökonomische, ethnische oder andere Gegensatz verwandelt sich in einen politischen Gegensatz, wenn er stark genug ist, die Menschen nach Freund und Feind effektiv zu gruppieren. ... Das Politische kann seine Kraft aus den verschiedensten Bereichen menschlichen Lebens ziehen, aus religiösen, ökonomischen, moralischen und anderen Gegensätzen; es bezeichnet kein eigenes Sachgebiet, sondern nur deren Intensitätsgrad einer Assoziation oder Dissoziation von Menschen, deren Motive religiöser, nationaler (im ethnischen und kulturellen Sinne), wirtschaftlicher oder anderer Art sein können.

In this light, it can be stated that Schmitt is more adequately described as a theorist not of the political but of *politicization* (Ladwig 2003, 46). Everything is potentially political and can be politicized. Every religious, ethnic, economic, and cultural difference can be politicized, leading to the identification of the public foe. This characterizes the process of politicization. The logic of over-politicization that is emphasized in this book refers in this sense to the process of ideologically inflating a difference and setting it as absolute, thereby defining an absolute foe that can be repressed for seemingly justified reasons. In contrast, the logic of de-politicization can be captured as the reverse process of neutralization. De-politicization pulls conflictive issues out of the political arena in which they used to be contested.

This is not the place to discuss in detail to what extent Schmitt has been used or misused by autocratic theorists and practitioners.⁸ Yet, Schmitt is so controversial in political theory that it seems adequate to add some contextualizing words here. In my reading of Schmitt, I favor Sartori's (1989, 70) interpretation:

What lurks behind the "decision of the one" is the monocrat, the full-fledged dictator. To be sure, what Schmitt actually sought "situationally," i.e., during the Weimar period, was an authoritarian, though juridically circumscribed "presidential system." ... The monopoly of decision, in its linkage with the "exception," inevitably paves the way to the limitless, absolute ruler – just like his criterion of intensity inevitably leads, no matter how unwittingly, to the absolute enemy.

From my perspective, Schmitt's work is explicitly anti-liberal and decisionistic; he thinks in vertical and hierarchical terms instead of horizontal ones; his text is state-centric and presidential, emphasizes authorities, and demonstrates a deep-seated mistrust in ordinary citizens. It is anti-pluralistic and overstresses state unity. I follow the interpretation that, above all, it is important to Schmitt that there is state unity; he is less concerned if this unity is democratic or autocratic (Hofmann [1964] 2002, 99). Schmitt also needs to presume that there is already a unified political will; there is just no explanation for how this develops in the first place. This obvious gap led Herman Heller to react to Schmitt's first presentation of the treatise in 1927 at the Berliner *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* and exclaim that the political stems from *polis* and not from *pol-emos* (Hofmann [1964] 2002, 108). The political is nothing static, given, or naturally conflictive and opposing, but instead it is dynamic, emergent,

⁸ A good starting point for a summary of diverging interpretations of Schmitt's work is the foreword by Tracy B. Strong and Gustav Schwab in the English edition of *The Concept of the Political* (Schmitt [1932] 2007).

and – at least potentially – oriented toward the common good. Given Schmitt's ([1932] 2002, 31) heavy emphasis on the "essentially polemical nature of the politically charged terms," it is no surprise that his theory of the political is actually a theory of the *Feind*, the foe. At no point does he define what the friend is. Indeed, "*Feind* is the founding concept" (Sartori 1989, 65). And it is actually only the foe that defines the friend as a nonhostile non-foe. Or, in the words of Sternberger (1961), this procedure resembles thinking of marriage via divorce.

In sum, politicization is – literally – the process of making an issue political. This means, here, going back to the etymological origins of (1) making a private issue a public affair and therefore contested in a public arena. Politicization in Schmitt's sense goes beyond making a private issue public. Politicization here also includes (2) the process of identifying and creating a (potential) public foe. So over-politicization can be characterized as a process in which an internal foe is produced and a previously nonpolitical issue like a religious, ethnic, nationalist, or economic cleavage is seen as absolute, justifying all coercive means to maintain or reach this state. In contrast, de-politicization means a neutralization and a dismantlement of a contested issue and an attempt to steer or even herd people into the private realm.

The modular theory that is suggested here argues that certain forms of legitimation, repression, and co-optation create configurations that follow either an over-politicization or a de-politicization logic to explain autocratic regime stability. The following chapters detail the partial theory frames that are built around legitimation vis-à-vis the people (Chapter 2), repression of the opposition (Chapter 3), and co-optation of the elite (Chapter 4). Based on these partial theory frames, an argument is advanced about why some of these components interact better than others. The concept of complementarity serves then as the cement that keeps these components together (Chapter 5).

2 Legitimation

In 1934, Theodore Abel, a Polish scholar from Columbia University, conducted an unusual study. He was curious about why so many Germans had become fervent members of the German National Socialist movement. He designed a study involving a prize for a writing competition. Early supporters of the movement were asked to write an autobiographical explanation on what made them turn into Nazis and why they believed in their ideology. He contacted the Ministry of Propaganda and, to his surprise, the Nazi regime agreed to the study. At the time of the planned survey, the Nazis were suffering from declining popular support and Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels thought that Abel's study could do no harm since the US-based scholar would only ask true believers. As a result, Abel received more than 600 autobiographies. Even today, this study provides unique insight into the question of why some Germans had become Nazis of the first hour (Abel [1938] 1986).

Why do ordinary citizens believe in an autocratic ideology? What attracts followers to undemocratic rule? One obvious response is that these people do not really believe in such ideologies but only pretend to. Fearing for their lives and the threat of repressive measures, they do not reveal their true preferences (Kuran 1997). They have a strong incentive to hide their real opinion and act as if they support the regime (Wedeen 1999). If that is always the case, then the questions just posed above would be irrelevant – the answer is that there is no such thing as a genuine belief in an undemocratic ideology.

Another common response is that the omnipresence of propaganda persuades people to believe in such ideologies. Constant exposure to state propaganda and mass indoctrination measures makes people believe in what they hear. Yet, Abel's study is of such importance for social scientists because of its particular timing. It was conducted in 1934, a year in which participants were not justifying their motives *ex post facto* after the regime fell or modifying their opinion in light of later atrocities. Instead, it is an unfiltered account of true believers. Almost all of them were supporters of the Nazi movement before it came to power in the

first place. Moreover, in 1934, German society's elimination of opposition (*Gleichschaltung*) was not as thorough as it would later become. Propaganda can only partly explain the ideological commitment of early Nazi Party members. As such, there is some truth in the statement of German political historian Hans Maier (1996, 244), who wrote that the Nazi ideology contained a remarkable "*tremendum et fascinosum*" for ordinary German citizens.

Of course, the question of why ordinary citizens believe in an autocratic ideology is by no means a uniquely German question. Similar questions are shared in all countries that have experienced (or that currently experience) autocratic rule because autocratic rule affects everyone in a society. Autocratic rule and autocratic regime survival are not an elite phenomenon. A comparative study of autocracies that does not inquire into the political experience of ordinary people overlooks an important point. Yet, with some notable exceptions, the current renaissance in the study of comparative authoritarianism has lost sight of this dimension. It is the older classical contributions on totalitarianism that demonstrate how to integrate this crucial dimension. Their insights will be of particular importance for conceptualizing the over-politicization logic of autocratic rule.

Today, totalitarian regimes have almost vanished from the globe. They are phenomena of the twentieth century. Yet, it is important to study these cases in detail. In modern case study language, totalitarian regimes are "extreme cases" for ideological indoctrination. They are cases with extraordinary high values on this variable – that is, cases lying many standard deviations away from the mean (Gerring 2008; Seawright and Gerring 2008). Therefore, totalitarianism is not typical of the universe of autocratic rule. However, the rationale for studying these empirical cases and for tracing back how the finest minds in political philosophy at the time grappled with understanding these phenomena also offers important clues about how ideology works in the less extreme forms of autocratic rule. Focusing on totalitarian regimes as the closest approximation to Weberian ideal types provides us with an opportunity to identify causal mechanisms with as much clarity and little "background noise" as possible. The mechanisms by which the totalitarian leader gains a following in society can then be translated and applied, in lighter gradations, to other autocracies as well.

That autocratic rulers seek the support of their people is of course not new. Folktales from around the globe provide evidence that kings and emperors mingled with their subjects, curious to know what the people thought about them. Because there has always been an incentive for preference falsification (Kuran 1997) in the face of power – that respondents

have an incentive to give false answers due to fear of repression – the kings and emperors mostly appeared masked or hidden behind veils. In fact, we know that the totalitarian Nazi regime, one of the most brutish regimes in history, was also obsessed with the question of what people thought. Indeed, C. J. Friedrich reported that the Nazis spent large sums of money to find out – and as a side effect revolutionized survey research (Friedrich 1957, 154–60). The Nazi regime wanted to know what people thought because it was well aware that every autocracy is inherently insecure. And every autocrat fears not only elite rivals but also being overthrown by mobilized masses of citizens.

Besides ideational sources, autocracies can claim legitimacy in a second way: their socioeconomic success and promise of development. This line of reasoning will be particularly exploited with an eye toward conceptualizing the de-politicization logic. In East Asia, for example, recent debates about the “tiger states” and the developmental model of dictatorships have been particularly vivid. It was the former foreign minister of Singapore, Sinnathamby Rajaratnam, who popularized the debate about technocratic development and its relationship to “Asian values,” which were said to have an affinity for authoritarian attitudes (Rajaratnam 1977). It is also Singapore that best symbolizes the (exceptional) socioeconomic success that autocracies can sometimes have. With the spectacular rise of China in the past few years, a new role model has joined this club of successful autocracies. Originally, however, discussion about the performance legitimacy of autocracies was an offshoot of the rentier state debate (Beblawi and Luciani 1987; Mahdavi 1970; Richter 2019). Rentier states are those that can rely on resources, mostly oil and rare minerals, to satisfy the material demands of their citizens. This chapter brings together the major lessons that can be learned from classic and recent studies. It demonstrates that what these diverse regimes have in common is that they deliver (Cassani 2017; Miller 2015; Roller 2013). Because they deliver tangible public goods, they are perceived as legitimate.

Against this backdrop, the chapter is structured as follows: First, it absorbs important insights from previous studies in how to theorize the role of the people in over-politicizing and de-politicizing autocracies. On the one hand, it highlights different forms of indoctrination to over-politicize people. On the other, it outlines working mechanisms of how to render the people passive. Second, the chapter engages in conceptualization of what legitimation in autocracies actually means. Third, the chapter emphasizes a key concern of conceptualizations that is often overlooked. If comparing legitimation formulae across autocracies, comparability needs to be ensured. The chapter argues that autocracies rely

on a portfolio of legitimacy claims. They usually do not rely on a single, encapsulated orthodoxy but are instead eclectic in nature. In this light, the chapter presents a matrix that allows for a comparative study of autocratic legitimacy profiles. Throughout the following theoretical reasoning, I also employ concrete empirical examples to better illustrate my argument.

Repository of Previous Research: How Autocratic Rule Is Legitimized

The first step of a theory frame is to consolidate knowledge by ordering, unifying, and synthesizing insights from previous research. This is done here with regard to what can be learned about the role of the ordinary people in theorizing the two logics of over-politicization and de-politicization.

The People in the Over-Politicization Logic

In understanding the role of the people in the over-politicization logic, Hannah Arendt's intellectual contributions stand out in many respects. It is particularly her work on totalitarian regimes that is crucial here. She perceived these regimes as novel phenomena, unparalleled in history. Her original text from 1951 explores the "origins of totalitarianism," but it is her expanded 1958 version that makes it more accessible to comparative autocracy research.¹ In the famous last chapter that she added to this edition, she argued that ideology and terror are the two major characteristics of totalitarian rule (Arendt [1951] 1966). Arendt put forward that the political ideologies underpinning totalitarian regimes were distinct from earlier nineteenth-century political ideas (*Weltanschauung*).

Arendt outlined three main ways in which totalitarian ideologies were new and distinct from their predecessors. First, they aimed at total explanations. In doing so, these new ideologies "promise to explain all historical happenings, the total explanation of the past, the total knowledge of the present, and the reliable prediction of the future" (Arendt [1951] 1966, 470). These political ideologies were all-encompassing; they were not restricted to an explanation of the status quo but rather embedded

¹ Originally, Arendt wrote the chapter on ideology and terror for the German *Festschrift* of her *Doktorvater*, mentor, and long-term friend Karl Jaspers. It was supposed to be the core of a new book *The Modern Challenge to Tradition* that, however, she never finished. She explicitly emphasized that ideology and terror constitute a new form of government. She began working on this chapter the year after she finished the 1951 version of her book. For the different versions (and to see how she developed this most significant piece of work), see the pioneering attempt to edit her complete works for the first time, see Arendt ([1952–1954] 2018, 11–88).

in a longer (and often deterministic) course of history. Second, these ideologies became independent of empirical experience and therefore immunized themselves from being checked against reality. They emancipated themselves from lived experience. Totalitarian ideologies are not falsifiable by history or experience, as they are eschatological in nature, promising attainment of a paradise state, be it in communism or the thousand-year Nazi Reich. Finally, totalitarian ideologies were insulated logical constructs, in the sense that they started from a simple axiomatic premise from which everything else could be logically deduced. This logical deduction became self-evident in the proclamations of totalitarian ideologues who touted their “ice-cold reasoning” (Hitler) and the “irresistible force of logic” (Lenin). This rational framing gave totalitarian ideologies a scientific appeal. Totalitarian reasoning “involves a consistent process of argumentation which, because it thinks in terms of a process, is supposed to be able to comprehend the movement of the suprahuman, natural, or historical processes” (Arendt [1951] 1966, 471).

While National Socialism and communism may be unequalled in their quasi-scientific rigor, this should not prevent the application of Arendt’s three distinct features of political ideologies (total explanation, immunization from reality, and axiomatic structure) to the analysis of contemporary political ideologies. These features still explain – to a large extent – why some people feel a certain attraction to nondemocratic political thought. Even if modern autocratic ideologies are not as codified, orthodox, and closed as totalitarian variants, they nevertheless develop popular appeal.

What needs to be highlighted for understanding the over-politicization logic of autocratic regimes is that the repressive side of twentieth-century totalitarian regimes was closely interlinked with their respective ideologies. In a letter from February 1953 to Alan K. Campbell, Arendt argues that “the struggle is between freedom and the dual compulsion of terror and ideology” (cit by Arendt [1952–1954] 2018, 605). For Arendt, repression destroys the essence of the political *per se*. The locus of the political in her theory is in the space *between* people, and not *within* the people as the Aristotelian *zoon politikon* suggests. People themselves are apolitical, but the political emerges in the relation between them (Arendt 2007, 9–12; Sontheimer 2007). What repression does is eliminate this relational space between the people, rendering them incapable of acting politically. Terror creates an omnipresent fear among isolated and solitary people who are deprived of their capacity to act. Fear is therefore an essential “anti-political” principle (Arendt [1951] 2005, 973).

For Arendt, the destruction of mutual trust between people simultaneously destroys their capacity for political action. Society becomes atomized. To maintain this antipolitical state, ideology and terror work

hand in hand. This is where the interdependence of legitimization efforts and repression manifests. The external compulsion of terror meets the internal “self-coercive force of logical deduction” (Arendt [1951] 1966, 473) of totalitarian ideologies. These two essential elements correspond to each other and need each other to be effective. For Arendt, ideology hampers the individual’s relationship to reality, while the use of terror ruins the relationship between people.

The deprivation and solitude that Arendt described applies to the populace in general. Juan Linz added an alternative perspective by sharply distinguishing between insiders (who were drawn to these ideologies) and outsiders (who were not). The success and the *fascinosum* of totalitarian movements can be attributed to the creation of a feeling of belonging and a sense of community among insiders. Linz argues that most of the people who joined the Nazis were not “lone individuals, but did so as members of civil society groups taken over by Nazi activists or went to Nazi rallies with friends” (Linz 2000, 18). It was not alienation but the integration of individuals into groups that drove totalitarian movements, such as the case of the Italian veterans (*Ardit*) or the German Freikorps who “formed on the basis of close emotional relations” (Linz 2000, 18).

Hannah Arendt’s approach remains unique in many regards. She took a deliberately socio-philosophical perspective (Arendt 2005). While her goal was to understand the essence of totalitarianism, a different approach, a political-structural approach, followed a more descriptive and explanatory aim. It is a second strand of research that sheds light on the functioning of over-politicization. Arendt’s socio-philosophical approach and the political-structural approach agree on the centrality of political ideology. Arguably, Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski (1956) put forward the most influential work in the latter approach. They argued that totalitarian regimes were a novel and unprecedented phenomenon that was made possible by modernization and high industrial standards, listing six features that demonstrate the novelty of this form of autocratic rule. Their famous “six-point catalogue” encompasses first and foremost an official ideology directed toward a utopia that radically breaks with existing societal rules. The other criteria range from the existence of a mass party to a system of terror (later softened to repression), the monopoly of mass communication, the monopoly of force, and a state-led economy. The list has been criticized for being too descriptive and lacking analytical value, and above all for being too static (among many critics, see Barber 1969). It is unclear how many of the six points need to change to mark a new regime type. The old Linzian question of how much change *in* the system is needed for a change *of* the system is difficult, if not impossible, to answer (Linz 1975, 337).

For the second generation of totalitarianism scholars, ideology played a central role as well (Schapiro 1972). As mentioned in the Introduction, Juan Linz's work is usually read as a typology to distinguish between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes (Linz 1975). He referred to three dimensions: monism vs. limited pluralism, ideology vs. mentality, and mobilization vs. demobilization. However, Linz's work can be interpreted as being a hybrid of typology and an explanation of stability. While the typology has become famous and is found today in many textbooks in Comparative Politics, we should not overlook that Linz also sought to delineate stabilizing functions and mechanisms shared by different types of autocratic regimes. In so doing, he particularly emphasized the stabilizing function of ideology. He concurred with older works stating that the ideology permeates all spheres of society; yet, he also emphasized the "autonomy" in the "control of ideological formulations" (Linz 1975, 197). This means that a totalitarian system needs to maintain its monopoly to dictate over the ideological corpus. If a ruling regime loses this monopoly over what people ought to think, the regime collapses. In a later reflection, Linz goes so far as to argue that the only crisis that can bring down a totalitarian regime is a legitimacy crisis (Linz 2000, vii–ix). In other words, the people (and not the elite) are the decisive group for the stability or downfall of autocratic rule.

While for Friedrich and Brzezinski as well as for Linz, the role of ideologies and ordinary people has been part of a broader set of conditions, an almost forgotten but highly interesting theoretical approach by Martin Drath puts the role of ideologies at the center of analysis (Drath [1954] 1968). Drath's simple but genial idea was to first identify one shared primary phenomenon and from that derive flexible and multiple secondary phenomena. The primary phenomenon is for him the enforcement of a new, revolutionary ideology serving as the exclusive framework for the interpretation of social reality (see also Bracher 1970, 247–58). The crux of his approach is that the secondary phenomena should guarantee the technical realization of the primary phenomenon. So, while the secondary phenomena might differ from case to case – some might need a strong party or a state-led economy, some others might not – these regimes converge around the idea of establishing an ideological framework that serves as *the* exclusive hermeneutic frame for all other political and private matters. To put the political ideology at the center also provides an angle that makes the approach more dynamic. The focus for change lies with the primary phenomenon. If this is still intact, there is no change – despite potential erosion of the secondary phenomena. If it begins to crumble, we

should consider this a change *of* the system and not only a change *in* the system.

These different approaches to the study of modern autocracies demonstrate that a political ideology is the primary justification instrument for autocrats. Ideologies can go even as far as justifying violence by framing its use as a necessary evil. Ideologies serve as the major hermeneutic frame that injects meaning into all political (and private) actions. For the sake of the primary phenomenon – the articulated ideological goals – any secondary phenomena that guarantee its technical realization can be justified. They become merely the means to an ideologically justified higher end.

As noted earlier, totalitarianism is an extreme case of autocratic rule (Merkel 2003). This needs to be kept in mind. Not all autocracies reach the extreme ideocratic state of totalitarian regimes. The whole point of studying these regimes, however, is to observe their underlying mechanisms in full clarity. The mechanism at play is the ideology that serves as the framing mechanism that justifies even repression. With lighter gradations, authoritarian regimes have similar mechanisms.

However, political ideologies are not only a means to a political end. They are also inherently attractive to many people. In twentieth-century totalitarian movements, people were genuinely fascinated by these political thoughts. A third strand of classic writings on totalitarian regimes is devoted to understanding this inherent appeal. It is a strand of previous research that often goes unnoticed but offers a novel perspective. It tests analogies of ideologies as political religion. Already in the 1930s, works by Eric Voegelin ([1938] 1996) and Raymond Aron (1970) used the sociology of religion to explain success of such movements. In particular, Voegelin advanced the hypothesis that the essence of totalitarian regimes cannot be understood if its essence is only considered in terms of political action. Instead, to gain a deeper understanding, analyses must be grounded in the fact that ideologies are akin to religious belief for their adherents. For Voegelin, the political ideologies of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are not “supra-mundane” but “intra-mundane” religions. They act as religions that do not transcend their promises to any outside divine entity but are instead anchored in a “divinization of worldly rule” (Voegelin [1938] 1996, 17). With obvious borrowings from Nietzschean philosophy, Voegelin compares the creation of a *homo novus* with a “human that makes himself god” (Voegelin [1938] 1996, 99).

Two more aspects can be learned from the political religion approach. First, the comparison with religion highlights the idea that political ideologies are Manichean in their logic, unambiguously distinguishing

between good and evil or in a Schmittian sense between friend and foe.² Second, the political religion approach sharpens our understanding of important eschatological elements. Promises for worldly salvation and attainment of paradise are very common in both fascist and communist ideologies. However, traces of such eschatological assurances can be found in other forms of autocratic political thought as well and are often accompanied by symbols and rituals intended to deepen quasi-religious belief. A “sacralization of politics” (Gentile and Mallett 2000) can be detected in the aestheticism of mass rallies; the ritualization of political and military gestures in public speeches, pledges, and roll calls; the cultish adoration of leadership figures; and sometimes even – as in the North Korean case – new calculations of time and calendars in which selected festivities like the regime leader’s birthday are celebrated. Totalitarian regimes routinely occupy the population’s cultural *rites de passage*, that is, important milestones in socialization, adolescence, and maturity. Birth, the admission to youth organizations (comparable to confirmation in church), weddings, and funerals are filled with political meaning that overwrites former religious semantics.

These classic considerations about the nature of political ideologies help us understand the *tremendum et fascinosum* of present and past autocracies. The allure of nondemocratic political thought is not exclusive to totalitarianism. On the contrary, these classic considerations apply in lighter form to authoritarian systems as well. It is not only clear-cut and omnipresent political ideologies like National Socialism, fascism, and communism that develop an inherent attractiveness to people – and it is also not only these full-fledged ideologies that serve to stabilize autocratic rule.

Modern autocracies still rely on those all-encompassing political ideologies, but these extreme forms of autocratic regimes are in global demise. Today, autocratic regimes instead are more eclectic, falling closer to the middle of the autocratic spectrum rather than at the totalitarian extreme. Their legitimation efforts are characterized by the “coexistence ... of different legitimizing formulae” (Linz 1964, 322). Today’s autocracies are less purist and orthodox than many of their twentieth-century counterparts, relying on a mixed portfolio of sometimes even competing elements (Mauk 2020). Nationalism can be one element, and with it also the politicization of religious beliefs or ethnic cleavages; traditional

² As a side note, in the previous chapter I referred to Schmitt’s argument that the characterizing distinction of the political is the one between friend and foe. While in economics the binary “code” is profitable vs. unprofitable, in morals good vs. bad, in aesthetics beautiful vs. ugly, the essence of the political lies in distinguishing between insiders and outsiders. The political religion approach might add here that this form of Manichaeism might be traced back to religious foundations of the political.

conventions remain salient, as does the personal charismatic appeal of a (revolutionary) leader. One of the most difficult parts of the empirical study of autocracies is to disentangle these different legitimizing elements. This book attempts to do so systematically, providing a legitimacy profile of all autocratic regimes included for study. At the end of this chapter, an analytical template, a legitimacy profile matrix, is provided that aims to facilitate comparative analyses.

The lessons to be learned from studying the extreme cases of autocratic rule can be distilled in the following four points:

1. In totalitarian regimes, ideologies can generally be understood as a filter through which people perceive empirical reality. No one has written more convincingly about the role of ideology in hampering an individual's relationship to reality than Hannah Arendt.
2. Ideologies try to immunize themselves from observable reality. It is a distinct feature of ideational legitimation that it avoids an empirical check against reality. Ideological promises are often nonfalsifiable. The political religion approach has even underlined eschatological elements that relate beyond worldly salvation.
3. Ideational legitimation is catalyzed by emotional in-group experiences. By distinguishing between friend and foe, ideational legitimation works by constructing a Manichean distinction between good and evil.
4. Ideologies can justify even repression and violent means. In one approach, secondary phenomena that guarantee the technical realization of a new ideology even derive their meaning from such an exclusive interpretive frame. The ideology then serves as the *one* interpretative frame that injects meaning into political (and even private) action. At a more general level, ideational legitimation can also justify antidemocratic means to achieve a supposedly higher end (stability, order, economic success, or the like).

Table 2.1 provides a synopsis of these initial considerations. The aim of this section was to recall the rich repository of classic totalitarianism studies as they inform the over-politicization logic. Please note again that these deal with extreme cases of totalitarian rule and rest on the assumption that we can use their insights in lighter gradations for all types of autocratic regimes.

The People in the De-Politicizing Logic

The aforementioned approaches have focused on the intentional and deliberate activation of the population through indoctrination and mobilization. They serve as a steppingstone for theorizing the role of the

Table 2.1 *Repository: The role of the people in the over-politicization logic*

	Socio-Philosophical Approach	Political-Structural Approach	Political Religion Approach
Major Argument of the Approach	Understanding of essence of totalitarianism via the “dual compulsion” of ideology and terror	Descriptive account of main structural features of totalitarian rule	Understanding of totalitarian movements via comparison to political religion
Major Lessons for Role of People in the Over-Politicization Logic	(a) Political ideologies hampering the relationship of the people toward reality (b) In tandem with repression, solitude of people and “atomized society” (c) Immunizing tendency of ideologies (d) Quasi-scientific rigor of political ideologies and aim of total explanations	(a) Emphasis on community experience of people and emotional bonds between people (b) Creation of in-group and out-group (c) Importance of autonomy over legitimacy formula for stability (d) Ideology as a justification instrument for repressive means	(a) Understanding of <i>tremendum et fascinans</i> (b) Explaining inherent attractiveness of ideologies for the people as being an intramundane, nontranscendental religion (c) Manichean nature of ideologies (d) Sometimes even eschatological content of ideologies

people in the over-politicization logic. The repository for the opposing logic, de-politicization, is to be found in later works. The lessons that we can learn are archived in a different strand of literature. In this intellectual tradition, ordinary citizens are perceived as the passive and malleable masses that need to be kept satisfied so that they do not revolt. While the approaches discussed earlier saw the masses as activated supporters, this approach instead sees the citizenry as passive, apathetic, and indifferent followers.

The analytical cleavage between these two general approaches is the supremacy of ideational factors over material endowments. Scholars of the totalitarianism tradition, by and large, remained silent about the socioeconomic performance of the regimes. Rather, they emphasized the structure of a state-led economy and prioritized the ideocratic nature of these regimes. From this perspective, totalitarian regimes want to control the minds of the people through ideological indoctrination while the economic success of these regimes has been only of secondary importance.

When Juan Linz analyzed Francoist Spain in the mid-1960s, he observed a scholarly “uneasiness” (Linz 1964, 291) about the perceived

misfit between the conceptualization of totalitarian rule and its empirical reality. Besides Spain, Linz noted that prewar Japan or Fascist Italy should not be placed in the same conceptual container as Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. From these modest beginnings as being categorized as nontotalitarian nondemocracies, authoritarianism has become today an overly elastic rubric under which all forms of nondemocracies are subsumed. With his 1964 essay, Linz signaled the start of a new research wave of authoritarianism studies, which conceptualized the role of ordinary citizens differently. While in older approaches, the population was often treated as mobilized masses that had been heavily ideologized, they were now characterized by the opposite feature: as being de-politicized. Pointedly, Linz refers in this context to the three Fs that characterized Portugal under Salazar: Fatima, football, and *fado* (folk songs) (Linz 1964, 307). Citizens under Salazar were kept passive and apolitical. Fatima, football, and the traditional folk songs served as distractions occupying the minds of the people, substituting for a mobilizing political ideology. Through heavy emphasis on religion, sports, and culture rather than politics, the people were rendered passive.

Citizens in these types of autocratic regimes are no longer guided by an overarching political ideology but by a general "mentality." It is almost a reflex in Comparative Politics today to criticize Linz for his vague notion of "mentality." However, although there has been no attempt to systematize what Linz meant by mentality, his point is nonetheless intuitively clear: it is something less formalized, less explicit, less absolute, less orthodox, and subtler than full-fledged political ideologies. In Linz's words, mentalities are "ways of thinking and feeling, more emotional than rational, that provide non-codified ways of reacting to situations" (Linz 1964, 301). In Linz's analytical approach, the role of the people in stabilizing autocratic rule significantly changed: from being active, ideologically mobilized supporters to becoming passive followers.

The introduction of a new regime type also had important repercussions on the object of study. While the totalitarianism paradigm was entirely concentrated on a handful of cases, authoritarianism opened up analytical doors to a new empirical terrain. In particular, works on developmental states experienced a boom in the social sciences and could connect more easily with the authoritarianism concept than with the overly demanding totalitarianism concept. Countries from all over the world were analyzed, beyond the usual suspects. Methodologically, the new authoritarianism wave also shifted its attention from (ideographic) case studies to small-N, mostly intraregional comparisons. It was also shown that these regimes were no mere transitional phenomena but were there to stay. Despite their routine promises of limiting

themselves to only fixing the country's economy and restoring internal order, they usually institutionalize permanent authoritarian rule, a process that was illustrated in admirable clarity for the Brazilian dictatorship and was aptly described as the "Portugalization' of Brazil" (Schmitter 1977, 179).

With this new empirical focus of what might be adequately called classic authoritarianism, the population was no longer regarded as the indoctrinated and politicized masses but rather as political objects that needed to be satisfied. The socioeconomic sphere came more and more to the forefront of academic debates. In particular, two further strands for theorizing the role of the people in the de-politicization logic are important: the rentier state debate and the bureaucratic authoritarianism debate. In what follows, their major lessons are summarized to adequately mirror and consolidate our knowledge in this regard.

The first strand of research is the rentier state debate. In the 1970s, Comparative Politics reacted to the emergence of new oil-rich countries in the Middle East that entered the stage of world trade. By the mere geographical fortuitousness of discovering oil on their national territory – the exploitation of which turned out not to be very cost intensive – these oil-rich countries could build their economic welfare on petrodollars. In the social sciences, these oil-rich countries were soon classified as "rentier states" (Mahdavi 1970). This was an apt characterization when we understand the difference between earned income and effortless rents (Beblawi 1987, 50).³ A rent is defined by the part of an income that is beyond the opportunity costs – therefore, an income not mirrored by the expenses of labor, production, or investment. In these countries, the rents stem predominantly from oil revenues and other mineral and natural resources, but also from unconditional foreign aid and external subsidies. What they have in common is that these almost effortless rents accrue to the government as the rentier. In his famous definition of rentier states, Luciani set a threshold that has since been widely used. They are states "whose revenue derives predominantly (more than 40 percent) from oil or other foreign sources and whose expenditure is a substantial share of GDP" (Luciani 1987, 70).

Moreover, a rent is disposable: it is not specified for a special purpose. In this light, it has been plausibly argued that rentier economies are prime examples of "circulation economies" (in contrast to "production

³ Beblawi makes an interesting remark here. Based on the influential Weberian study on Protestant ethics and capitalism and the Schumpeterian type of entrepreneurship, rents and rentiers have often been met with hostility. Their wealth has been seen as being undeserved (Beblawi 1987, 49–50).

economies”) in which actors only compete for the control of rents. Instead of engaging in actual production, economic activity is understood as merely means to ensure income circulation. The role of the state is reduced to being an instrument for allocation (Chatelus 1987, 109–13; Chatelus and Schmeil 1984). The rentier state does not need to be concerned with propelling the domestic economy or raising productivity. It neither is in need of fostering a national myth as the guarantor of the common good nor does it need to uphold domestic economic competition. The state is in a comfortable fiscal position that allows it to impose fewer taxes on its citizens. In “normal” production states, taxation would be an essential source of revenue and an imperative undertaking of the government. In rentier states, the need for taxation is relaxed. In contrast, “all it needs is an expenditure policy” (Luciani 1987, 74). This book adds that it needs to keep the people passive and satisfied.

With this in mind, we can distill a causal mechanism that can be applied beyond the rentier states. As the public in such resource-rich states routinely benefits from the absence of taxation, the public is expected, in return, to remain indifferent toward the politics of the ruling regime and generally loyal to the system – although not necessarily loyal to the individual ruling figures. The rulers on the other hand can “disband them [the public] and meet practically no resistance whatsoever” (Luciani 1987, 74). As long as the rentier economy can be upheld and as long as this kind of “social contract”⁴ is not reneged on, the allocation state is stable. There is no interest on either side in changing this win-win-situation.⁵

Since 2011, the Arab uprisings have challenged this old reasoning about the macro-social contract (Beinin and Vairel 2013; Bellin 2012; Lynch 2012; 2014; Volpi 2017). What is important for this book, however, is the sea change in the perception of the role of the people. While

⁴ Please note that the major difference between the autocratic and the democratic social contract idea in political theory lies in the contractual partner. The autocratic social contract is implicitly agreed on between an autocratic regime and its citizens in which the citizens stay out of politics as long as the regime delivers. In contrast, the democratic social contract is a contract among citizens either to overcome a natural state of Hobbesian brutality or in a Lockean sense when the people recognize the need for cooperation and the pursuit of a common good.

⁵ Ross (2001) retested the authoritarianism hypothesis beyond the Middle East and for nonfuel minerals by analyzing pooled time-series cross-national data from 113 states between 1971 and 1997 and found that oil does indeed hinder democracy. This relationship in his study is both valid and statistically significant. Aside from just oil, Ross found that sources of rents tend to block democratizations as well. This can be traced back to the rentier effect and low taxation that “dampen pressures for democracy” (Ross 2001, 356). While a similar result has been presented by Ulfelder (2007), who used survival analyses, Herb (2005) reached a more ambivalent conclusion.

previous autocracy theories highlighted the mobilization of the people, the new rentier state debate argued the opposite – rather than mobilizing and ideologizing the population, people should instead be rendered passive and demobilized. The stability of autocratic regimes would then rely not only on (the capacity of) mass indoctrination but on satisfying people socially and economically. To keep political demands at bay, the people's economic demands must be met. The quid pro quo of economic satisfaction for political acquiescence lies at the heart of the de-politicization logic.

Rentierism is one major root for achieving performance legitimacy. The second repository of previous research that this theory frame tries to absorb is the rise of “bureaucratic authoritarianism” (O'Donnell 1978; 1979; 1988) and its critique of one-sided modernization theory. Classic modernization theory argues that the “more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy” (Lipset 1959, 75). The causal chain underlying this relationship is a sequence of industrialization, urbanization, and education that again fosters a larger middle class and higher political and economic equality that then brings about democratization or at least democratic stability (Merkel 2010). While there has been insightful discussions about further modifications regarding the role of elites (Ansell and Samuels 2015) and about its endogenous (development leads to democracy) and exogenous (development sustains democracy) variant, modernization theory is one of the most tested and robust relationships in Comparative Politics (Boix and Stokes 2003; Przeworski and Limongi 1997).

Guillermo O'Donnell (1978; 1979) challenged this conventional wisdom, arguing that modernization can bring about the opposite as well. He argued that high modernization regimes may also run a higher risk of turning to authoritarianism (Collier 1979a; Remmer and Merckx 1982). O'Donnell showed this in the cases of Brazil after 1964 and Argentina after 1966 and 1976 but extended it to Chile and Uruguay and to a lesser extent to Mexico as well. In Europe, he argued that several countries in Eastern Europe between the two world wars, Greece in the 1970s, as well as Francoist Spain, could fit his theoretical model of “bureaucratic authoritarianism” (O'Donnell 1979, 90–92). Hyug Baeg Im also translated the model to East Asia and argued that it also develops explanatory power for the case of South Korea's developmental dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s (Im 1987).

O'Donnell's original theoretical approach broadly falls into two important parts: a political-economic one and a societal one. Regarding the former, O'Donnell argues that bureaucratic authoritarian regimes evolve endogenously out of a failed import-substitution strategy. In such

a situation, the populist regime in which broad and multi-class coalitions of national economic interests rule slips into crisis. Rising expectations of the people are no longer met and public frustration grows. The initial national-populist strategy fails; “nationalism cum industrialization” (O’Donnell 1979, 55) reaches its limits. Instead, international dependency increases and attracts international money. The former homogeneity of national economic interest is replaced by a deep divide between international technologically advanced and capital-intensive industries and peripheral, marginal industries that are often cleared from the market (Collier 1979a; 1979b; O’Donnell 1979, 51–71).

This political-economic demand-performance gap is – according to O’Donnell – aggravated by a second gap between societal differentiation and integration. In contrast to classic modernization theory, O’Donnell highlighted a time lag between societal differentiation and its capacity to integrate the diversity of new actors into society. The level of societal differentiation exceeds the level of political institutionalization, becomes overstrained, and finally slips into crisis. This time lag, of course, is not only a phenomenon reduced to the subtype of bureaucratic authoritarianism but can also be applied to a variety of autocratic regimes as well.

The main point is that in such crisis situations where economic demands are not met and societal integration lags behind, public frustration grows and a new political elite takes over. Officials with “technical problem-solving approaches” (O’Donnell 1979, 81) come to the forefront. These technocrats exploit the economic and societal crisis and claim to be concerned about the socioeconomic condition of the country, promising efficiency. A technocratic governance style is adopted, and it becomes more and more important that key political figures have experience in managing complex organizations and that they build on these insights to manage the state. As a result, the regime is streamlined to “bureaucratically ‘encapsulate’ most social sectors” (O’Donnell 1979, 88). Particularly, political unions and labor organizations are “domesticated” (O’Donnell 1979, 88). The regime is perhaps most aptly described as a one that “endeavors to ‘depoliticize’ the handling of social issues” (O’Donnell 1988, 32).

The key lesson that can be learned for the study of autocracies more generally is that a high level of modernization does not automatically bring democracy; on the contrary, it can bring authoritarian rule. Recently, Bryn Rosenfeld (2020b) has demonstrated the emergence of an “autocratic middle class” that does not – against conventional wisdom – support democratic rule, but helps sustain autocratic rule. Military and (international) business elites build a technocratic, managerial elite that develops close economic ties to a state-dependent middle class.

A strong commitment to economic development subsequently trumps any demands for democracy and human rights and is perceived as a legitimate means to a seemingly higher end: political order and economic growth.

Modern autocracies rely on a portfolio of legitimacy sources. Their legitimacy formula is multifaceted and multidimensional. Yet, the discussion about the cornerstone texts in comparative authoritarianism discloses important analytical distinctions. In the following section, I suggest a broad and admittedly coarse-grained distinction between ideational and performance legitimacy. In systems theory, this distinction is demarcated as diffuse and specific support. While the former is the reservoir of good will that makes people endure even times of hardship, the latter is more output oriented and short lived and is based on reciprocity (Easton 1975). The reciprocity in the rentier state approach is the most clear-cut: “I as a citizen will not revolt against the state as long as my socio-economic demands are met.” Reciprocity in the bureaucratic authoritarianism model is not as straightforward, but it can nevertheless be encapsulated as follows: in times of crises, technocrats take over political power and promise to run the country as if it were a business. Bureaucratic authoritarianism is a managerial style of politics that promises economic recovery and social stability. As such, people tend to accept compromises with regard to human rights and political freedoms for the sake of economic development that they believe only a highly skilled technical elite can guarantee. Table 2.2 summarizes the lessons that can be learned from the repository of previous research. It focuses on the role of ordinary citizens in de-politicizing settings.

Newest research has demonstrated how autocracies thwart dangers of igniting protest and keeping the population satisfied, particularly for the Chinese case. China stands in the center of debates about how an autocracy can successfully legitimate its rule (Dukalskis 2017; Holbig 2009). As the communism-cum-nationalism legitimacy formula gradually erodes, the economic performance of the country becomes increasingly important. While this is widely recognized, what is often overlooked in this context is a subtler mechanism of keeping people passive and protest averse. China is considered a role model for establishing a responsiveness mechanism that (seemingly) gives people a say in formulating politics – nudging them away from open protest and encouraging them to play by the rules.

To preempt public protest, Chinese officials have recognized that they need to be more responsive to their citizens to diffuse anger, absorb criticism, and give citizens at least the impression that they care about their well-being. The responsiveness rate of Chinese officials is then particularly high when the threat of collective action is heightened. Whenever

Table 2.2 *Repository: The role of the people in the de-politicization logic*

	“Classic” Authoritarianism	Rentier States Approach	“Bureaucratic” Authoritarianism
Major Argument of the Approach	Introduction of new regime type of authoritarianism, opening avenues for studying new empirical phenomena	Rentier economy based on effortless rents that favors distribution over allocation	Break with modernization assumption and argument that socioeconomic development can breed authoritarianism
Major Lessons for the Role of the People in De-Politicization Logic	(a) Mentality of the people as being less formalized, less orthodox, less codified, but rather informal and emotional (b) Rendering people passive via emphasis on economy but also religion, sports, and national culture (three Fs in Salazar’s Portugal)	(a) Implicit societal contract between the incumbent who delivers socioeconomically and the people who, in turn, remain passive and do not revolt (b) Reciprocity mechanism: keeping people satisfied thwarts danger of political overthrow	(a) Growing frustration of people, particularly when nationalism- cum-industrialization strategy of populist regimes fails (b) Growing gap between social differentiation and society’s capacity for integration (c) Technocratic coup alliance that takes over power and runs the state as a business by promising socioeconomic order and stability and highlighting managerial problem- solving capacities (d) Socioeconomic imperatives can trump even human rights demands

this sword of Damocles threatened Chinese officials, particularly around historically resonant memorial days, they react to public discontent significantly more often (Chen, Pan, and Xu 2016; Meng, Pan, and Yang 2017). The Chinese authorities’ biggest fear is mobilized collective action. While they allow publicly shared criticism and articulated complaints, they are quick to intervene whenever the threat of collective action looms large (King, Pan, and Roberts 2013).

Besides preempting protest, China is also seen as an authoritarian country in which various deliberative practices have spread. Deliberation as a persuasion-based mode of influencing people coexists with authoritarianism. It might even be argued that China's future hinges on its ability to be responsive to citizens' demands and to introduce deliberative practices as the old-fashioned command mode of authoritarian decision making is increasingly losing its grip in society (Fishkin et al. 2010; He and Warren 2011). China's responsiveness and openness to reform measures that incorporate the will of the people in policy making might not only lead to decreased protest but also to higher acceptance of the regime (Stromseth, Malesky, and Gueorguiev 2017).

To what extent other autocracies will follow the Chinese model is open to debate. Malesky and Schuler's (2010) impressive research has shown a similar trend in the Vietnamese parliament. In today's globalized and interconnected world, autocracies face intensifying societal demands that require complex adaptation to effectively cope with their populations. Regime survival might depend on the inclusion of new, complementary instruments in their governance toolkit. This is especially urgent as both mass indoctrination and an over-politicization of society and political acquiescence and de-politicization of the citizenry in exchange for socio-economic benefits might increasingly be less effective in the future.

Yet, what should not be overlooked is that China is a technologically well-advanced country. This becomes obvious in the digital sphere. Controlling online content is a major way of avoiding and buffering protest in the twenty-first century (Greitens 2013; Gunitsky 2015; Lynch 2011). The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been particularly pre-occupied with online legitimization efforts. Online content is influenced by a highly complex communication infrastructure that allows popular discontent, thus serving as an important safety valve (King, Pan, and Roberts 2013). The major aim of controlling social media posts is to deflect skepticism rather than to convince skeptics of the CCP's merits (Han 2015a; 2015b). As such, guided social media posts are one instrument of giving people a channel to express their frustration and render them passive. Censorship begins where passivity ends. Only if serious collective action is imminent are media posts directly censored.

Selective censoring is not a new phenomenon. In a similar vein, autocracies have always been eager to provide a regime-controlled safety valve to channel popular discontent. The most obvious is "exit" (Hirschman 1970). Applying his model to the fate of the German Democratic Republic, Albert Hirschman argued that exit was the prime strategy of dealing with those dissatisfied with the regime. Letting opponents and dissenters go reduced internal pressure for change (Hirschman 1993),

but other solutions need to be considered for those who stay in autocratic countries. Martin Dimitrov started innovative archival research on citizen complaints. Socialist countries established a system whereby citizens could voluntarily hand in their individual complaints. The topics of discontent ranged from material complaints (mostly about housing and/or jobs) to social issues and political concerns. These citizen complaints were an important informational tool used by incumbent governments for registering discontent among society. Because the complaint system was based on a voluntary submission, it could be considered less biased than other societal seismographs (Dimitrov 2014a; 2014b; 2019).

As in their democratic counterparts, the major indicator of public content and discontent in autocratic regimes is the ballot box. In the recent literature, there is still an ongoing debate about the Janus-faced effect of elections on autocratic stability. While one camp argues that elections make autocracies more democratic, the other camp points to the opposite effect, highlighting the stabilizing function of elections for autocratic rule. And, indeed, the empirical picture is fragmented. There is case-based evidence for democratization by election, leading to a sudden collapse as in the Philippines in 1986, as much as a sustaining effect of elections as in Mexico under the authoritarian rule of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). There is also the gradual effect of elections as liberalizing a polity, as we saw in the mid-1990s in Taiwan, as much as a process in the opposite direction: autocratic regression we observe in Russia today. One strand of research argues that elections are a catalyst for autocratic regimes' decline, understanding them as a school for democratic praxis habitualized over time and as establishing democratic organizational structures. The other strand points to the co-optation of the elite and the opposition, as well as emphasizing the policy convergence effect, the informational importance, and the legitimacy function of elections (Blaydes 2011; Edgell et al. 2018; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Levitsky and Way 2010; Lindberg 2009; Magaloni 2006; Morgenbesser 2016; Morgenbesser and Pepinsky 2019; Schedler 2013).

In this situation, Schedler convincingly argues that we should see elections in authoritarian settings neither as mere adornments nor as easy tools in the hands of dictators. Instead, he perceives elections as arenas of political struggle in a two-level game. Parties struggle over voters on the level of electoral competition, but they also struggle over the meta-rules of the game on the level of institutional change. Against this backdrop, Schedler aptly identifies elections as a strategy of political risk management. Elections are a contested field: "just like all other political institutions, elections shape the arena of politics. They do not substitute for politics" (Schedler 2013, 174).

When it comes to the role of the people, elections have two functions that are important to note. For one, elections can develop a legitimating function. For the other, elections can play a crucial informational role in autocratic settings. Given the general shortage of unbiased public opinion in authoritarian contexts, elections work – like the voluntary complaint systems that some communist regimes installed – as barometers of public opinion (Dimitrov 2014b). They might be an adequate means to reduce the “dictator’s dilemma” (Wintrobe 1998, 20). Elections may provide valuable feedback if results are not too distorted by prior electoral manipulations. In such cases, elections can offer important clues about the legitimacy of the incumbent autocratic government, for example, which (regional and local) political talents are capable of organizing support and might be recommended for further political careers. Elections provide information. Yet, what might sometimes be even more important for autocrats is to use elections not for informational purposes but as mere power tools. They should signal a regime’s strength and popular support – to both domestic and international audiences (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). The seeming popularity of the incumbent regime is demonstrated by real or staged electoral victories.

For autocrats, however, elections are a balancing act. If authoritarian elections are manipulated too much, no information is gained. The almost 100 percent approval rates of North Korean-style elections have no added value in this regard. However, too much information can be signaled to citizens. One telling example is the landslide electoral loss that the Burmese military junta suffered when it opened up the electoral process in 1990. The oppositional National League for Democracy (NLD) of Aung San Suu Kyi received around 60 percent of the votes and more than 80 percent of the parliamentary seats, while the proxy party for the military regime only gained 2.1 percent of the seats. The sign of weakness was too apparent and the autocratic regime was delegitimized in a single blow. In the Burmese case, elections did not succeed in serving an internal legitimizing function. They did not credibly demonstrate to ordinary citizens that most of their neighbors considered the regime to be (by and large) justified. To the contrary, they created frustration and, even more dangerous to autocratic regime survival, cynicism.

In constructing a partial theory frame, the first step is to take stock and assess the repositories of previous research efforts. In this discussion, four lessons stand out about how to render the people passive:

1. Reciprocity works in autocracies. If the autocratic regime satisfies the socioeconomic and political demands of citizens, it not only strengthens its grip on power but justifies it as well.

2. With the rise of bureaucratic authoritarianism, a simultaneous rise in popular acceptance of a technical, managerial style of politics in which performance matters occurs. Running a state is equated with running a business.
3. Today's autocracies need to cope with a more challenging and demanding mass audience. They need to be responsive to these demands, either to preempt protest or to provide safety-valve channels and deliberation mechanisms.
4. Elections, if not excessively manipulated, can have informational value and may serve as a barometer of public opinion. Elections can fulfill a second function by legitimating autocratic rule by signaling domestic strength.

To sum up, this book distinguishes two major roles that ordinary citizens play in autocratic contexts. They can be mobilized, ideologized, indoctrinated, and turned into active supporters of the regime. Alternatively, the people can be kept passive, satisfied, apolitical, and protest averse. In both cases, autocrats try to organize certainty. It is only the logics that differ: activating vs. deactivating the people.

Conceptualizing Legitimation

The second step in constructing useful theory frames consists of investing in proper conceptualizations. Based on an assessment and synthesis of classical and contemporary works on totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, the importance of ordinary people in studying autocratic rule has been carved out. In the following, a conceptual framework for studying legitimacy in autocratic regimes is proposed. Yet, one “elephant in the room” remains: Can an autocracy ever actually be called legitimate? Does the term not refer exclusively to a form of political rule that is widely accepted and voluntarily shared, making autocratic legitimacy an oxymoron (Gerschewski 2018)? Above all, why should autocrats actually bother about justifying their grip on power?

The simple reason for bothering is that every autocrat is insecure. And while they want to organize certainty, controlling the people is a constant challenge. The people might be inert and passive, or they might be politicized and even fervent followers; either way, they are also a potential source of existential threat to his rule. To mitigate this potential source of threat, the least costly way of controlling the masses is to win their hearts and minds. No autocratic regime in history has been able to repress its whole population for very long. An autocrat might wish to control all the people, but this is an impossibility in practice. Moreover, repression is a

double-edged sword. In this context, Christian Davenport has coined the term “punishment puzzle” (Davenport 2007, 8): scholars have found evidence for the varying effects of state repression on dissent. Repressing dissent can thwart the danger of immediate overthrow, but it can also have the contrary effect and actually ignite protests. In such a situation, the incumbent autocrat, for the sake of his survival in office, needs to legitimate his rule. I follow here the famous *bon mot* uttered by Napoleon Bonaparte’s former foreign minister, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, who noted that you can do everything with bayonets except sit on them. In this sense, legitimacy is indeed “institutionalized power” (Friedrich 1970, 98).

Autocratic rule is obliged to say something about why they are actually entitled to rule (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). Some refer to political ideologies, some to religious missions, some to national pride, some to ethnic cleavages, some to economic development. Only if they are mere kleptocracies or sheer tyrannies do they not provide any legitimacy claim at all. All other forms of autocratic rule advance claims to justify why they are entitled to rule. I argue that legitimacy and legitimation are the best-suited concepts that subsume the activating and passivating legitimating strategies of autocracies under one conceptual umbrella.

Legitimacy is one of the oldest and arguably most controversial concepts in political science. If the essence of the political is to find collectively binding decisions, then legitimation is the task of justifying this collective binding if no prior consensus among political actors can be assumed. While some see legitimation as key to understanding and explaining the stability of political orders, others criticize it heavily. Przeworski is one of the leading voices advocating against the usage of the concept. For him, legitimacy does not matter. He argues that legitimacy has only “little bearing on the issue of stability” (Przeworski 1991, 28). An individual’s attitude toward a regime does not make a difference until it becomes an organized group interest: “Isolated individuals do not shake political orders” (Przeworski 1991, 28). Others have criticized the concept on more methodological grounds, referring to a paradoxical situation: legitimacy is a concept that does not play a role until it is in decline. Only if it is gone and the regime crumbles does it have an impact on observable variables like stability. As such, some scholars argue that the term should not be used (Marquez 2016; O’Kane 1993).

These are powerful concerns; yet, before these basic criticisms are tackled, we need to clarify what legitimacy and legitimation actually mean.⁶ “Legitimacy” has its roots in the Latin phrase *legi intimus*, which literally means “according to the law.” Etymologically, it stems from the

⁶ This section draws on a previous publication; see Gerschewski (2018).

Latin *lex* and the idea of legality is central to legitimacy. In state theory, the *imperium legitimum* used this notion. Ranging back to the work of Sallust, it referred to a form of political rule according to the laws and therefore free of arbitrariness and despotism (Würtenberger 1982, 680–81). Since its origins, the concept of legitimacy has kept these normative undertones. It is essentially the rule of the law. The concept has undergone semantic expansions and reductions, but one consequence of its normative roots is that the term has been used almost exclusively in democratic theory, more precisely in the philosophy of state and the philosophy of law. The concept of legitimacy was closely intertwined with the thinking about a just, fair, and righteous rule. It gave an answer to the question of how a political order should look and how we desire a state to be. The list of desirable components is long and, depending on the thickness of its definition, entails one or more of the following: participation, contestation, competition, accountability, division of power, control of the executive, and the respect of human rights, to name just a few from the rich inventory of democratic political thought.

It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century when Max Weber laid the foundations for an empirical social science. Weber's main objective was to ground social science concepts in observable instances, and with them that of legitimacy. He aimed to free core analytical concepts from their normative ballast.⁷ In so doing, he opened up concepts like legitimacy to empirical research (Müller 2007, 126). This turn led to a shift from a normative concept of how the political ought to be (*Sollen*) to how it actually is (*Sein*), which is mirrored in his emphasis on the “belief in legitimacy” (Weber [1922] 1978, 213, emphasis in original). Turning academic attention to subjective beliefs was a major step toward the applicability and translation of the term to the nondemocratic realm. This book follows this strictly empirical belief of the people in regime legitimacy.⁸

Yet, a reconstruction of what Weber exactly meant by belief in legitimacy is difficult. Despite being a key term in his political sociology, there is no explicit definition of legitimacy belief in his work. A good starting point

⁷ Edith Hanke (2005, 11–16) makes an interesting point here. Weber was influenced by the Austrian law professor Georg Jellinek and his distinction between “*Allgemeine Staatsrechtslehre*” (General Constitutional Law) and “*Allgemeine Soziallehre des Staates*” (General Social Studies of the State). While the former is a classic field of law and focuses on the way a state should be organized, the latter is represented by the newly emergent field of social sciences dedicated to the study of what is observable.

⁸ Given the normative roots of the concept of legitimacy and its common normative usage as being free, fair, just, and righteous, it might be important to explicitly add that using this concept in the context of autocratic regimes does not aim to relativize or even excuse these forms of political rule. It is also not meant as an implicit critique of democratic legitimacy formulae.

is introducing the distinction between rule (sometimes also translated as domination, *Herrschaft*) and power (*Macht*). Collins argued that finding a precise social science definition of rule is at the center of Weber's political sociology (Collins 1986, 145–66). It resulted in the famous definition that rule is the “probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons” (Weber [1922] 1978, 212). Yet, in a letter to Robert Michels, Weber also bemoaned that political rule is not only ambiguous, but “fabulously stretchable” (Hanke 2005, 4).⁹

Weber saw rule as a subset of power (Weber [1922] 1978, 212). If one assumes a dyadic social interaction between a superior, dominant person A and an inferior, subordinate person B, then one of the main differences can be seen in the attitude of B toward A. In a mere power relationship, B reacts reluctantly to fulfill the will of A, but A is capable of making B act as he wants him to. B follows the will of A, but the reason for doing so is only of secondary importance. In a rule relationship, B obeys the command or order of A and recognizes the authority of A. In this light, Weber's use of the notion of legitimacy belief is understandable. B believes in the right of A to rule and even feels obliged to follow. In the German original, Weber speaks of a “*Gehorsamspflicht*” (Weber [1922] 2005, 129), an obligation to obey. The intermediating transmission belt between command and obedience in a *Herrschaft* relation is derived from military logics and is based on discipline. For Weber, discipline is trained by habitual processes (Hanke 2005, 5–8; Müller 2007, 122). In a power relationship, there is no feeling of obligation as power still represents for Weber “something erratic and even an archaic element in history” (Hanke 2005, 16, my translation). The difference between power and rule therefore lies in the attitude of the ruled toward the ruler.

This book advances an understanding of autocratic rule, rather than autocratic power. As such, it is indebted to the Weberian tradition. Its starting point is that *all* regimes, be they democratic or autocratic, need to legitimize their rule. The task of justifying collective binding in the absence of a prior consensus is not exclusive to democracies. I follow German political theorist Peter Graf von Kielmansegg in his assumption that modern political systems cannot rely on the stable and prevalent convictions of their citizens, so that all regimes are in constant need of producing legitimacy and defending their legitimacy formula against alternatives (Kielmansegg 1971, 373–74). In the long run, every political system needs a “legitimacy idea” (Kielmansegg 1971, 389) to maintain stability. The fundamental difference between democratic and autocratic political orders might be that in democracies citizens have a “right to justification”

⁹ The original reads: “Der Begriff der Herrschaft ist nicht eindeutig. Er ist fabelhaft dehnbar.”

(Forst 2012; 2017), whereas this right is denied to citizens in autocracies. But both regime forms justify their rule with stabilizing consequences.

If autocracies are only about power in the sense of *Macht*, then legitimacy and legitimation play a secondary role, if any role at all. There is no need to justify power, but it is all about execution of power and being able to do so consistently. However, if autocracies are about political rule (*Herrschaft*), then legitimacy is at the heart of comparative authoritarianism. This book commits to this latter rule perspective and therefore pays close attention to the attitudes of ordinary citizen toward the ruler. What is even more important is that these attitudes of the ruled are not merely peripheral but are central for the stability of autocratic rule.

Legitimacy is a relational bond between the dominant A vis-à-vis the subordinate B. Person A is interested in creating what Weber has called pointedly a “legend” (Weber [1922] 2005, 549). This legend is a legitimacy claim in which subordinate B should believe. Weber restrains himself from judging the quality of this legend, and this is the crucial starting point for this chapter’s approach as well. People can believe in any legend that legitimizes the status quo rule. If we recall the three forms of legitimate rule that Weber has famously pointed out, only one of the three has democratic roots. Neither the traditional nor the charismatic types of legitimate rule are genuinely democratic. It is only the legal-rational type that has a close affinity to democratic praxis. What people believe to be legitimate can differ considerably. It can be the age-old convention, it can be a leader’s personality and supernatural properties, or it can be the fairness of a process. Such a normatively neutral and strictly empirical understanding of legitimacy makes it possible to use it in nondemocratic contexts.

For the empirical operationalization of legitimacy in autocratic regimes, the performance side is more straightforward than the ideational side. Connecting to the previous discussion about rentier states and bureaucratic authoritarianism, performance indicators are by and large similar for democratic and autocratic systems (Mauk 2020; Roller 2013; Schmidt 2013). Three subsets of indicators seem to be important: economic, social, and the maintenance of order. Economic indicators usually span from GDP growth to energy consumption, from inflation rate to the GINI index, measuring household equality. In social terms, indicators are also at hand. Social welfare is routinely measured by life expectancy or education efforts. Lastly, autocracies – not unlike democracies – promise domestic stability and the maintenance of political order. The reasoning behind the performance legitimation is clear-cut. If the regime delivers, it is viewed as legitimate by the citizens.

The operationalization for ideational legitimacy is less straightforward and demands more elaboration. I suggest a fourfold distinction. Three of

the four dimensions are based on an influential critique and further development of Weber's political sociology by David Beetham. Beetham argues that Weber's typology of legitimate rule should be dissected for analytical purposes. Weber collapses several dimensions into one. Instead, Beetham proposes that we should keep three dimensions distinct: legality, justifiability, and the concrete expression of consent (Beetham 1991). While a fourth dimension will be added that refers to the contestedness of the legitimacy belief, Beetham's approach is particularly useful here, as it clearly identifies core elements of an adequate conceptualization of ideational legitimacy.

First, legality refers to the etymological roots of the concept of legitimacy. Beetham argued that power "needs to be acquired and exercised in accordance to the established rules" (Beetham 1991, 16). A legitimate order cannot rule against the existing laws. The forceful usurpation of power and the enforcement of a new political rule are therefore almost by definition illegitimate acts, as they break sharply with existing laws. However, usurpation creates new centers of power and rule relationships that can become legitimate with the passage of time. Beetham (1991, 65) argued that legality can be reduced to "settled expectations" that guide behavior and ensure predictability. Only if people accept norms and rules over time via a Weberian habituation can we speak of a legitimacy belief held by the people. Irrespective of the concrete content, stable expectations are a prerequisite for ideational legitimacy.

Second, existing norms need to be justified. If they remain merely in the legal sphere, they do not develop full force. Instead, the justifiability of a claim is a core feature of legitimacy (Beetham 1991, 19). The dominant A can base his legend on a variety of sources, but it needs to be credibly anchored. The justifiability can be based for example in harking back to a historical narrative like a revolutionary struggle against colonial powers, in a full-fledged political ideology like communism, fascism, and developmentalism or looser forms of exploiting nationalism, religion, and ethnicity. Justifiability is so about the overall credibility of the legitimating legend on which the political rule is based. The justifiability of a claim does not only refer to the cement that binds people together but also to the ruling elite itself, resulting so in "endogenous self-legitimation" (Barker 2001, 30–40).

Third, the Weberian perspective of legitimacy belief needs to be complemented with a concrete transmission of legitimacy. Historically, the explicit expression of consent took many forms: swearing an oath, going to the polls, or organizing mass rallies. All of these events "*confer* legitimacy on the powerful" (Beetham 1991, 91, emphasis in original). We know from communist regimes that they were particularly successful in manufacturing legitimacy transfer by making effective use of rallies and holding more symbolic elections. But the same holds true for (semi-)

competitive autocracies in which elections can be the transmission belt by which legitimacy is acquired.

Fourth, I add a dimension to autocratic legitimacy that is borrowed from the work of Michael Freeden, who argues that all political ideologies share a common morphology (Freeden 1994; 2013). Ideologies consist of core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts. They form a cluster of political concepts, a “macroscopic structural arrangement that attributes meaning to a range of mutually defining political concepts” (Freeden 1994, 141). These core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts, however, are in line with Gallie’s notion of “essentially contested” concepts. For example, there is no agreed consensus on what makes a democracy a democracy (Gallie 1956, 183–87). Concepts are internally complex and contain in themselves competing descriptions of their constitutive parts that are, moreover, open to modifications (Gallie 1956, 171–72). Different parties use a contested concept like democracy differently; it remains open to interpretation and the contesting parties know about this definitional rivalry.

Based on Gallie’s seminal work on the essential contestedness of concepts, Freeden develops the brilliant idea that what ideologies aim for is to reverse the nature of concepts: to make concepts uncontested: “Ultimately, ideologies are configurations of *decontested* meanings of political concepts” (Freeden 1994, 156, emphasis in original). The rivalry and competition over the proper use of a contested concept need to be resolved; uncertainty about the right interpretation and the correct meaning that seems to be unavoidable for political concepts is abrogated (Freeden 2006). The ideology crowds out competing meanings and serves as a compass guiding people away from semantic indeterminacy. In this sense, an ideology serves as “freeze-frames of the meanings of the concepts employed” (Freeden 1994, 158). The concepts are endowed with clear (and often unchanging) meaning.

An ideology assigns meaning to concepts and furnishes them with the “proper” semantics. In such a situation, the concepts are no longer fluid and contested but rather are pressed into a rigid thought skeleton in which the range of semantic options is limited. The better able an ideology is to reveal such a fixed route through the semantic field, the more successful an ideology will be in practice. In this light, the main idea for making Freeden’s morphological approach to political ideologies fruitful is to ask how successful ideologies have been in decontesting the meanings of their constitutive concepts. How good are they in crowding out alternative meanings? To what extent are they successful in monopolizing meaning?

With these four dimensions in mind (legality, transfer, justifiability, and uncontestedness), we arrive at a nuanced understanding and conceptualization of ideational legitimacy that can be transplanted from the

Table 2.3 *Conceptualization of legitimation*

Key Concept	Secondary Dimension	Operationalization
Legitimation	Ideational legitimation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Validity of claims ◦ Justifiability ◦ Transfer mechanism ◦ Uncontestedness
	Performance legitimation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Economic performance ◦ Social welfare ◦ Physical security

democratic realm to the autocratic one. Legitimacy is a relational and asymmetric concept between ruler and ruled in which the ruled accept the ruler's entitlement claim as being justified and follow the ruler based on an internalized obligation to obey. The legitimating norm, the "leg-end" in Weberian terms, must constitute settled expectation to be fully effective and must be actively transferred. The extent of legitimacy can be aptly defined as the strength (how deep is the belief?), the width (how many people?), and the uncontestedness of the relational bond between a dominant A and a subordinate B.

Table 2.3 summarizes the conceptualization of legitimation. It displays the main types of legitimations – ideational and performance based – as well as their operationalization. Please refer to Chapter 6 and the Appendix for more information and details about concrete measurement.

Why and How Legitimation Works

The last step in developing a theory frame consists of identifying concrete working mechanisms. In this context, the question arises why and how legitimation vis-à-vis the ordinary citizens works in autocratic settings.

On a general level, the answer to this question is straightforward and has already been addressed. Legitimation is the dynamic process of gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the ruled. From the perspective of the rulers, legitimation aims so at fostering support and at gaining a following among ordinary citizens. Citizens should orient themselves favorably toward the political system. Leaning toward general systems theory, ordinary citizens evaluate what the political system stands for and to what extent the system actually delivers. For Easton (1965b), support was nothing less than an existential input to the political system. It can be aptly summarized that "without adequate support, a political system cannot persist indefinitely" (Fuchs and Klingemann 2009, 70). In turn, declining support means stress to the system. Support is vital for any political system to

survive (Dalton 2004; Klingemann 1999; Norris 1999; 2011; Rosenfeld 2020a). And legitimation efforts aim ultimately at creating this support.

Ordinary people express their political support, however, in different modi. As outlined above, ideational legitimacy differs from performance legitimacy. In systems theory terms, this distinction is often phrased as the distinction between diffuse and specific support. These are different modi that not only work differently, but that also diverge in their time horizon. This should be kept in mind for fully understanding why legitimation works. From Easton's work (Easton 1965a; 1965b; 1975; 1990), a second, less known, but crucial key distinction can be borrowed.¹⁰ He argued that beyond the differing modi of support, the objects of support, that is, the respective addressees, should be accounted for as well. Three objects need to be kept separate. They are the "elements of a system" that "are the most relevant to its capacity to persist" (Easton 1965b, 171). Cross-tabulating the different modi and objects of support, we arrive at a matrix that comes with two advantages. For one, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how legitimation efforts actually work. For the other, the matrix provides a template that facilitates empirical comparisons by ensuring comparability.

The first distinction that is important for understanding the different working mechanisms is the one between modi of support, that is diffuse and specific support. Diffuse support is defined as an "evaluation of what an object is or represents" (Easton 1975, 444). It is therefore not dependent on the daily output or performance of the system but rather is a "reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed" (Easton 1965b, 273). Throughout history, people have endured and accepted partial compromises, postponements, dissatisfactions, and frustration without directly revolting against the status quo. This holds true for all kinds of political systems, be they democratic or autocratic in nature. Diffuse support makes a political system able to "weather the many storms when output cannot be balanced off against inputs of demands" (Easton 1965b, 273). Diffuse support is therefore oriented toward the long term. It is an enduring and resilient attachment to the political system. Easton concedes that longer periods of crises can turn out to have

¹⁰ Easton has a very narrow understanding of legitimacy: it is gained via socialization and refers exclusively to the regime and the authorities. I do not share this narrow understanding and use legitimacy as a comprehensive concept that is able to subsume different sources under one umbrella. Also, it needs to be stated that I differ in one more respect. Easton proposes that specific support is only addressed toward the incumbent authorities. I expand it to the regime as a second object of support.

a negative effect. Yet, the opposite also holds true – longer phases of well-functioning output generation can have a lasting positive effect. As such, diffuse support can be thought of as a long-lived, storage battery.

In contrast, specific support is *expressis verbis* an instrumental form of short-term support. It is a “*quid pro quo* for the fulfillment of demands” (Easton 1965b, 268). It is directly and immediately linked to the performance and the generation of output. If the political system performs well in the eyes of their members, they reward them with specific support. If they fail to do so, members withdraw their support. As such, specific support resonates strongly with the social contract idea of rentier state approaches discussed earlier. Members of the system react in line with their individual cost-benefit calculus. This steady utilitarian updating is short-term oriented; it only has lasting influence if the abundance (or lack) of the specific support translates into a general favorable attitude (or its decline), that is, if it reaches the realm of diffuse support.

Instrumental specific support usually originates from direct experience. For the context of this book, the de-politicizing autocracies tend to be based on such concrete and immediate experience. The legitimation efforts of these autocracies rely on satisfying the current demands of the citizens. It is the provision of goods, welfare, and norms like stability and order that are in the focus of this autocratic logic (Knutson and Rasmussen 2017). In contrast, diffuse support arises also from a second source. Diffuse support stems from political socialization as well, starting already in early childhood (Easton 1975, 445). It is particularly the over-politicizing autocracies that stress these socialization effects. As outlined above, it is the work of Juan Linz (2000) that underlined the historical importance of community experiences that integrated individuals and that relied on strong emotional bonds, making references to the Italian *Arditi* veterans and the German *Freikorps*. It is especially ideocracies that place heavy emphasis on indoctrinating the people, propagating their ideological goals, intervening deeply into school curricula, and reframing cultural and historical narratives. The “primary phenomenon” (Drath [1954] 1968) of an exclusive ideology is promoted by all means. As such, over-politicizing autocracies invest more into indoctrinating ideational legitimacy claims into their citizens’ belief system. Yet, it should also be noted that these ideologies are not only spread via violent means. If there is one lesson to be drawn from the political religion approach discussed earlier, then these ideologies do have an inherent intellectual appeal at least to some portions of society. For some, they contain an inner fascination due to their Manichean and eschatological outlook, their simplified answers, and their construction of enemies. And, it should be noted that their legacy is long-lasting – even

after the autocracy broke down (Carter, Bernhard, and Nordstrom 2016; Neundorf, Gerschewski, and Olar 2020; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2017; Simpser, Slater, and Wittenberg 2018).

Diffuse and specific support differ not only ideal typically in their genesis (indoctrinating via socialization vs. satisfying demands via direct experience) and time horizon (long-term vs. short-term), but also in the objects that they address. The three objects to which political support can be directed are the political community, the political regime, and the concrete authorities. Diffuse support of the ordinary citizens can address all three objects while specific support corresponds only to the regime and the concrete authorities. When thinking about concrete working mechanisms, these three objects need to be kept separate.

To start with, political communities as the first (and in Easton's terms most relevant) object of support are made up of a group of people who are not only "bound together by a political division of labor" but also "by the subtleties of sentiment" (Easton 1965b, 177). Support for the political community means a sense of common identity among group members toward the political system. It is about an attachment to the system. In more concrete terms, Easton thought of patriotism or nationalism as making ordinary citizens accept generally binding decisions made by rulers for the sake of the collective. It is a sense of belonging together, a "we-feeling ... which indicates political cohesion of a group of persons, which ... shares a political fate" (Easton 1965b, 185). The criteria for membership in the political community can vary from territory, blood, subordination to kinship, and others (Easton 1965b, 178–79). This emotional attachment to the political community lies only in the realm of diffuse support. Instrumental and reciprocal specific support does not go together with this form of common group identity.

The political regime as the second object of support is for Easton a set of constraining rules and values that is accepted and followed by citizens. It ensures minimal procedural organization of a group so that the group does not need to negotiate matters on a day-by-day basis. A regime therefore represents "relatively stable expectations ... with regard to the range of matters that can be handled politically" (Easton 1965b, 192). Easton proposes the authorities as the third object of support. In an earlier work, he used the term "government" instead of authorities, which clarifies what he had in mind (Easton 1957, 392). The governing authorities are the most concrete, tangible, and direct objects of support. Easton refers to the ruling cabinet, the officials, and administration, but also to the incumbent power holder that usually plays the most important role in autocracies (Easton 1965b, 212–14).

As outlined above, legitimation is a relational bond between rulers and ruled. Ordinary citizens in any type of political system, be it democratic

or autocratic, can direct their support toward different objects. Equally, political systems in their legitimation efforts vis-à-vis the people can stress different objects. In the context of the book, ordinary citizens in autocratic regimes might value the political community as an object of support, but might be critical toward the person of the dictator. In turn, autocracies might differ in their emphasis on objects. Some autocracies might strive for creating support for the nation and a general sense of belonging, while others refer more to norms and values and others to particular authorities.

While the nuanced differentiation into different objects and modi of support clarifies the different working mechanisms, this matrix provides also a second advantage. Cross-tabulating modi and objects gives the skeleton of the matrix of legitimation efforts. This matrix not only helps to understand the working mechanisms of legitimation, but also ensures a comparability across empirical cases (Gerring and Thomas 2005). Without doubt, there is a disturbing variety of legitimation efforts that differs across space and time that needs to be made comparable. This is a fundamental task that lies at the heart of all comparative work. Autocratic regimes differ in their individual legitimacy portfolios and these portfolios need to be made comparable. A common template needs to be developed against which deviations and similarities can be assessed. The legitimation matrix is such a common template that aims at comparability of different legitimation profiles.

To apply the matrix empirically, it needs to be filled with the concrete content. Peter Burnell proposed an inventory of legitimacy sources in an explicit *autocratic* setting. He listed six sources that serve as a helpful heuristic and starting point for more systematic elaborations (Burnell 2006, 548–50). Burnell distinguished first between domestic and international sources. He named five domestic sources: (1) hereditary sources that come close to the Weberian description of tradition in which the “sanctity of age-old rules and powers prevail” (Weber [1922] 1978, 226); (2) religious claims in theocratic societies; (3) political ideologies, which he subdivides between communism and ethnic nationalism; (4) elections; and (5) performance. Besides these five domestic sources, Burnell also highlights (6) the international dimension of autocratic regimes. By discussing the cases of North Korea, Cuba, and Iran, he plausibly argues that the “enemy at the gate,” mostly the United States in these cases, serves as an external crystallization point to enhance internal legitimacy efforts. Dictators often use anti-imperialism to bolster their nationalist legitimacy claims.

Burnell’s list of autocratic legitimations is an extremely helpful start. Yet, it should also be complemented with insights from other scholars. Weber proposed his famous three types of legitimate rule: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. In particular, the role of charisma seems to

be underrated in Burnell's work. Charisma is classically defined as a "certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary" (Weber [1922] 1978, 241) and needs to be added to the picture. Dolf Sternberger distinguished between numinous (with reference to transcendence) and civil (bourgeois sources of legitimation). Its dividing line is the question as to whether the political order is legitimated with reference to a holy entity, a prophet, or a chosen person on the one hand or as to whether it is human-made, worldly, and with human consent (Sternberger 1968). This distinction emphasizes the importance of (political) religion for legitimizing autocratic rule. In a similar vein, Carl Joachim Friedrich elaborated a typology of four types of legitimate rule: religion, philosophical-legal, tradition, and procedural pragmatic sources (Friedrich 1970). More recently, David Beetham has discussed another source for legitimacy – the belief in science and technocratic rule. For example, Marxism-Leninism with its self-legitimizing formula of a scientific *Weltanschauung* stands out. The main entitlement claim of Marxism-Leninism was to offer privileged scientific insights into the course of historical processes. The Communist Party so framed itself as the avant-garde with (exclusive) knowledge about the laws of history (Beetham 1991, 69–76).

In an attempt to bring these different perspectives together and order them accordingly, the proposed matrix in Figure 2.1 is filled with concrete content. It arrives at a more fine-grained and systematic account that makes possible the comparative study of legitimation efforts in autocratic settings.

In the empirical section of this book, Part III, the forty-five autocratic episodes in thirteen East Asian countries since 1945 will be first assessed with regard to their individual legitimacy claims. For each of the cases, the matrix below needs to be filled. This step makes transparent on what basis the autocracy claims to have a right to rule. In a second step, it will be asked to what extent there are good reasons to assume that the individual legitimacy portfolio is believed by the citizens. In line with the operationalization of the concept suggested in the previous section, it needs to be asked: Does the autocracy perform in socioeconomic terms? Does it provide welfare and physical security? And, are its legitimacy claims valid, justifiable, transferred, and uncontested? Only a convergence between the respective legitimacy claims and legitimacy beliefs makes ordinary citizens support the ruling autocracy.

Conclusion

The latest renaissance of comparative authoritarianism has mostly concentrated on the interplay between the elite and the opposition. In the past two decades, we have gained important insights into the inner dynamics

		<i>Objects</i>		
		Political Community	Regime	Authorities
<i>Modi</i>	Diffuse	Nationalism (also often enhanced by international pressure) Ethnicity Tradition and heredity (Politicized) religion	Political ideologies (often in conjunction with scientific appeal) Procedural-pragmatic sources (elections etc.)	Charisma of the ruler
	Specific	—	Performance-based legitimacy	Performance-based legitimacy

Figure 2.1 Ensuring comparability: The legitimation matrix

of nondemocratic rule. This chapter aims at bringing the ordinary citizens back in. Comparative authoritarianism needs to rethink the roles played by the masses. Autocratic rule affects all people – and, in turn, the people affect autocratic rule. People and their attitudes matter for autocracies.

In this theory frame about the role of the people in autocratic regimes, four points are of particular importance. First, two strategies of autocracies in dealing with the masses are outlined: activating vs. deactivating people. Second, a working definition of legitimacy is put forward that is able to travel from normative democratic theory to the empirical study of autocracies. Third, in conceptualizing ideational legitimacy, four dimensions are outlined that inform an empirical application. Fourth, an analytical matrix for systematizing the comparative study of autocratic legitimacy is proposed that provides concrete working mechanisms and ensures spatiotemporal comparability across empirical cases.

Regarding the first point on the role of the masses, the theory frame demonstrates the two logics autocracies use to organize certainty: autocracies might overwhelm their citizens through mass-level political indoctrination or they systematically underwhelm them and keep the masses passive and apolitical. Both strategies try to thwart the risk of overthrow that emanates from ordinary citizens. By synthesizing the classical research on totalitarian regimes in particular, we can learn the most about the first strategy of ideologizing the people. Several strands within this research highlight the *tremendum et fascinosum* (Maier 1996, 244) of such regimes. Arendt's work on ideologies showed most clearly the ideological ambition of total, quasi-scientific, and rigorous explanations. She also highlighted a tendency that can be observed today in many variations – namely, that autocracies immunize themselves from empirical reality checks by making promises and nonfalsifiable, sometimes even transcendental references.

While repression bedevils the relationship between people, it is ideology that impedes the individual's relationship to reality.

The second logic of de-politicization can perhaps be best studied with reference to the rentier state debate. It is an implicit societal contract between the ruler and the ruled. As long as the ruler performs socially and economically and provides internal security and public order, then the ruled are expected to accept the entitlement claim of the ruler. Fulfilling popular socioeconomic demands makes people passive and apolitical and thus both risk and protest averse. With the rise in importance of socioeconomic performance demands, popular acceptance of a managerial and technocratic problem-solving leadership style has increased in parallel. In the twenty-first century, growing popular demands and the mounting complexity of governing forms have also led to autocratic regimes that are inclined to legitimate their rule through procedures, such as elections, and to ensure responsiveness through deliberative channels.

Regarding the second point, legitimacy is defined and conceptualized. A major analytical challenge lies in finding the proper language to capture multiple phenomena that people's political attitude matters in autocratic settings. Here, legitimacy and legitimation are chosen to be the most suitable umbrella concepts. Despite their origins in democratic theory, they also have roots in strictly empirical usage. They are flexible enough to subsume full-fledged political ideologies, loose and extreme forms of nationalism, politicized religions and ethnicities, tradition, and charisma, as well as performance-orientation under one encompassing concept. They demonstrate how and why a subordinate B accepts the entitlement claim of a dominant A. The legitimating norm constitutes, at a minimum, settled expectations that are transferred and that are justifiable.

With regard to the third major lesson in this chapter, the empirical application of the concept of legitimacy poses a serious challenge to comparative research in general and to comparative research on autocracies in particular. Conceptualizing performance legitimacy proved to be straightforward. Yet, this proved to be more difficult for the ideational part. Four dimensions are distilled here. First, an empirical approximation to the question of legitimacy reflects to what extent people's settled expectations are met. This first criterion harks back to the legal origins of the legitimacy concept. Second, it is asked to what extent any empirically given legitimacy claim may be justifiable. This is a type of second-order justification for the original justifications underpinning collectively binding political decisions. Third, it is assessed to what extent legitimacy is actually conferred from the ruled to the ruler. This can be done in the form of institutionalized elections but also through mass rallies and pro-government demonstrations of any sort. As a fourth dimension, it is inquired how uncontested the

Table 2.4 *Legitimation in autocratic regimes*

Definition	Legitimacy is a relational and asymmetric bond between ruler and ruled in which the ruled accept the entitlement claim of the ruler (the Weberian “legend”) as being justified and follow it based on an internalized obligation to obey; legitimation is the dynamic process by which legitimacy is produced
Target group	Ordinary citizens
Function	Gain a following among the ordinary citizens by either creating true believers or apathetic followers
Locus	In systems theory, support as input dimension
Working mechanisms	Creating “diffuse support” via socialization and indoctrination vs. creating “specific support” via direct experience and reciprocal fulfillment of demands
Types	Legitimacy matrix that distinguishes between ideational vs. performance oriented and between the objects of support; empirically applying the legitimacy matrix ensures comparability across empirical cases
Conceptualization	Ideational legitimacy via legal validity, justifiability, transfer mechanism, and uncontestedness vs. performance legitimacy via economic, social, and security performance

legitimacy claim actually is. Is it able to effectively crowd out alternative meaning and constitute the “only game in town”?

The fourth and final point pertains to comparability across empirical cases. This needs to be ensured. This chapter proposes a legitimacy matrix that cross-tabulates the different modi and objects of legitimacy. This matrix gives not only a more nuanced understanding of the working mechanisms, but ensures comparability across cases. The matrix has been filled with concrete legitimacy sources that autocracies can use. By so doing, it arrives at a fine-grained matrix that allows for the comparative study of legitimacy claims across empirical cases. The objective is to strike a balance between case-sensitivity and generalizability. In Part III, this matrix serves as the template for the comparison of all East Asian autocracies since 1945, undergoing a first praxis test.

Table 2.4 summarizes the major findings of this chapter, which theorized the role of ordinary citizens in autocratic regimes.

This chapter focused on the efforts of incumbent autocrats to legitimate their rule. Chapter 3 focuses on the opposition as the second actor that poses an existential threat to the survival of autocracies. Like this chapter, it asks for the different forms and effects of repression, constructing a partial theory frame.

3 Repression

This book distills two logics of autocratic rule: an over-politicization logic and a de-politicization logic. The previous chapter has shown that the most fundamental distinction between these two logics is the way the autocratic regime deals with its ordinary citizens. Does it attempt to mobilize them and politicize even aspects of private life, aiming to create an ideologized public *hostis*? Or, in contrast, does it attempt to demobilize its citizens, keeping them passive and apathetic, usually by satisfying demands for law and order and individual economic well-being? These questions lie at the heart of two contrasting logics. Yet, these two logics not only stand in stark contrast to each other but also demand different forms of repression and co-optation. They are instrumental for the implementation of the respective logics.

This chapter deals with the different ways in which autocratic incumbents keep the opposition in check. It aims at outlining the contours of a modular theory frame of repression. In a first step, it will – as in the previous chapter – deal with the repository of past research. It condenses current knowledge about repression in autocratic regimes, carving out lessons learned for the logics of over-politicization and de-politicization. Based on this step, a more fine-grained conceptualization of repression will be proposed, before concrete working mechanisms that guide theoretical expectations will be addressed. More concretely, it develops a distinction between hard and soft forms of repression. It will be argued that over-politicization accepts, in some cases even ideologically demands and justifies, the use of hard repression. In contrast, hard repression constitutes a red line for the de-politicization logic, as it might ignite unintended protest and intervene abruptly into the tacit contract between citizens staying out of politics and the socioeconomic performance of the regime. Lastly, the chapter will identify two distinct working mechanisms that are derived from systems theory and demonstrate why and how repression works in autocratic regimes: either preemptively and suppressing alternatives before they enter the political sphere or reactive repression that literally pushes back political demands to silence opposition.

Repository of Previous Research: How Opponents Are Repressed

Repression as the second pillar of autocratic regime stability is often depicted as the backbone of autocratic rule. Compared with legitimation, it seems to be less controversial to include repression in any explanation of autocratic stability. It even serves often as a definitional feature for nondemocratic rule (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956; Sartori 1987; Tullock 1987; Wintrobe 1998). It is argued that while democracies respect human rights, nondemocracies do not. Although it is indeed an important definitional feature, the question tackled here is more nuanced and geared toward a causal explanation: What type of repression and what level of intensity of repression stabilize autocratic rule? This is not a trivial task as repression is a double-edged sword. It is particularly empirical research that has found that too much repression can potentially have (inadvertently) destabilizing effects on an incumbent regime (Blaydes 2018; Davenport 2007). Repression serves therefore as an explanatory factor that reduces existential threats emanating from the opposition.

The Opposition in the Over-Politicization Logic

The academic literature about the role that repressing opposition plays in autocratic regimes is vast and fragmented. This book again takes the beginning of modern political science in the 1940s and 1950s as its starting point. In this period, totalitarianism was the major type of nondemocratic rule. The lessons that can be learned from this research strand heavily inform the conceptualization of repression in the over-politicization logic.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Hannah Arendt's socio-philosophical work on the origins and elements of totalitarianism constitutes an innovative and unique source. She identified terror as one of the two major characteristics of such rule, along with ideology. Arendt argues that it is an interwoven fabric of external compulsion (terror) and internal compulsion (ideological deductive reasoning) that characterizes totalitarian regimes. Arendt is clear that these two belong together: while terror "with its iron band, presses masses of isolated people together" (Arendt [1951] 1966, 473) and destroys the freedom *between* the people, ideology makes people lose touch with reality and surrender their *inner* freedom. As such, she concludes that the "ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e. the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e. the standards of thought) no longer exist" (Arendt [1951] 1966, 474).

For Arendt, terror destroys the nature of the political that in her view is not to be seen within the people but emerges between them. In her political thought, the political is a bond that connects people with one another. In totalitarian regimes, terror not only ruins interpersonal trust but also destroys the basis for any political action. Terror atomizes society into individuals. For Arendt ([1951] 2005, 973), it is the fear and the mistrust that are embedded into the people that mark the “anti-political principle” per se. Terror creates an omnipresent fear among isolated and solitary people who are deprived of their capacity to act politically. It is the “space of movement between men” (Arendt [1951] 1966, 473) that is repressed. Terror does nothing less than destroy “the one essential prerequisite of all freedom which is simply the capacity of motion which cannot exist without space” (Arendt [1951] 1966, 466).

Arendt does not explicitly distinguish between the people and the opposition as this book does. The usual distinction – which Arendt follows as well – is between the elite and the masses. For the type of totalitarian regime that Arendt analyzes, that is, Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union, distinguishing ordinary people from the opposition is of lesser importance. The claim of totalitarian regimes is in its literal sense total: subordinating and subjugating all people, as they constitute potential opposition. Terror makes people appear not in the plural but only in the singular; terror “eliminates the individuals for the sake of the species, sacrifices the parts for the wholes” (Arendt [1951] 1966, 465). Given the highly ideological nature of these regimes and their attempt to not only identify but also to create a public *hostis*, the use of harsh and widespread repression is justified for the ideologically higher good of creating the *Tausendjähriges Reich* (“Empire of a Thousand Years”) or of marching toward a communist utopia.

While terror is in Arendt’s account essential to totalitarian regimes, it is interesting to note that the leading second-generation theorist of totalitarianism, Juan Linz, saw a possibility of totalitarianism without terror. For Linz, repressive instruments did “not seem essential” and are “neither a necessary nor sufficient characteristic” (Linz 1975, 195) for such nondemocratic rule. He conceded a “greater probability that it [terror] appears,” but he did not rule out the existence of “totalitarianism without terror” (Linz 1975, 195). This is surprising, particularly considering that he argued that totalitarianism introduced about ten new aspects of terror, including its unprecedented scope, its arbitrariness and disregard for even the appearance of legal procedures, its clear-cut definition of a social enemy, its moral self-righteousness, and its extension to members of the political and military elite (Linz 1975, 217–28). Nevertheless, Linz shied away from including terror in his definition of totalitarian rule.

Linz's skepticism about the essential role of terror can be traced back to his dual goals of simultaneously typologizing nondemocracies and explaining their stability. For the former goal, terror is indeed an insufficient discriminatory feature that does not distinguish totalitarianism from authoritarian rule. Linz refers to the example of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, whose rule did neither justify its power via ideologies nor use widespread mobilization. However, Trujillo did rely on a high-intensity coercive apparatus that practiced arbitrary repression (Linz 1975, 217). As such, Trujillo's regime does not qualify as totalitarian rule, but rather as authoritarian with a high degree of repression. Although Linz did not make explicit reference to Benjamin Barber's criticism of the concept, he seemed to lean toward it. Barber critically observed that totalitarianism, that is, the absence of a boundary between the private and public spheres, can also be "absent either by custom (as in tribal societies) or by choice (as in ... communitarian examples)" (Barber 1969, 30). In this light, Linz was cognizant of a much higher probability of terror and repression in nondemocracies; yet, he did not rule out the possibility of totalitarianism existing without it. This is at odds with other approaches, most notably Arendt's socio-philosophical perspective.

The terror dimension was also the most controversial point in Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski's six-point catalogue (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956). It was actually the reason behind their internal disagreement and for the fact that Brzezinski did not appear as co-author in later editions and translations of the text (Friedrich 1957). Friedrich saw in the terror system a manifestation of the ruling party and the security apparatus that fights not only external but also internal enemies. In this context, he highlighted the use of modern psychology and its close interconnectedness to propaganda and mass communication (Friedrich 1957, 130–57).

In their preface to the first edition, Friedrich and Brzezinski clearly stated that their book was meant only as a descriptive theory that did not seek to explain either the emergence or the downfall of totalitarianism. The first litmus test of their descriptive theory occurred after the death of Stalin and the subsequent de-Stalinization process. Brzezinski became more and more hesitant of comparing fascism and communism, while Friedrich remained unchanged in his assessment that the two regime forms are "similar in their essential features" (Friedrich [1954] 1968, 179). Friedrich continued to argue that to qualify as a totalitarian regime, all six features (ideology, party, terror, monopoly over mass communication, monopoly of force, state-led economy) needed to be present. However, in light of de-Stalinization, he softened his understanding of the terror dimension. Friedrich stopped using the concept of "terror," but in an essay on the "Evolving Theory and

Practice of Totalitarian Regimes” spoke about a “fully developed secret police” (Friedrich 1969, 126). He contended that this feature oscillates between different types of nondemocratic rule and that post-Stalinist developments should be interpreted against this theoretical adaptation (Friedrich 1969, 132). This did not prevent other scholars (even some of his former students) from going so far as to argue that Friedrich’s six-point catalogue was disproved by historical developments (Beyme 1998).

What needs to be maintained for the conceptualization of over-politicizing logics in autocratic regimes is that these early scholars emphasized an overly exaggerated use of repression that was often justified in ideological terms. Even if terror were replaced by weaker terms, this particular type of nondemocratic rule relied on excessive repression that tried to annihilate opposition to the regime.

The Opposition in the De-Politicizing Logic

In contrast to the overly exaggerated and ideologically charged use of repression, newer research underlines the importance of strategic repression in studying nondemocratic rule as well. Yet, unlike the totalitarianism paradigm, this research opens up new perspectives by widening the arsenal of repressive instruments beyond terror. It is one of the particular merits of (formal) modeling techniques to deepen our understanding of the strategically optimal response of a certain type and degree of repression that stabilizes autocratic rule. While the excessive and brutal use of repression informs the over-politicization logic, the more strategic and softer use of repression is closer to the de-politicizing logic in which people are kept passive and apathetic.

Among others, Ronald Wintrobe has been a pioneer in marking this difference. He proposed an economic theory of dictatorship, arguing that two kinds of autocracies can be distinguished, the totalitarian and the “tinpot” (Wintrobe 1990; 1998). Wintrobe argued that the tinpot ruler restrains himself by exerting the minimum of power necessary – while the totalitarian ruler maximizes power (also see Kirkpatrick 1982). Wintrobe proposed two political instruments – loyalty and repression – that autocrats can use vis-à-vis the citizenry and proceeded to model equilibrium levels of repression and loyalty under tinpot and totalitarian regimes. In general, he found that in totalitarian regimes, repression and loyalty are positively correlated. High repression results in high loyalty: in such cases, the political opposition is nearly wiped out.¹ This resembles the

¹ Repression, however, cannot be expanded infinitely but only to a point where, technically speaking, the income effect overwhelms the substitution effect and the aggregate supply

idea of over-politicization outlined above. In tinpot regimes, however, a trade-off exists instead between repression and loyalty. An increase in repression leads to a decrease in loyalty. Repression backfires. And de-politicizing autocrats fear this backfire effect. Interestingly, Wintrobe also analyzed the effect of economic performance. For tinpots, he found that longer phases of successful economic performance lead to a decrease in the level of repression, while economic underperformance leads to a sharp increase in repression. Wintrobe argued therefore that “the classic error for a tinpot is to respond to worsening economic conditions by relaxing repression” (Wintrobe 1998, 55). In contrast to tinpots, for totalitarians, economic performance that can be credited to the dictator leads to an increase of repression, because the totalitarian wants to seize the opportunity to amass power (Wintrobe 1998, 58–67).

Wintrobe’s basic model served as the benchmark for subsequent studies that have further developed and refined the inner workings of autocracies based on rational-choice assumptions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2001; 2006; Blaydes 2018; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Escribà-Folch 2013; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2014; Tanneberg 2020). Newer research has also had an advantageous position, as it could rely on a wealth of data that previously did not exist. In contrast to the legitimation dimension, which remains until today hugely under-researched, the repression literature has made substantial progress over the years. Empirical human rights measures have been established.

Against this backdrop, two huge data collection efforts dominate the contemporary empirical analysis: the Political Terror Scale (PTS) and the Cingranelli and Richards Human Rights Data Project (CIRI) (Cingranelli and Richards 2010; Gibney and Dalton 1996; Wood and Gibney 2010). They are unparalleled in scope and base their yearly assessments on the *Amnesty International Annual Report* and the annual publication of *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* issued by the US Department of State. By so doing, they provide a solid basis for empirical studies. This book will draw on these rich sources as well for distinguishing between forms of repression.

Using these data sources, it has been consistently shown that autocracies rely more on repression than their democratic counterparts (Davenport 1999; 2004; 2007; Poe and Tate 1994). It has also been shown

of loyalty bends backward. Therefore, repression is only expanded to a point in which a marginal increase in repression reduces the marginal supply of loyalty. Historically, this was the case when Stalin feared at the end of the 1930s that the purges went too far (Wintrobe 1998, 60–61).

that repression works. A panel study of autocracies between 1950 and 2002 with global scope found that an increased coercive capacity has a strong negative impact at the country level of democracy, as well as on its prospects for democratization (Albertus and Menaldo 2012). Abel Escribà-Folch (2013) has also shown that repression increases the likelihood of an autocrat's survival. His study goes beyond former work because he differentiated various types of repression. He was able to show that political terror only reduced the threat of regular and nonviolent exit from office, whereas the restriction of civil rights was effective in deterring regular and nonviolent as well as irregular and violent exit from office. This distinction between the curtailment of physical rights on the one hand and civil liberties on the other is important. It will be taken up again in the later conceptualization of the different forms of repression.

To sum up, three points need to be explicitly highlighted. First, the conceptual confusion in the works of the 1950s shows the necessity of disentangling forms of repression. While one might be inclined to intuitively equate repression with brutality, killings, and the general use of physical force, the arsenal of repressive instruments is much wider and the empirical picture is fuzzier. Different types of nondemocratic rulers deploy different types of repression. Second, the type of repression alone, that is, either terror or more subtle instruments, is not a robust dimension to demarcate the typological space between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. It does not develop enough discriminatory power to distinguish these regime forms. Instead of using repression in typologies, it should instead serve as an explanatory factor for autocratic survival logics. In contours, it could be outlined that on the one hand over-politicizing regimes rely more on harsh forms of repression that are ideologically charged. On the other hand, softer forms of repression are more compatible with de-politicizing aims. This leads to the third and last point of what can be learned from previous research: it is not only that repression works in general; rather, it is a strategically optimal degree and specific type of repression that works in a given surrounding. While older studies emphasized an exaggerated use of repression, newer studies have convincingly shown that "too much" repression can backfire. Moreover, repression is a double-edged sword that has not only explanatory power for both the stability and the downfall of autocratic regimes but also needs to be seen particularly in tandem with legitimation efforts. Table 3.1 provides a synopsis of what can be learned from prior work for conceptualizing repression in autocratic regimes.

Table 3.1 *Repository: Managing opponents in the over-politicization and de-politicization logics*

	Classic Totalitarianism and Authoritarianism Studies	More Recent Game-Theoretic Accounts
Major Argument	Excessive use of repression (debate about terror)	Equilibrium arguments about extent of repression and loyalty
Major Lessons for Role of Opponents in the Over-Politicization and De-Politicization Logics	(a) Working mechanism: instilling fear among opponents as backbone for over-politicizing regimes (b) Ideological charging of repressive means (c) Extent of repression not discriminating among nondemocratic regime types	(a) Working mechanism: Disabling opponents from organizing dissent as backbone for de-politicizing regimes (b) Types of repression matter for survival and downfall of nondemocratic regimes (c) Optimal degree of repression; strategic and calibrated usage of repression: in totalitarian regimes, high repression and loyalty are positively correlated, in tinpot regimes negatively (d) Systematic data collection efforts

Conceptualizing Repression

The discussion of prior work highlights the overall importance of repression for analyzing autocratic regime stability. Yet, it also reveals conceptual disagreements and confusion. What makes matters more complicated is that repression is not an exclusive autocratic practice but exists in democracies as well. Over time, the concept has undergone such semantical expansion that it demands a clear-cut conceptualization. In general, an apt route to defining the core of a concept is to determine what it actually does *not* mean. This chapter follows this advice and limits the range of options, first clarifying what repression is not, according to the terms of this book.

Repression can be helpfully typologized along the following three criteria: the identity of the agents, the character of the action, and whether or not the action is observable (Earl 2003). First, formal state agents should be distinguished from more loosely connected state agents and from private actors (e.g., the distinction between security police vs. local police vs. Ku Klux Klan). Second, any agent's action can involve either coercion or channeling (e.g., murder vs. obstruction). Third, any repressive act can be either observable or intended to be covert (e.g., censorship vs. covert counterintelligence programs). These basic parameters alone lead to twelve possible types of repression, necessitating further clarification.

To limit the typological space, some clarifications are in place. First, in this book, repression refers only to agents that are formally connected to the state or are at least closely affiliated with the state. Private actors will not be included here. Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way (2010, 59) have proposed such a list of potential actors: “army and police forces, presidential guards, gendarmes and riot police, secret police, and other specialized internal security units, and the domestic intelligence apparatus.” Second, when it comes to the instruments, a wide variety of repressive and coercive measures are included.² They will be spelled out in the next section in more detail. Third, due to data limitations, the focus will be on observable actions.

In addition, two limits in scope need to be emphasized. First, this book focuses only on autocratic regimes. Forms of state repression that are also observed in democratic polities, such as the policing of protest within social movement theory will be excluded (Della Porta and Reiter 1998; Earl 2003). Besides policing of protest, democratic governments’ repressive acts in reaction to the terrorist attacks on 9/11 have also often been subsumed under the term repression (Earl 2011). Neither the policing of social movements nor the democracies’ reaction to terror will be dealt with here. And second, repression refers in this context only to violations of the so-called first generation of human rights. It has become customary to differentiate among three generations of human rights. Whereas the first generation refers to classical liberal rights like the rights to life, speech, religion, or protection from arbitrary judgment, the second generation goes beyond this core understanding and includes economic, social, and cultural issues like humane working conditions, health care, and secure living conditions. The third generation is composed of collective solidarity goals like the right to development or to a clean environment and clean water (Gareis 2012, 149–72). Also, Johan Galtung’s (1969) influential concept of “structural violence” cannot be integrated. Such a comprehensive understanding of human rights protection would overload the book, which must concentrate on the violations of first-generation rights by autocratic regimes.

Lastly, the concept of repression will only be used to explain the maintenance and stability of autocratic regimes. This means that the book is not interested in further exploring *why* repression is taken as an instrument by governments. Here, some patterns have already been established: (1) The higher the democratic level, particularly the

² Conceptually, a distinction among repression, coercion, influence, authority, force, and manipulation can be made. I will use “repression” as the most apt concept. For a discussion of the different concepts, I refer to the work of Lukes (1974, 17–18) as a starting point.

higher the participation and accountability scores, the less repression is observed (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Poe and Tate 1994);³ (2) the more unequal the society, the more repressive the regime; (3) the greater the economic growth, the less repression is used (Henderson 1991; Mitchell and McCormick 1988); and (4) the more the public is informed about repression, the less repression is executed (Anderson, Regan, and Ostergaard 2002). A bit fuzzier are empirical findings that support the self-binding force of signing international treaties (Hathaway 2002). Shedding more light onto the “punishment puzzle” (Davenport 2007, 8) will also be peripheral here, that is, the nexus between repression and the intensity of conflict. Studies have found the influence of repression on further dissent as being positive, negative, alternating between positive and negative, nonexistent, and inverted U-shaped (Davenport 2007, 8).

These are the conceptual limits of this book. In this light, repression is defined with Henderson (1991, 121) as “the use or threat of coercion in varying degrees applied by government against opponents or potential opponents to weaken their resistance to the will of the authorities.” Also, in contrast to new path-breaking research of the international dimension of autocratic rule (Dukalskis 2021), repression in this book must take place within the jurisdiction of a state (Davenport 2007, 2). Repression generally works via imposing a cost on the target and is mostly used to undermine collective actions, including their initiation (Earl 2011, 263).

When conceptualizing repression, a distinction is drawn between two types of repression: hard repression vs. soft repression. The discussion of the repository of past research referred to classic works of Arendt, Friedrich, and colleagues of this era. They mainly used the term terror to describe the arbitrary and excessive use of repression in totalitarian societies. This form of repression seemed to be more compatible with the over-politicization logic. Its use is justified by ideological means, aiming to destroy a public *hostis*. The other pole of repression is marked by soft forms. Its conceptualization draws on insights of more recent research that suggest a strategic and calibrated use of repressive means.

The distinction between soft and hard forms of repression also speaks to the work of Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. They suggested disentangling “high-intensity coercion” from “low-intensity coercion” (Levitsky and Way 2010, 56–58). The former are “high-visibility acts

³ However, while this pattern generally holds, Regan and Henderson (2002) have questioned the linear relationship between the quality of democracy and repression and have argued that the threat level is decisive so that an inverted U-shape is more adequate. Their finding suggests that regimes in the middle between full autocracies and full democracies are the most repressive.

that target large numbers of people, well-known individuals, or major institutions” (Levitsky and Way 2010, 57). They enlisted as an example the violent repression of protest and demonstrations, imprisonment, attempted assassinations, and high-profile assaults on democratic institutions. Low-intensity coercion, in turn, is represented by attacks on lower-profile targets that encompass surveillance, physical harassment, or nonphysical forms of repression like being refused a job or educational opportunities. Levitsky and Way proposed an intuitive distinction that mirrors the media logic of reporting repressive acts. While high-intensity coercion figures prominently in the media, low-intensity coercion is not so openly displayed and works more subtly underground. Both forms of coercion are effective in their own ways. However, Levitsky and Way seemed to collapse two categories in their work: the profile of the target and the instrument used. While both might correlate empirically, a clear distinction in favor of one category simplifies empirical research.

In this book, hard forms will be distinguished from soft forms of repression by the respective human right that is violated. This constitutes a clear-cut analytical dividing line. It distinguishes between a violation of the integrity of the person on the one hand and the curtailment of civil liberties and political rights on the other hand (Henderson 1991, 121–22; Mitchell and McCormick 1988, 482–86). In this context, violations against personal integrity represent the most “egregious and severe crimes against humanity” (Poe and Tate 1994, 854) by state governments and include extrajudicial killing, torture, forced disappearances, and imprisonment of people due to their political beliefs. Sometimes these violations are also called “state terror” (Wood and Gibney 2010, 368). They represent violations of citizens’ basic human rights that are concerned with personal security and survival.

The second subset of human rights violations involves violations against political rights and civil liberties. They are not directed at the person’s physical integrity but against their capacity to voice dissent. These rights and liberties are often referred to as First Amendment rights in the US Constitution (Davenport 2007, 2). They encompass civil liberties such as freedom of speech, the freedom of assembly and association, the freedom of domestic and international movement, and the freedom of religion (Møller and Skaaning 2013, 82–83). In comparison with attacks on personal survival and physical security, they are termed here as softer instruments of repression.

Table 3.2 summarizes the conceptualization of repression in autocratic regimes. It displays the two types of repression and how they are operationalized. Chapter 6 and the Appendix provide more detailed information and concrete measurement.

Table 3.2 *Conceptualization of repression*

Key Concept	Secondary Dimension	Operationalization
Repression	Hard repression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Torture◦ Killing◦ Disappearance
	Soft repression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Imprisonment for political reasons◦ Violation of freedom of expression◦ Violation of freedom of assembly◦ Violation of freedom of movement◦ Violation of freedom of religion

Why and How Repression Works

The last step in building this theory frame refers to the concrete working mechanisms of repression. Why and how does repression actually work? Systems theory provides a convincing answer. Systems theory is a general theory that is often criticized for being overly mechanistic and overstretching the analogy with technological processing. Yet, it has important merits and a certain intuitive charm. Since David Easton (Easton 1957; 1965a; 1965b) and others formulated systems theory in the 1950s and 1960s, generations of social science scholars have used it implicitly or explicitly in their explanations. It is a powerful theory that provides important clues about the inner logic of political systems. Like the discussion of diffuse and specific support, it provides here the theoretical angle to discovering the mechanisms of repression in more depth.

Repression can be exerted at two loci in the political system: in the prepolitical arena and in the political arena – that is, the political system per se. The point of attack is in both scenarios the demand side. Besides support, demands are the second source of inputs into a political system and are defined broadly by Easton (1965b, 38) as “an expression of opinion that an authoritative allocation with regard to a particular subject matter should or should not be made by those responsible for doing so.” Demands are more concrete and direct than support and serve as the major informational input to the system. Demands have a “boundary exchange function” (Easton 1965b, 48). That is to say, demands are placed at the interface between the complex environment and the input side of a political system.

The first locus of repression can be identified in the prepolitical space. The essence of the political is the contention over which demands flow into the system or are withheld. The factors that shape these demands in the first place are manifold. They range from expectations to public

opinions, motivations, interests, and preferences. Easton summarizes them neatly as preceding “wants.” The wants constitute the raw material out of which demands are later formed (Easton 1965b, 71–72). When a want is converted into a demand, it is “politicized” (Easton 1965b, 80). Repression can set in at this prepoliticized stage. This is of particular importance for autocracies. For example, Marie-Eve Reny (2018) shows in her excellent work how the Chinese authorities tolerate local Protestant churches as long as their religious leaders keep a low profile and do not actively engage in politics. As such, repression remains in the prepolitical stage.

In Easton’s own words: “In such dictatorial systems the capacity to set the agenda for political discussion is a crucial instrument of control” (Easton 1965b, 93). The selection of which of the wants are actually converted into demands is regulated by gatekeepers who control check-points in the channels to the political system. Easton also pointed out that dictatorships need to pay attention to limiting the number of gatekeepers, because the higher the number of these gatekeepers, the less control can be established over this conversion. Moreover, the gatekeepers are loyal to the ruling autocratic regime, seek its approval, and work in line with its directives. The threat of input stress on the system or of input overload is therefore minimized. The conversion of wants into demands is controlled.

The second place where repression works is within the political system. Those demands that enter the political system and pass the gatekeepers then pursue a career within the political system. All systems need to regulate this flow of demands. It can be understood as a second-stage reduction process in which demands are filtered again. The volume of demands usually exceeds its processing capacity so that this second step is necessary: “Few systems could persist if all raw demands ... proceeded directly, without modifications to the authorities, the output points” (Easton 1965b, 128). This holds true for democratic as well as nondemocratic systems. Yet, democracies have more (peaceful) options to reduce the volume of demands. They collect demands and combine, aggregate, and amalgamate them before they are condensed to the most politically salient issues. In open systems like democracies, this is a self-regulatory task and is the single most crucial characteristic of the pluralistic political game. Demands compete with one another; some win, some lose – and the losers need to prove to be fair losers. Dictatorships, however, make use of these procedures in a more limited, more secretive, and top-down controlled way (Easton 1965b, 128). Dictatorships also strengthen the “intra-system gatekeeping” (Easton 1965b, 133–34). Demands that represent an informational unit are modified, pushed back, or withheld in

their flow through the system. The channels through which they would pursue their intrasystem career are manipulated or blocked.

Systems theory therefore proposes two lines of attack: (1) the conversion process from wants to demands in the prepolitical sphere and (2) in the reduction process after some demands have already entered the political process. The former can be characterized as *preventive*, or even preemptive, whereas the latter is more *reactive* in nature.⁴ For empirical research, the reactive repression side is more accessible. It is event data in which certain actions are undertaken to push back demands. The preventive form of repression, suppression, is almost invisible and is usually intended to be covert. Before becoming politicized, the wants are already undercut.

Reactive repression can therefore be based on the classic Weberian formula of exerting power, that is, making A do something that B wants and that A would not have otherwise done (Weber 1956, 28). This type of repression comes close to what we routinely understand as repression in autocracies. It focuses on the concrete institutions that are used to push back demands to the system. They come in various forms, be it secret police in Friedrich's work or other state agents like presidential guards or army forces. These institutions induce change in an actor's behavior by sanctioning deviance from expectations. Reactive repression is based on an observable conflict of competing interests and policy preferences in which divergence is punished. Both autocratic regime logics of over-politicization and de-politicization rely on this reactive working mechanism. Yet, it is theoretically expected that they differ in the "choice" of institutions that carry out repression and the respective human right that is violated. In both logics, however, the Eastonian gatekeepers fight back the oppositional demand that could potentially endanger the overall logic of the autocratic system. By doing so, gatekeepers also control the political agenda of what is discussed and debated within the political system. Only a certain type of demand passes. Others are actively manipulated, modified, or in a literal sense re-pressed.

The *preventive* or *preemptive* repression is subtler. It works by creating an atmosphere of fear among the people that makes them behave in a way that the autocratic regime wants them to act. It establishes a "rule of anticipated reactions" (Linz 1975, 214). It comes close to the Arendtian conception of repression. It tries to undermine interpersonal trust that

⁴ In this light, it might be apt to call the preventive form that aims at preventing the creation of demands "suppression," while the reactive form that pushes back demands is "repression" – or "oppression." For the sake of convenience, repression serves here as an umbrella term, and suppression and oppression will be regarded as two subsets.

constitutes the basis for political action per se. In doing so, it resembles in its workings what Steven Lukes coined the third dimension of power:⁵ “A may exercise power over B by getting B to do what B does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping, or determining his very wants” (Lukes 1974, 23). I believe it is coincidental that Lukes used the Eastonian term of “wants”; at least, I have found no evidence that Lukes was inspired by Easton’s systems theory. However, there is more to this coincidence. Suppression – the control over the wants – is to be placed in the Eastonian prepolitical arena before a want finally gets politicized and transformed into a processable demand. If a demand is put into the system, the only way to cope with it is to react to it.

The preventive working mechanism of repression needs to instill fear into people and shape their wants from the very beginning. This is what over-politicization regimes usually aim to do. The ubiquity of repression, sometimes even terror, makes people shy away from acting politically. The preventive working mechanism is also compatible with the de-politicization logic. Instead of creating omnipresent fear, it uses only softer forms of repression to make people apathetic followers, keeping them away from political engagement. In both logics, preventive repression forestalls the development of an oppositional demand and prevents political conflict over interests from emerging in the first place. The crucial point in Lukes’s third face of power is to impede an anticipated conflict from emerging. It addresses the prepolitical arena and *latent* conflicts. While the first two faces of power assumed the existence of an actual power conflict, “the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place” (Lukes 1974, 23).

This fear of taking action and engaging in the political game is also addressed by Jeremy Bentham’s classic panopticon idea. People are – but more importantly feel – under surveillance and act in accordance with the rules. Michel Foucault, who took up this idea, summarized the main effect of the panopticon: its task is “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault 1995, 201). It is the architecture of the panopticon that “assures asymmetry, disequilibrium, difference” while it produces “homogenous effects” on the behavior of people (Foucault 1995, 202). Feeling under constant surveillance, people are prevented from taking action.

⁵ The first and second dimensions of power are those described earlier. The first refers to the Weberian definition of power in which an issue is pursued against the will of B. The second face of power centers still on observable, behavioral conflict over competing interests but focuses on the agenda-setting power (Lukes 1974, 11–20).

Table 3.3 *Repression in autocratic regimes*

Definition	(Threat of) Imposing a cost on a target, by state actors (or those closely affiliated), within the border of national jurisdiction, violation of first-generation human rights
Target group	(Potential) Opposition
Function	Suppression of wants or repression of demands
Locus	Conversion process of wants into demands at a prepolitical stage or repression of demands within the political arena after demands enter and begin their political career
Working mechanisms	Preventive ("third face" of power) or reactive mechanisms
Type	Hard vs. soft repression
Operationalization	Violation of physical integrity rights vs. violations of civil liberties and political participation

Conclusion

Repression is understood as the actual use or the threat to sanction deviant behavior by imposing a cost on the target. Moreover, it was reduced to state agents and to repression within the borders of a national jurisdiction. Repression has two points of attack: first, it works in the prepolitical area in which systemic wants are transformed into demands to the political system. Second, intrasystem gatekeepers push back or manipulate demands that have already reached the political decision-making system. In the latter case, gatekeepers exert power by making B do what A wants. In the former case, it is the subtler third face of power that works: to already shape the wants of B. This is done by making the citizenry immobile and incapable of action by instilling fear (of being observed) and so prevents conflicts from ever arising in the first place. As such, two working mechanisms can be identified: preventive and reactive. Conceptually, repression that violates the physical integrity of people is the hard form of repression. Repression that curtails First Amendment rights and undermines political participation and civil liberties is the softer form of repression. Table 3.3 summarizes the main points.

This chapter focused on how autocracies repress the opposition. Chapter 4 will concentrate on the elite and how rival elite members are co-opted to the regime. Chapter 5 will then integrate the insights of the three modular theory frames of legitimation, repression, and co-optation into an overall theoretical framework, highlighting the complementarity among these factors. It is only jointly that they constitute the two logics of autocratic rule.

4 Co-optation

The third theory frame is dedicated to the role of rival elites in autocratic settings. In one of the cornerstone texts in the democratization literature, Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986, 19) claimed: “More precisely, we assert that there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence – direct or indirect – of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners.” For them, it was an elite split that was a necessary prerequisite for the initiation of any transition process toward democracy.

Their research agenda was dominant in the 1980s and also had a profound and lasting impact on the study of comparative authoritarianism. Autocrats must maintain unity and avoid splits among the elite members of the regime. Still today, elite coherence remains a major factor in explaining the stability of autocracies (Gandhi 2008; Magaloni 2008; Svobik 2012). Managing intra-elite relations is a decisive task in securing the survival of autocratic rule. The third potential Achilles' heel threatening an autocrat's success in organizing certainty stems therefore from rivaling elites. While legitimation is directed at the people as the main addressee and repression focuses on the political opposition, a functioning co-optation seeks to guarantee intra-elite cohesion.

This chapter follows the same structure as the previous two. I will outline a theory frame that centers on the role of the elite in autocratic regimes. It is important to first thoroughly explore the repository of previous research and identify the key lessons that can be learned for conceptualizing co-optation in the two logics of over-politicization and de-politicization. Based on these insights, the chapter proceeds with a clearer and more concise conceptualization of what the co-optation of elite members actually means. Lastly, concrete working mechanisms will be characterized that seek to explain why co-optation is so important for the stability of autocratic rule. As such, this chapter again follows the three steps of theory frames by taking stock and consolidating

our knowledge and continues with a more informed conceptualization before theoretical expectations are spelled out.

Repository of Previous Research: How Rival Elites Are Managed

This repository of previous research briefly reviews the classic studies on how elite unity is reached via party structures before it condenses the current trend in comparative authoritarianism that focuses more generally on formal institutional constraints on elite actors. This strand of research will then be complemented with an older strand, the one on informal politics and how patronage, clientelism, and neo-patrimonial rule sustain autocratic rule. While the former research strand on formal institutions speaks to both the over-politicization and the de-politicization logics, the latter strand on informal institutions is particularly applicable to de-politicization.

The Elite in the Over-Politicization Logic

Classic studies on totalitarian regimes usually refer to a strong dichotomy between elites and the masses and how elites dominate the masses. It is particularly the political-structural research approach that deserves attention here (Barber 1969; Friedrich 1969; Schapiro 1972). Among others, Friedrich has singled out political parties as the major institutional vehicle for implementing this domination. This political party is committed to the ruling ideology. It remains the single most important formal power center, usually led by a single person and consisting of around 10 percent of the total population, most of them passionate and loyal ideological followers. Friedrich is also clear that the political party is organized hierarchically and oligarchically, being densely interwoven with the bureaucratic apparatus (Friedrich 1957, 19). For Juan Linz, the totalitarian party was also undoubtedly the monistic power center. The political party is its “purest expression” (Linz 1975, 198). Citing Mussolini, he argues that it is particularly the political party that distinguishes this form of nondemocratic rule from any previous form (Linz 1975, 198–99). While Fascists often experimented with using the term “movements” instead of “parties” (Gentile 1984), the Communist parties followed the Leninist principle of democratic centralism to organize party structures, representing an elitist and vanguard position (Rigby 1972).

For conceptualizing the over-politicization logic, it is important to note that for those scholars, the “totalitarian party is not just an organization of officeholders based on the co-optation by a ruling group

of officials” (Linz 1975, 201). Instead, the political party is seen as *the* transmission belt between the elite and the masses. Parties not only represent the people, but the parties are also meant to transform the people into ideologically committed followers. “Total politicization through the mobilization of a party” is aimed for (Linz 1975, 206). Yet, this classic totalitarian perspective is a relatively narrow and idiographic one. It seems to overload the role of the political party. Instead of portraying the political party as an ideological transmission belt to permeate society, it might be more apt to broaden the perspective. To translate the classic findings to today’s study of autocratic rule, the role of the political party needs to be attenuated. A political party is not only an ideologically charged elite instrument to form and guide the masses. Instead, newer research suggests that (even) in one-party regimes, the role of the party is rather to be seen more generally in co-opting influential actors and as constituting an arena for elite bargaining (Magaloni and Kricheli 2010).

It is particularly this new renaissance in comparative authoritarianism that offers important anchors here. While it shares with the classic totalitarianism paradigm the focus on formal institutions, it extends the argument in two important regards. First, it expands the argument to other formal institutions beyond the political party. Parliaments, elections, and the judiciary are analyzed as well. Second, it also puts less emphasis on the idea of an effective transmission belt to the masses but rather highlights, in the spirit of neo-institutionalist thinking, the intra-elite smoothing and conflict-constraining nature of institutions. With some right, it can be stated that the research focus shifted from the external effect of a formal institution to an internal perspective. Political parties are not only meant as transmission belts toward the masses but also as transmission belt within the elite. As such, important lessons can be drawn not only for the over-politicization but also for the de-politicization logic of autocratic rule. The key function of maintaining intra-elite unity is of utmost importance for both logics.

In a nutshell, the main argument of the new institutionalists in comparative authoritarianism is that institutions matter. Institutions should guarantee intra-elite unity and should prevent splits between hard-liners and soft-liners. Even if these institutions *prima facie* appear to be democratic institutions, political parties, parliaments, judiciaries, and elections may also be tools to stabilize autocratic regimes. Institutions in autocracies function because they provide incentives for elites to avoid disarray. They not only shape elite decision making; they also prolong time frames and make actions more predictable. As such, institutions are effective tools to co-opt rival elites in a credible manner. This holds true across the two logics of over-politicization and de-politicization.

Take the example of Jason Brownlee (2007), who laid out the argument of rational choice institutionalism under authoritarianism in admirable clarity. Explaining the different durabilities of autocratic regimes, namely those in Iran and the Philippines on the one hand and Egypt and Malaysia on the other, he argues that the difference between the two sets of cases lies in the degree to which initial conflict is resolved by party institutionalization. The early years of a political party are decisive for its later development (see also Levitsky and Way 2013), representing a kind of initial character test. The “origins of strong parties” can therefore be traced back to the very “struggle that brought them to power” (Smith 2005, 429). When regimes face less opposition and resistance at the beginning, they have few incentives for building strong coalitions in the form of institutionalized political parties. The result is more fragile regimes that have a higher propensity to eventually democratize.

The cases of Iran and the Philippines demonstrate this fragility. Instead of building strong political parties, they relied on tactical alliances in their regime formation phase that provided domestic actors with more incentives for elite fragmentation, splits, and defections. Egypt and Malaysia, in turn, developed political institutions that created a strong institutional legacy. From an elite-centered institutionalist viewpoint, Brownlee argues that parties fulfill different functions that secure intra-elite cohesion. Parties here are not only clientelist networks for distributing benefits; they are also institutions that mediate and settle intra-elite conflict between factions. Parties “curb leaders’ ambition and bind together political coalitions” (Brownlee 2007, 37). They are able to regulate conflict, even when it comes to smooth power transitions; by doing so, parties not only regulate conflict over power but also conflict between actors in power. The institution of a political party provides a “collective security” arrangement for elite members, convincing them that their interests are best served by relying on the party (Brownlee 2007, 39). It is the strength of the party institution that serves as the probability raiser for durable elite cohesion.

These insights are in line with the “theoretical core of new institutionalism” (Immergut 1998) in which institutions are broadly defined as the “rules of the game,” understood as “humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction” (North 1990, 3). Even seemingly democratic institutions “structure the relationship between individuals” (Hall 1986, 19). What the new institutionalism in comparative authoritarianism has convincingly demonstrated is that the effect of institutions is not bound to any democratic context (Köllner and Kailitz 2013). Institutions function as predictability enhancers and ordering instruments in autocratic settings as well, with a similar effect on stabilizing expectations (Hall 2016).

Institutions affect actors' incentive structures and change the probability of both individual preference formation and subsequent action (Katznelson and Weingast 2005, 15). In this sense, institutions "exert patterned higher-order effects on the actions" of all political players involved (Clemens and Cook 1999, 444–45).

Institutions, particularly formalized parties, are also vehicles for increasing credibility arrangements. This specific feature of institutions becomes paramount when discussing moral hazard problems and potential intra-elite splits that O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) raised in the 1980s. A central problem of all types of autocratic governance lies in the asymmetry of information and in diverging interests. Milan Svolik argues that a ruling coalition consists of two players, the dictator and his supporters. The latter are "individuals who support the government, and jointly, with the dictator, hold enough power to be both necessary and sufficient for the survival of the government" (Svolik 2009, 480). While the dictator wants to strengthen his grip on power at the expense of the ruling coalition members, in turn, these members can threaten the dictator with a coup d'état. To make the power-sharing arrangement credible, institutions are of utmost importance. They enhance the probability that the involved players do not renege on their (implicit) contract. Institutions facilitate these power-sharing arrangements and reduce the risk of intra-elite splits (Boix and Svolik 2013; Magaloni 2008).

The argument about co-optation in parliamentary settings is similar to the one about political parties. Parliaments also function as institutional safeguards keeping elites together. If parliaments respond to power challenges with an optimal "degree of institutionalization," then they increase their tenure by an average of 8.38 years (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1293). This implies that regimes can potentially over- and under-institutionalize by overreacting and underestimating threats. By answering challenges "correctly," however, parliaments are able to neutralize threats and help autocracies survive longer (Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006).

The institutionalist argument on elite co-optation has also been applied to courts and elections. The "rule *by* law" argument, instead of "rule *of* law," fits in the general debate about a growing judicialization of politics (Ginsburg and Moustafa 2008). This holds for autocracies, where judicialization can serve as an apt vehicle for intra-elite cohesion. The 1980 constitution of Pinochet's Chile is a prime example of formalizing a pact able to balance the divergent interests of competing factions. Formalizing such an internal power arrangement in a written constitution reduces behavioral uncertainty and stabilizes expectations on all sides (Barros 2002).

Elections are like parties, legislatures, and judiciaries in that they can be an effective instrument of elite co-optation (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). Scholars converge on this assessment, notably Lisa Blaydes's (2011) study on Egypt, Ellen Lust-Okar's (2006) study on Jordan, and Beatriz Magaloni's (2006) study on Mexico. With slight variations, their general argument can be summarized as follows: elections serve as a tool for distributing rents and privileges. Elections work like "market mechanisms" or "auctions" (Blaydes 2011, 49) in which elite members, that is, party apparatchik, military officers, business people, or members of elitist families and cliques compete for influence and admission to extract state rents. The success of these competitors is measured by their capacity to produce a following and maximize vote shares in their constituencies. Therefore, within the shielded realm of autocratic elections, a limited and controlled competition exists that a regime can instrumentalize. A regime can treat elections as an informational tool to identify and select the best political talents and co-opt them early on by channeling spoils to their favor.

Expanding insights from classic totalitarianism studies, the rather narrow concentration on political parties as ideological transmission belts toward the masses should be overcome. Instead, what can be learned from recent scholarship is that a variety of formal institutions matter. And, they do so for all types of autocratic regimes. Irrespective of the strategy of over-politicization or de-politicization, institutions prolong time frames, settle intra-elite conflicts, and neutralize threats. These are effects that stabilize all types of autocratic rule. The key lesson is that these formal institutions resemble democratic ones but should not mislead researchers to underestimate their effect on autocratic stability.

The Elite in the De-Politicization Logic

The new institutionalism in comparative authoritarianism shows that institutions matter. This applies equally to the over-politicizing and the de-politicizing configurations. Both logics rely on different formal institutions for forging intra-elite unity. The arguments that have been identified in the previous section about institutions smoothening intra-elite conflict, alleviating power transfers, curbing political ambitions, enhancing intragroup unity, and making politics in general more predictable hold true for logics of both over-politicization and de-politicization.

Yet, de-politicizing autocracies rely on one additional way of co-opting the elite – informal co-optation. This additional pathway has received less attention in the current academic debate. Research is mostly concerned with formal institutions. Parties, parliaments, elections, and courts are

usually highly formalized entities. Today's research efforts are less concerned with informal institutions, that is, implicit and tacit conventions and unwritten codes of behavior that are embedded in everyday social practice. This is a blind spot in the current renaissance of authoritarianism research that needs to be addressed.

Informal institutions need to be considered as well when consolidating our knowledge about elites in autocratic regimes. Foundational texts on clientelist and personalistic networks stem from the 1970s. This research strand had a particular focus on the shadowland of informality. It can and should be made fruitful for the conceptualization of the depoliticization logic. In their excellent conceptual review, Gero Erdmann and Ulf Engel (2007, 97) argue that in this context neo-patrimonialism "became the orthodoxy of the 1970s and early 1980s." Closely connected to neo-patrimonialism are two other concepts, patronage and clientelism, together forming a triad of informality. Yet, the conceptual field remains messy. Together with other forms of informal and noncodified politics like corruption as an "alternative means to interest articulation" (Scott 1969, 1142), these concepts are often used interchangeably. What they share, however, is that informal exchange can serve as a functional equivalent to formalized interaction. Intra-elite cohesion can be achieved via formal party platforms as much as via informal personalized patronage.

For analytical clarity, it is imperative to distinguish among these concepts. Neo-patrimonialism can be seen in general as a type of rule, while clientelism and patronage would be the two dominant ways to exert such rule. Clientelism and patronage should be understood more as instruments. Corruption, in turn, might then be conceptualized as the most important lubricant to keep these the two instruments working. Moreover, the difference between clientelism and patronage can be seen in both the recipient and the kind of good. Patronage refers to the granting of political favors for certain groups within society and encompasses collective goods like infrastructure such as streets, schools, or hospitals. However, it needs to be kept in mind that these goods are excludable. They should not be mistaken for public goods accessible to the entire population. Rather, they represent club goods whose benefits can be targeted to certain supportive groups, for example, an electoral constituency or specific ethnic stronghold. Unlike patronage, clientelism is directed toward individual persons and includes private goods such as direct bribes and privileged access to jobs and services. While the former is rather high politics and involves politicians, who act as brokers for a specific (often ethnic) group, the latter can in principle permeate an entire society (Erdmann and Engel 2007, 106–8).

The conceptual evolution of patrimonialism since the 1960s to its contemporary use as neo-patrimonialism has important implications for explaining autocratic regime stability. Guenther Roth was among the first to reintroduce the concept of patrimonial rule into regime studies. Particularly in the field of African politics, the concept had an illustrious career. Roth initially bemoaned the narrow dichotomy between charismatic and bureaucratic rule that had dominated the discourse (Roth 1968, 195–97). Instead, patrimonialism as a subtype of Weberian traditional domination was highlighted and translated to the regime characterizations of the time. Roth's main contribution can be seen in decoupling patrimonial rule from charisma, arguing in favor of a new type of patrimonialism that he called "personal rulership." This personal rulership is routinely connected to cliques, factions, and political machineries. It is exercised "on the basis of loyalties that do not require any belief in the ruler's unique personal qualification, but are inextricably linked to material incentives and rewards" (Roth 1968, 196).

This type of personalized, but not necessarily charismatic, rule paved the way for further elaborations of these concepts. Although building closely on Weber, it also provided a fertile ground to go beyond Weber. Patrimonialism usually encompasses two main defining features: "the *exchange of resources* (jobs, promotions, titles, contracts, licenses, immunity from the law, etc.) between key figures in government and strategically located individuals" on the one hand and the emphasis on the "*personal nature of the exchange*" on the other hand (Theobald 1982, 552, emphasis added). From an organizational point of view, patrimonial rule lacks rational-legal bureaucratic elements. In the Weberian original, these legal-rational elements are (1) a "clearly defined sphere of competence subject to impersonal rule," (2) a "rationally established hierarchy of inferiors and superiors," as well as (3) a "regular system of appointment on the basis of free contract" (Weber [1922] 1978, 229).¹

Weber's strict distinction between patrimonial and legal-rational rule was soon overcome. The inclusion of incipient rational-legal elements into modernistic forms of patrimonialism led to its reassessment (Lemarchand 1972; Lemarchand and Legg 1972). The prefix "neo" soon marked the ongoing hybridization process in which traditional elements were complemented and coexisted with legal-rational bureaucratic elements (Eisenstadt 1973a; 1973b). This idea of neo-patrimonialism as a mixture of traditional and modern features has

¹ In Max Weber's ([1922] 2005, 567), original German, the key words in this context are "*abstrakte Regelmäßigkeit*," which define rational-legal rule.

been utilized for the explanation of authoritarian stability. Already in the 1970s, Harold Crouch's (1979) focus was on the survival strategy of Sukarno's "guided democracy" and Suharto's "New Order" in Indonesia. He argues that in both eras, regime stability could be explained by the hybridization of bureaucratic and precolonial Javanese elements. A similar argument has been made before for the case of Brazil, claiming that even in its democratic phase between 1948 and 1964, it was deeply rooted in patrimonial heritages, as well as for Congo's political regime survival (Roett 1972; Theobald 1982; Williams 1972). *Neo-patrimonialism* soon became the new paradigmatic term in which the traditional and legal-rational elements were harmonized under one theoretical umbrella.

Within this type of rule, clientelism is a characteristic way to exert power. Clientelism includes in almost all accounts an asymmetrical relationship between a patron and a client (Eisenstadt and Lemarchand 1981; Powell 1970; Scott 1972). In its basic form, a patron-client relationship is a dyad, although it can also be extended to a wide and dense network of multiple actors. It functions for the mutual benefit of both the patron and the client. The control of critical resources by a specific group, the desire or requirement of this resource by the client, the impossibility of receiving this resource otherwise, and the absence of public and universalistic allocation mechanisms are four necessary conditions for a clientelistic system to come into existence (Clapham 1982, 7–9; Scott 1972, 99–101). The patron grants political or economic benefits in exchange for the client's support. The interaction between the two is routinely based on a simultaneous exchange of resources, usually in the form of a "package deal" (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1980, 50) in which neither side can renege on the contract. Clientelism is a "lopsided friendship" (Lemarchand and Legg 1972, 152) that is, however, based on reciprocity. It serves as the theoretical bridge between micro-level interactions and macro-level stability.

A later strand of scholarship emerged in the early 1990s that took up the concepts of neo-patrimonialism, clientelism, and patronage and applied them to democratization research (Roniger 2004, 355–57). Richard Snyder (1992) compared four examples of neo-patrimonial regimes in the Philippines under Marcos, in Haiti under "Papa Doc" and "Baby Doc" Duvalier, in Paraguay under Stroessner, and in Zaire under Mobutu. The ruler-elite nexus seemed to be the most important factor in explaining the various outcomes. To exclude certain elites from the patronage network and to alienate them from the regime's inner power circle was shown to have a boomerang effect in the long run. Successful elite co-optation impedes both radical and moderate

opposition. Particularly, the “formation of pockets of autonomy” (Snyder 1992, 393) within the military must be avoided to maintain autocratic stability.

Marcos’s very exclusive ruling style is a case in point in that it served as a catalyst and breeding ground for oppositional movements. When in 1986 a reform-oriented military staged a coup against him, civilians supported this move and their “people power” ousted the dictator. During the rule of “Baby Doc” in Haiti, the early exclusion of black elites that had been the backbone of his father’s regime was the decisive factor for regime breakdown. Stroessner’s Paraguay also failed over malfunctioning clientelism and deficient intra-elite cohesion, while Mobutu’s Zaire was a well-known example of the longevity of patrimonial rule that effectively overcame ethnic and regional fault lines. For sub-Saharan Africa, it is particularly the work of Michael Bretton and Nicolas van de Walle (1994; 1997) that had a lasting impact on democratization studies. They made a case for the distinctiveness of neo-patrimonial rule in the transition to democracy. Challenging conventional wisdom about the splits between hard- and soft-liners (Przeworski 1986), they argued that these regimes tend to split instead over access to patronage. Elite coalitions “built on the quicksand of clientelism” (Bratton and van de Walle 1994, 463) fracture not over ideological lines, but over the insiders and outsiders of a patronage system that redistributes preferential access to prestigious offices and material spoils.

It is the explicit private nature of the neo-patrimonial exchange that makes it particularly attractive for those authoritarian regimes that try to drag public issues into the shadowland of informality. In other words, these informal exchanges are more likely to be observed in de-politicizing authoritarian regimes in which the people are kept away from political, that is, public, issues. While informal politics in general play a role for all political regimes, let alone all types of nondemocratic ones (Dittmer, Fukui, and Lee 2000; Helmke and Levitsky 2004; Köllner 2013), it is the personal nature of exchange that makes it particularly well suited for a strategy of de-politicization. Elites are kept to the political inner sanctum not by over-politicizing socioeconomic interactions and charging them ideologically but rather by keeping them enigmatic, secretive, and guarded behind a veil of informality.

To sum up, the classic debate about informal politics in explaining the maintenance of autocratic regimes centered on the concept of neo-patrimonialism and its instruments of clientelism and patronage. It establishes a nonuniversalistic *quid pro quo* that goes beyond mere kinship. It is a reciprocal relationship between asymmetric patrons and clients for their mutual benefit and constitutes an exchange of resources. Several

Table 4.1 *Repository: Rivaling elites in the over- and de-politicization logics*

	New Institutionalism	Informal Politics
Major Argument	Seemingly democratic institutions like parties, parliaments, courts, and elections stabilize autocratic rule.	Emphasis on informal institutional arrangements that can stabilize autocratic rule.
Major Lessons for Role of Elites in the Over-Politicization and De-Politicization Logics	<p>(a) The relatively narrow focus of totalitarian parties that serves as an ideological transmission belt between elites and masses should be overcome.</p> <p>(b) Institutions work in both over-politicizing and de-politicizing autocratic settings.</p> <p>(c) Institutions work as constraining and enabling vehicles that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - smoothen power transitions; - settle intra-elite conflicts; - make power-sharing arrangements more credible; and - make politics in general more predictable. 	<p>(a) Triad of neo-patrimonialism, clientelism, and patronage structures the asymmetric and reciprocal interaction and material exchange.</p> <p>(b) The shadowland of informality with its focus on secretiveness and privacy is particularly suitable for de-politicizing logic of autocratic regimes.</p>

studies have shown that this kind of informal politics has a stabilizing effect on autocratic regimes. It prevents the emergence of radical and moderate opposition that could threaten regime survival. As elites split for pragmatic reasons and over access to patronage networks, keeping a balance between excluding and including elite members via preferential treatment and material spoils has been singled out as one of the most decisive factors for autocratic longevity. As a result of their hidden character and their mushrooming particularly in private shadowlands, neo-patrimonialism, clientelism, and patronage are particularly suited for stabilizing de-politicizing regimes.

The recent neo-institutionalist focus in comparative authoritarianism and the debate about informal politics of the 1970s and 1980s

complement each other. Both offer valuable insights into elite management. How to co-opt potential rivals and bind them to the ruling regime is of existential importance for any incumbent autocracy. While newer research focused on formal institutions like political parties, parliaments, judiciaries, and elections, older research underlined the importance of informal arrangements in neo-patrimonial regimes. Patronage networks and clientelistic exchange act as a functional equivalent to formal institutions. While both forms of co-optation aim at intra-elite unity, informal co-optation seems to be particularly suited for the de-politicizing logic. It reinforces its tendency to remain in the private shadowland. In turn, both the over-politicization and the de-politicization logics rely on a range of formal institutions to maintain intra-elite unity. Table 4.1 summarizes the main points.

Conceptualizing Co-optation

Based on these insights, elite co-optation will be conceptualized here. Etymologically, *co-optation* derives from Latin and might be best translated as “to add by vote.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* also defines it as “elections to vacancies in a body by the votes of the existing members.” This is a rather narrow definition and empirical usage suggests a broader applicability. Karl Loewenstein (1973) has shown that co-optation historically took place in diverse settings: in ancient Rome’s priest colleges; selection of magistrates; membership in the senate, city councils, and craftsmen guilds during the Middle Ages; modern political parties; state membership in international organizations; and boards of directors in private companies and enterprises. Co-optation is a widespread and multifaceted phenomenon that represents one important technique of investiture. Loewenstein’s account on the wide use of co-optation already indicates that a formal electoral process is only one of the many ways to co-opt a new member to any kind of group or body (Loewenstein 1973, 13–22).

Conceptually, co-optation needs to be disentangled from other investitures like elections and appointments. This is a difficult task, as co-optation can formally be an election, and the outcome of co-optation can resemble an appointment. However, co-optation is always based on personal judgment. This is not necessarily the case for elections. Elections are often explicitly intended to be an impersonal technique: you can vote for someone without knowing them, but you generally do not co-opt someone whom you do not know. Moreover, it is important to note that co-optation is nonconstitutive. It only enlarges and strengthens an already existing group; it does not

bring about a new group or body as elections and appointments do (Loewenstein 1973, 181–89).²

In the context of this book, co-optation will be very broadly defined as the attempt to tie strategically important actors to the ruling regime (Schmotz 2015). An interesting parallel to such a definition stems from organizational theory. Philipp Selznick put forth a classic definition that serves the purpose of this study surprisingly well.³ Co-optation is therefore “the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence” (Selznick [1947] 1980, 13). This goes beyond the narrow electoral definition.

In this light, co-optation “implies not dealing the stakeholders out of the game, but dealing them new cards.” It must be undertaken in such a way that the co-opted is “persuaded not to exercise his power to obstruct” (Shleifer and Treisman 2000, 8–9). By doing so, the stakeholders should not transform into opponents but should make use of their resources in line with the ruling regime (Bertocchi and Spagat 2001). In the words of Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and his colleagues, co-optation is the task to tie members of the “selectorate” to the “winning coalition” in the regime’s inner sanctum (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003).

Who co-opts whom in an autocratic setting? The players in the autocratic co-optation game are assumed to be on the elite level. Co-optation as used here takes place on a high level of state hierarchy. The co-opted are members of the business and military elite. The elite is defined here as “persons who are able by virtue of their authoritative positions in powerful organizations and movements of whatever kind, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially” (Higley and Burton 1989, 18). They stem from high ranks in the military or hold top positions in economic, business, professional, cultural, and also religious organizations or movements (Koesel 2017; 2014) that are the most politically relevant and resource rich. The addressees of co-optation are therefore strategically important actors, since they are able to cause serious and grave challenges to the regime. They have either significant resources at their own disposal or are capable of organizing broader segments of

² This study deviates from Loewenstein’s definition in one aspect. For him, co-optation always results in a power equality between the co-opter and the co-opted. The members are on a par; they share the same powers and duties. Loewenstein speaks about functional identity and homogeneity (Loewenstein 1973, 183). This seems to be a too demanding definition. However, it does sharpen the discriminatory power of the concept vis-à-vis appointments and elections that bring about functional heterogeneity and hierarchy.

³ I am grateful to Christoph Stefes for highlighting this parallel to me.

society in protest against the ruling regime. In some cases, the political elite personally overlaps with the military and business elite, constituting one body. However, while it might be difficult to disentangle them, they can be distinguished according to their respective political, economic, or military roles.

The co-opter is part of the inner sanctum of the political regime. The closer the members of the “winning coalition” (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003) or the “ruling coalition” (Svolik 2012) are to the dictator and the nucleus of power, the more likely they are to exert co-optation efforts. An example might illustrate this point. We can use the metaphor of concentric circles to describe the Egyptian elite under President Anwar Sadat. With growing distance from the power center (Sadat), we can distinguish the top elite (with leading figures like Mubarak), core elite (with the prime minister, important ministers, presidential advisors, military chief of staff), middle elite (ministers, governors), and sub-elite (top bureaucrats; military and police commanders; leaders of economic, trade, and labor organizations). Co-optation needs to take place across all five intra-elite levels but is also restricted to this elite circle (Pawelka 1985, 28–32).

Co-optation is therefore not regarded here as a mass phenomenon, but as a selective endeavor. Instead of arguing, for example, that dictators co-opt the working class as such (Kim and Gandhi 2010), co-optation is understood here more as an elite-level phenomenon. The approach agrees with Guillermo O'Donnell, who argues that for the “domestication” of labor unions the “most important organizational channel for the formulation of popular demands would be attempted by cooptation of the leaders” (O'Donnell 1979, 88). Leaders, not masses, get co-opted by the regime. Masses generally do not find their way into the inner sanctum of autocratic regimes. Leaders who unite economic resources, military strength, or organizational capacity will be the clients observed here. In a second step, these leaders serve as “social brokers” (Lemarchand and Legg 1972, 153). The economic, military, or organizational support will be seen as the clients' resource base that tips the scales in their favor. It is why they get co-opted in the first place and why the patron grants them preferential access to resources. Conceptually, the inclusive function of co-optation is therefore limited here to their respective speakers and leaders who might – subsequently – create unity among their mass bases.

If larger masses are bound to the regime by tangible material benefits like low tax rates or social spending among the working class, then this is subsumed within this theoretical framework as a form of creating specific support. The debate about the “rentier state” (Beblawi 1987) and about “allocative co-optation” (Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004, 382–83) is

therefore more adequately incorporated in the legitimization pillar and the idea of enhancing performance-based legitimacy among the people. Co-optation, as it is understood here, enhances intra-elite loyalty and not support by a broader public.

When it comes to distinguishing different types of co-optation, a distinction between formal and informal co-optation is suggested. This distinction is in line with the repository of previous research discussed above. It argues that formal co-optation takes place in a deliberately designed institution or follows explicit and often codified and written rules. Informal co-optation is not deliberately created and constitutes “conventions” (North 1990, 4) that are not codified (Fukui 2000). The informal type of co-optation goes back to the discussion of patron-client relationships outlined earlier. It is a *quid pro quo* relationship between power asymmetric actors, a patron and a client, for the mutual benefit of both. It is an informal exchange in which the patron is an agent of the ruling regime and the clients are strategically important military and business elites. The arena in which this dyadic or network-shaped interaction takes place is informal. It is based on noncodified, extra-legal, and noncontractual forms. Yet, Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980, 50) point out that although relations are informal, they should not be regarded as less binding. Co-optation usually takes place vertically and is less concerned with horizontal cooperation among groups of equal status.

When conceptualizing informal co-optation, I propose to distinguish between the respective resource bases of patrons and clients (Scott 1972, 97–99). The resource base for patrons consists of selective access to vital resources that are not open to competition but are rather controlled and mediated by the patron (Roniger 2004). Granting preferential access to jobs, education opportunities, or services belongs to the patron’s informal co-optation toolbox, along with material spoils and bribes. In return, clients offer their support to the ruling regime and do not use their material resources or organizational powers to subvert the ruling regime. The client support can take various forms, such as political campaigning and mobilization, direct economic assistance, or the fulfillment of military duties.

When making the concept of informal co-optation fruitful for comparative empirical work, the hidden and opaque nature of the exchange becomes a major hurdle. Neither the patron nor the client has an incentive to reveal their interests. It is a tacit contract that is usually unobservable by researchers. However, to ensure comparability, a set of guiding questions on the quality of these *quid pro quo* relationships can prove helpful (Scott 1972, 105–7). In conceptualizing informal co-optation in empirical work, four criteria will be applied: the duration of the bond

between patron and client, the scope of the exchange, the density of the network's coverage, and the resource base on the side of the patron and of the client.⁴

The previously outlined neo-institutionalist turn in comparative authoritarianism provides important lessons for the second type of co-optation: formal co-optation. As outlined in the repository of previous research, contemporary scholarship is particularly preoccupied with the party, the parliament, the cabinet, and close leadership circle as the major arenas for formal ways of co-optation. The rationales behind why these formal arrangements uphold stability differ slightly. Parties have a stabilizing effect by creating stable ruling coalitions in which leaders' ambitions are both contained and constrained (Brownlee 2007). They provide an institutionalized way of settling intra-elite conflicts and provide a prior agreed-upon procedure of leadership succession (Smith 2005). Moreover, Milan Svolik (2012, 162–95) highlights that the assignment of services and offices is hierarchically organized and the appointments to offices controlled. Parliaments as co-opting arenas also neutralize threats. They do so by absorbing rising new interests and integrating them in the existing autocratic game. Policy concessions are granted in this arena (Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; 2007). Cabinets and leadership circles function, similar to parties, as credibility raisers and alleviate the intra-elite moral hazard problem (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix and Svolik 2013; Magaloni 2008; Svolik 2009).

With great methodical rigor, these studies have shown that different forms of formal co-optation work. Their smallest common denominator can be summarized in two dimensions: (personal) representation and (policy) responsiveness. With regard to the former, Juan Linz (1964, 300) had already argued in the 1960s that co-optation is most effective when “pre-existent or newly emergent elements of the society can be represented.” In its most basic sense, representation is about making something present again that had been previously absent (Pitkin 1967). In autocracies, business and military elites get involved in the political process and their private interests get interwoven with the survival imperative of the ruling regime so that their private interests become represented by the ruling regime.

The focus on representation resonates with the empirical approach of notable scholars in more recent years. The benchmark study by Jennifer Gandhi (2008) used the number of political parties that are involved in the legislature; similarly, Milan Svolik (2012) used the absence or presence

⁴ Scott proposes seven criteria (Scott 1972, 105–7). I do not use the balance between affection and instrumentality of the relationship, the local control of the resources, or the differentiation between clusters.

of independently elected parties in legislatures, while Leonardo Arriola (2009) used the number of cabinet members to explain co-optation efforts. The rationale for these measurements is clear-cut: the higher the number of parties or cabinet members, the higher the co-optation efforts and the better the inclusion of potentially rivaling elites. Yet, while these approaches are suited for a large-N comparison due to their parsimony, they are rather coarse grained and do not mirror the complexity of co-optation. Instead of using the number of parties and persons, a more qualitative approach is advocated in this book. While the indicators that have been proposed could serve as a valid starting point, case-based evidence is needed to consider that the logic of “the higher the number, the better the co-optation” can be misleading. If we take the number of parties in parliaments, one-party regimes follow a different co-optation pattern than multiparty regimes. One-party regimes co-opt *before* new parties emerge; they are preemptive and not reactive. They absorb new alternative factions before they gain public prominence. They integrate different wings under one party umbrella. The Communist Party in China and the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) of Mexico are prime examples of successful within-party co-optation. How new interests and persons are made present that have been absent before is case sensitive. The empirical part of this book is dedicated to such fine-grained empirical analysis.

Policy responsiveness is the second criterion for how formal co-optation will be operationalized for empirical research. The receptivity is not – as in democracies – related to the common people, but rather it is limited to elite members. It is therefore curtailed at the top level. The political winning or ruling coalition needs to be responsive to the demands of wider business and military elites. To maintain elite unity, the co-opter needs to be responsive to the demands of the co-opted. Otherwise, the ties that bind them together weaken. The co-opted actor needs to be satisfied and policy concessions need to be granted. Co-optation is not only the granting of personal positions in the parliament but also receptivity vis-à-vis the policy interests of the co-opted.

The co-opters need to play this balancing game and the better they play it, the more stable their rule will be. The idea of a monolithic bloc without any factions has been questioned even for the arguably most streamlined political orders, like the German National Socialists (Deutsch [1954] 1968). Also for North Korea, a polity that is usually described as the last totalitarian bastion in the world, Patrick McEachern (2006; 2010) has persuasively shown that different policy interests can be distinguished and that North Korea should not be misinterpreted as a unitary actor. Instead, we should be attentive to the fact that co-optation in autocracies is a delicate balancing act in which different factions need to be satisfied.

Table 4.2 *Conceptualization of co-optation*

Key Concept	Secondary Dimension	Operationalization
Co-optation	Formal co-optation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Policy responsiveness ◦ Personal representation
	Informal co-optation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Duration of bonds ◦ Scope of exchange ◦ Network's density ◦ Resource base

Table 4.2 summarizes the conceptualization efforts so far. It demonstrates the two major forms of co-optation – formal and informal – and how these forms of co-optation are operationalized within this book. Refer also to Chapter 6 as well as the Appendix for more information about concrete measurement.

Why and How Co-optation Works

From a functional perspective, the task of co-optation is to guarantee intra-elite cohesion. Actors who are of strategic importance for the autocratic regime's survival need to be integrated into the elite before they pose a threat to the regime. To reach unity within the elite increases the regime's steering capacity. If all relevant forces pull in the same direction, the political course can be more easily decided upon and the threat of an intra-elite split is minimized. In democratization theory, elite disintegration into two camps of hard-liners and soft-liners has been among the most widespread empirical causes for the breakdown of autocracies (Przeworski 1986; 1991). In turn, autocratic regimes are advised to undercut such centrifugal forces. The main function of co-optation is so to thwart the danger of splits and to maintain a unitary and cohesive elite body.

Not unlike repression, co-optation can be exerted both reactively and preventively. In the latter case, the emergence of oppositional actors is undermined by binding them *ex ante* to the regime. Before they rise to prominence, their oppositional potential gets neutralized. In the former case, oppositional actors are bought off to impede their oppositional potential from growing. In both cases, the co-opting party influences the utilitarian calculus of the co-opted. More incentives for compliance are given to ward off regime dangers.

The co-optation strategy is based therefore on cooperation between the actors and is routinely more effective than the mirror image of repression. In an informative experimental setting, Edward Lawler has shown the effect of co-optation from a social psychological viewpoint. He established

an experimental situation in which an appointed leader created an unfair payment scheme and could either co-opt or threaten subordinates. Lawler found that co-optation tactics were not only more effective than repression in preventing revolt but that co-optation techniques also made subordinates less susceptible to outside pressure. Although both tactics did not change the inequitable payment, the normative self-binding of the co-opted played a decisive role. An adjustment of individual normative evaluations that originally opposed the unfair payment occurred. Additionally, "a leader who adopts a cooptation tactic may appear more conciliatory and even invoke a reciprocity norm suggesting to the target, 'Don't hurt those who help you' or 'Help those who help you'" (Lawler 1983, 97).

What Lawler shows in his classic psychological experiment is one working mechanism of co-optation, which is the invocation of a feeling of reciprocity. This feeling is induced to deepen already existing ties with relevant actors to maintain their loyalty to the regime. The self-interests of the co-opted actors get increasingly intertwined with the ruling regime's interests. The fate of the former is even more closely entangled with the latter so that the interdependencies between the two parties grow. The co-opted now gain a stake in the regime's survival. While the co-opted might at the outset be independent and in a position of strength vis-à-vis the co-opter because of the important resources at their disposal, this relationship turns upside down. After agreeing to be co-opted, the co-opted lose their independence and their initial position of strength. After co-optation occurs, the co-opted and the co-opter depend on each other.

A second co-optation mechanism can be called the absorption mechanism. It can be directed toward old members but also toward new ones. Emerging actors who might pose a potential future threat to the regime are integrated into the ruling circle by offering incentives and buying them off. In doing so, co-optation expands the ruling coalition and absorbs alternative actors into the regime. The double-headed task of co-optation consists therefore of a deepening of the loyalties and interweaving of self- and regime interests and a widening and absorption of emerging actors.

The two mechanisms are distinguished here, deepening through reciprocity and widening through absorption. Widening and deepening can take place in both arenas, the formal and the informal. They share the aim of tying potentially rival elites to the political inner sanctum.

Conclusion

Co-optation is a person-based technique to bind strategically important groups to the regime so that they do not use their resources against the regime, but in favor of it. In autocracies, these important groups usually

Table 4.3 *Co-optation in autocratic regimes*

Definition	Personalized, nonconstitutive investiture technique to tie strategically important groups from the military and business to the political inner sanctum
Target group	Military and business elite
Function	Maintain intra-elite cohesion and thwart dangers of elite splits between hard-liners and soft-liners
Working mechanisms	Preventive or reactive Absorption of new members (widening) or interweaving of interests and feelings of reciprocity (deepening)
Types	Co-optation in formal arenas (parties, parliaments, courts, elections) vs. co-optation in informal arenas (patronage, clientelism)
Operationalization	Formal co-optation via responsiveness and representation vs. informal co-optation via the duration of the informal bond, the scope of exchange, the network's density, and the resource basis

come from the military ranks and large business enterprises. Co-optation tries to avoid internal elite splits that are often causes of, or triggers for, democratization processes. Co-opting elites can be accomplished preventively and reactively. Co-optation can absorb potential threats before they loom large, or it can interlink an individual's personal fate with the regime's fate to instill a feeling of reciprocity. The formal and informal channels by which co-optation can be pursued can vary from country to country, and we should be aware that functional equivalents might be difficult to detect. Table 4.3 summarizes what co-optation means in autocratic regimes.

This chapter focused attention on elite management in autocratic regimes. The two other "open flanks" of autocratic regimes are the opposition that needs to be repressed and even more fundamentally the ordinary people who must be either mobilized or kept apathetic. The people, the opposition, and the elites are the ideal-typical addressees of the three pillars of legitimation, repression, and co-optation. Having outlined the inner workings of these three modular theory frames, Chapter 5 will now turn to the interplay among them. It argues that instead of looking at them individually, they should be treated jointly. It highlights particular complementarity relationships between them and advances a theoretical expectation of an over-politicization logic that is contrasted with a de-politicization logic. These two logics form the two worlds of autocratic rule.

5 The Two Logics of Autocratic Rule

This book argues that two logics – over-politicization and depoliticization – stabilize autocratic regimes. As such, the book identifies essential logics for existential aims. It proposes three modular theory frames that are put together in a comprehensive theoretical framework.

The three modular theory frames are centered on the role of the people, the opponents, and the elites in autocratic regimes. These are the key actors of (nondemocratic) regimes. The previous three chapters highlighted so the role of legitimation, repression, and co-optation and synthesized the respective repositories of previous research to move from fragmented to more consolidated knowledge. Based on this synthesis, these chapters engaged in more nuanced conceptualizations and outlined theoretical expectations and working mechanisms. This chapter is now dedicated to bringing together these three theory frames. It proposes arguments why they fit together by asking why and how these three modular theory frames are complementary to each other. In other words, instead of highlighting their individual functions, it advances an argument about their interplay and conjunctural causation.

In the Introduction, the trade-offs between different destabilizing factors have been made prominent. Autocratic rule can fall due to the people protesting, the opposition organizing, and/or the elite splitting. Autocracies need to use available resources to fence off these different threats. While autocracies might wish to tackle all of them at once and simultaneously, this is usually just impossible. While controlling one source of internal threat makes the autocratic regime safer, this chapter explores whether there is any combination of factors that makes some regimes more stable than others. If we assume that an autocrat – in light of hard budget constraints in material and symbolic politics – needs to choose between options, which combination is likely to be more successful than others? Which combination is most conducive to autocratic regime stability?

In logical terms, there are 2^6 possible combinations that can emerge out of six factors (ideational legitimation, performance legitimation, hard

repression, soft repression, formal co-optation, and informal co-optation), with two values (present, absent). Out of these sixty-four logically possible combinations, two major paths will be identified. I argue here in theoretical terms why we should expect these two paths toward stable autocratic rule. Chapter 8 is then dedicated to applying a formalized method to demonstrate that these two paths are indeed the most salient ones.

Taking a step back, functions or institutions can relate to one another in different ways (Helmke and Levitsky 2004; Voigt 2009, 63). Four ways can be distinguished by which a function A can affect a function B in a political system:

- a) A and B can be *neutral* toward each other. They are not interrelated. Any kind of improvement in A has neither a positive nor a negative effect on B.
- b) A and B can be *substitutive*. The effect of A can be replaced by the effect of B.
- c) A and B can be *conflictive*. Following A has a detrimental effect on B.
- d) A and B can be *complementary*. Following A has generally positive effects on B.

Theoretically, I expect a complementarity relationship between different forms of legitimation, repression, and co-optation. In the following, I will explicate the reasoning behind this expectation. To explicitly state again the main message of the book, I propose two logics by which autocracies aim at stabilizing their rule. The first logic refers to overly activating and mobilizing the people by ideologically overcharging even previous non-political issues, harshly repressing opponents by instilling fear in them, and closely binding potential rival elites with formal arrangements, most importantly with political party structures. The second logic refers to the deactivating, passivating, and demobilizing of the people that go hand in hand with soft forms of repression that obstruct any form of organizing dissent but shy away from harsher forms of repression as they might ignite protest. As such, de-politicizing regimes violate civil rights and political freedoms (freedom of expression, assembly, movement, and religion) but rely less on infringing personal integrity rights (killings, disappearances, torture, political imprisonments). When it comes to elite co-optation, formal ways of tying rival elites to the inner sanctum are possible as well as utilizing the shadowland of informality and personalized patronage and clientelist relationships.

This chapter is devoted to clarifying why these two logics fit together. The conceptual cement that stabilizes these configurations is the concept of complementarity. The chapter will first clarify what complementarity actually is. It will distinguish three meanings: the logic of similarity,

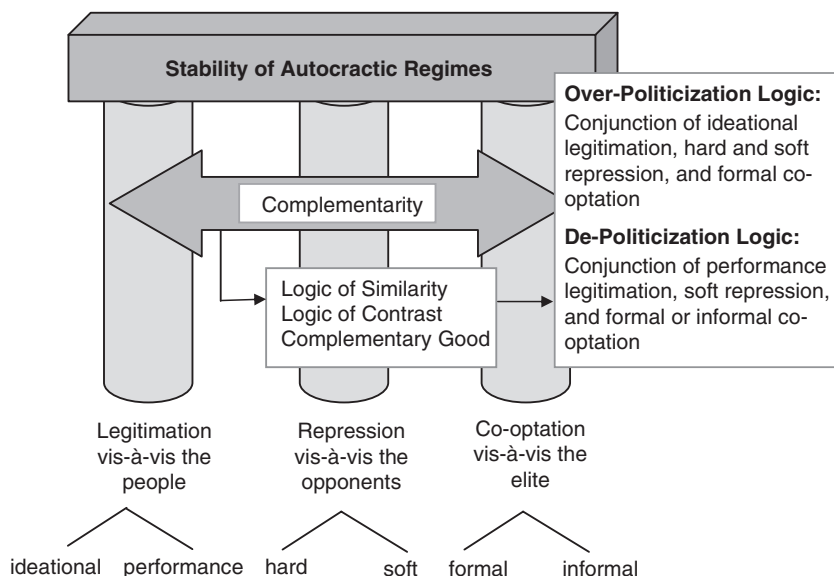


Figure 5.1 The stability of autocratic regimes and complementarity relationships

the logic of contrast, and the economic logic of complementary goods. Based on this more fine-grained understanding of complementarity, it will engage in discussing why the two logics of over-politicization and de-politicization are complementary. This chapter therefore clarifies the theoretical expectations about the two logics, acting as a bridge to the empirical section of the book. Figure 5.1 situates the reader.

Three Understandings of Complementarity

Again, it makes the most sense to start with the etymological roots of the concept. Complementarity stems from the Latin *complere*, meaning “to make something full” (*plenus*), to make something whole or complete. For example, Goethe’s complementary colors add up to white. In his famous color cycle, the corresponding colors stand opposite each other – blue and orange, or red and green. When mixing them, they are completed to white. Consider the binary codes of “1” and “0” in computer sciences, where a 1 is always a non-0, and vice versa: “1” complements “0” perfectly. In formal logic, the contradictory relationship between A and B, in which B is defined as non-A, is another example. Linguists also use complementary relationships in their study of antonyms.

Within the field of the social sciences, the most advanced discussions on complementarity might arguably be those in political economy and economic sociology, as part of the broader “varieties of capitalism” debate (Hall and Soskice 2001b).¹ Within this debate, a scholarly consensus has emerged that three logics need to be recognized: the logic of contrast, the logic of similarity, and the economics approach (Crouch et al. 2005). Borrowing from the varieties of capitalism debate, these three logics will be translated to the study of comparative authoritarianism.

First, complementarity can be seen as a “missing ingredient” (Deeg 2007, 613). This is in line with the literal definition given earlier, to make something complete. One entity makes up for the gap that the other is unable to fill. It compensates either for the deficiency of the other institution or for roles that the other institution is not able to perform. Colin Crouch speaks in this context of a *logic of contrast* in which contrasting characteristics are put together to form a whole, balancing out deficiencies of the other institution. He illustrates his reasoning with the difference between a mongrel and a pedigree animal. The pedigree is purist in character, so that both its strengths and its vulnerabilities might be exaggerated. The mongrel, however, takes its strength not from the emphasis on pureness but from a balance of different and contrasting parts. The mongrel therefore follows the logic of contrast (Crouch 2006, 171–74).

The second, frequently used understanding of complementarity refers to synergy and the “mutual reinforcement effects of compatible incentive structures in different subsystems” (Deeg 2007, 613). Here, the effect of one institution on the other is multiplied due to the coherence of the whole institutional design. Crouch has aptly called this the *logic of similarity* and refers to the idea of *Wahlverwandschaft* (elective affinity) (Crouch 2006, 169–71). Not contrasting and missing ingredients but rather similar components fit well together and mutually strengthen each

¹ Among the most inspiring works for the discussion in the chapter are Aoki (2001); Crouch, Streeck, Boyer, Amable, Hall, and Jackson (2005); as well as Morgan, Whitley, and Moen (2005). A *conceptual* starting point can be set with the discussion of Amable (2003), who argues that interactions between institutions may sometimes be structured in a way that makes it necessary to consider their effects jointly. In this light, Boyer (2007, 13) also proposes a rather broad definition of complementarity: “two elements E and E’ are said to be complementary if the performance R of the conjunction of E and E’ is superior to the performance of each element considered separately.” Höpner (2005) provides an excellent overview of the current *empirical* research efforts that range from explaining the linkage between monetary policy institutions and wage coordination and between strength of labor movements and leftist governments to specific organizations of skill formation, company finance, or welfare state organizations.

other. The logic of similarity is a less rigid definition of complementarity. It simply entails that institutions composed of different parts and sub-systems find a fit together and pull in the same direction. The common effect of such alignment is reinforced and amplified to a greater degree compared with the mere sum of the individual efforts. It is the proverbial whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

A third conceptual discussion can be found in the realm of economics. Economists routinely distinguish between substitutive and *complementary goods*. Goods are substitutive if they are in competition and can replace each other. Butter and margarine, for example, are substitutive goods. If the price for butter rises, then the demand for butter will decrease, as it will be replaced by margarine. Complementary goods, in contrast, are not in a competitive relationship but instead depend on each other. An increase in the demand for one good A raises the marginal contribution of the other good B to the utility or production function. And vice versa: an increase in the price for good A leads to a decrease in the demand for B. Tobacco and pipes or ink cartridges and printers are examples of complementary goods. If tobacco gets more expensive, then the demand for pipes falls.²

Economists can measure the degree of complementarity by using the cross price elasticity of the demand c_d . This measure displays the responsiveness of the demand for a product to a change of the price of another product.³ If the cross price elasticity of demands is negative, the relationship between the goods is complementary (as the price for B rises, the demand for A falls: assume the price for B rises by 5 percent, the demand for A reacts with -5 percent). For substitutes, the measure will be positive (as the price of B rises, the demand for A rises).

The main problem for social scientists in general and autocracy researchers in particular is the often nonmonetary character of analytical components, which complicates translation to the political sphere. Unlike a price for goods, there is no price for the component of a political

² In their varieties of capitalism debate, Hall and Soskice (2001a, 17) largely follow this economics definition of complementarity and define it more narrowly: "two institutions can be said to be complementary if the presence (or efficiency) of one increases the returns from (or efficiency of) others."

³ In formal terms:

$$c_d = \frac{\Delta q_A}{q_A} \text{ (percentage of change in the demanded quantity for good A) divided by } \frac{\Delta p_B}{p_B} \text{ (percentage of change for price of good B)} = \frac{\frac{\Delta q_A}{q_A}}{\frac{\Delta p_B}{p_B}} = \frac{\Delta q_A}{\Delta p_B} * \frac{p_B}{q_A}$$

Table 5.1 *Three understandings of complementarity*

Understanding of Complementarity	Description
Logic of contrast	A serves as the missing ingredient for B, making it complete.
Logic of similarity	A and B pull in the same direction and have synergetic effects.
Complementary goods	An increase in the price for A leads to a decrease in the demand for B (cross price elasticity of demand is negative).

system that would quantify its value. Nevertheless, the basic idea of cross price elasticity to find a measure for the responsiveness of one institution if the other becomes costlier is intriguing and will serve as a valuable heuristic.⁴ Table 5.1 summarizes the three understandings of complementarity: the logic of contrast, the logic of similarity, and the economics definition of complementary goods.

Complementarity in the Two Logics of Autocratic Rule

The three general logics of complementarity (contrast, similarity, economic goods) distilled above will be translated from the varieties of capitalism debate to the realm of comparative autocracy studies. To recapitulate, the previous chapters highlighted the different functions that the three pillars of legitimation, repression, and co-optation fulfill. To gain public support via ideational or performance-based efforts from the citizens has been the function of legitimation. The repression pillar channels the demands from the opposition toward the ruling regime. This is done by drawing on harder and softer forms of repression. While the former instills fear among opponents, the latter particularly focuses on disabling the organization of dissent. Lastly, maintaining cohesion and steering capacity within the elite is fulfilled through the use of formal and informal ways of co-optation.

⁴ Yet, one caveat is in place when drawing on the economic tradition: The connection between two goods does not need to be complementary. The link between them needs to be demonstrated. If one observes that the demand for good A rises and simultaneously the price for the seemingly complementary good B falls, the burden of proof lies in the fact that there is indeed a connection between A and B. One needs to rule out that these market movements are unrelated and are not induced by a third, uncontrolled factor.

Complementarity in the Over-Politicization Logic

The starting point for theorizing the complementarity within the over-politicization logic is the fragile link between forms of legitimation and repression. In general, a working legitimation function reduces the risk of public overthrow, whereas a working repression apparatus keeps potential opponents in check. Yet, this linkage represents the most fragile Achilles' heel. The linkage between these two pillars is weak, and, more importantly, it is ambivalent. Repression is a double-edged sword vis-à-vis legitimation. This has been highlighted by Christian Davenport's (2007, 8) "punishment puzzle" in which the impact of repression on public dissent has been shown as being positive, negative, curvilinear, as well as nonexistent. This is to say, there is no consensus about the effect of repression on the formation of the public will. It can turn out to be complementary, since gaining support within the population decreases the potential demand for a political opposition that would eventually require repression. Reciprocally, repression seeks to undermine all attempts of oppositional movements for alternative legitimation sources. Synergetic effects between repression and legitimation can so be theoretically assumed. The logic of similarity would therefore apply. Yet, their relationship can also turn out to be not complementary if repression turns out to be the trigger for protest. In this case, it undermines the regime legitimation efforts and decreases public support. Equally, the cross price elasticity of demand can have either negative or positive values.

Against this backdrop, I suggest zooming into the secondary dimensions of legitimation and repression, that is, the way a regime legitimizes its rule and how it represses its people. This follows the general advice given by Gary Goertz (2006, 26) that the secondary dimensions of concepts often provide the anchor points for the development of hypotheses and causal mechanisms. I argue that for a more performance-based autocracy, the use of harder forms of repression is more likely to backfire than for ideology-based autocracies. While softer forms of repression like curtailing the expression of belief or the freedom of assembly focus on disabling the organization of dissent and might still be "tolerated" by the people (or at least not spark a revolt), being judged and evaluated by its output might prove to be incoherent alongside the use of hard repression instruments. The implicit social contract between an autocratic ruler who performs and the people who are satisfied and kept passive is interrupted. A red line is crossed, as the violation of physical integrity rights cannot be legitimized. Instead, violations of physical integrity rights, such as killings and disappearances, can end the political apathy of the population.

As such, performance legitimization and hard repression stand not in a synergetic relationship; they pull in different directions. Performance passivates; hard repression might activate.

For ideologized autocratic regimes, however, harder forms of repression can turn out to be complementary to ideational legitimization. A political ideology, nationalism, charisma, and shared historical experiences can even serve as an action-guiding hermeneutic frame that is leveraged to justify repressive acts. The ideology provides the overarching legend, the basic narrative of the regime in which it aims at utopian goals or societal revolutions. To achieve these ideologically justified aims, all means are not just acceptable but may even be demanded – including both soft and hard forms of repression.

As the classic work on autocracies in the 1950s and 1960s has particularly demonstrated, there is an intimate link between the use of repression and ideology. They can be said to follow the same logic; that is, they are symbiotic. They aim at overly politicizing private issues and pulling them into the public sphere, justifying so repression in the name of a seemingly higher political good. In the name of combatting an ideologically charged Schmittian *hostis* (Schmitt [1932] 2002), repression of deviance, in the form of both targeting the physical integrity of people and targeting political rights, can so be depicted as being justified.

I call the first logic that maximizes the distance and alienation between friend and foe the over-politicizing logic. Such regimes are characterized by heavy reliance on a guiding and all-encompassing ideology. Against this backdrop, they might seem to be *prima facie* similar to “ideocracies” (Backes and Kailitz 2016; Bernholz 2001; Gerschewski 2016; Piekalkiewicz and Penn 1995). And, indeed, the role of the ruling ideology is the *fundamentum divisionis* in relation to other autocratic regime types. This dominance of ideology is mirrored in most clarity in the work of Hannah Arendt. She highlighted ideology and terror. The one presupposes the other. Lenin’s “irresistible force of logic” is a good case to illustrate the point. An inner (and often propagated higher) logic is inherent in his political ideology, which encompasses an explicit action program (Arendt [1951] 1966, 471). Its seemingly consistent, logical deduction from undisputed premises, its image of scientific rigor, and its propagated vanguard insights not only justify the use of all necessary means but also even demand them to successfully realize political utopia.

Yet, one important caveat is in place here. In translating these classic insights into today’s comparative study of autocracies, the sources of ideational legitimacy should be widened. The classic contributions have concentrated empirically on the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, or the early GDR period (Arendt [1951] 1966; Drath [1954]

1968; Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956; Schapiro 1972). They are deeply entrenched in the totalitarianism debate. Ideology is understood narrowly in these contexts; it is a distortion from empirical reality that disconnects individuals from their environments. While this was the appropriate description of the role of ideology in totalitarian regimes, a more encompassing approach to political ideology is needed. Instead of restricting our understanding of political ideologies to this subset, the Freedman approach to political ideologies should be followed (Freedman 1996; 2006). Political ideologies are seen here more expansively and broadly as a form of structured and patterned political thinking that underlies everyday discourse and praxis.⁵

The study of political ideologies in comparative autocracy research should therefore be unhinged from its totalitarian legacy and should instead be embedded in the broader political theory debate. It is not only the orthodox and full-fledged political ideologies like communism and fascism that demand close links to repression and that increase antagonism between friend and foe. Nationalistic sentiments as a “thin ideology” (Freedman 1998), a shared history, politicized religion or ethnic cleavages, as well as charismatic leadership constitute functional equivalent sources that can be leveraged for gaining political support and for defining the antagonist. These sources can be instrumentalized and manipulated in justifying the use of repressive means as well. This widening of the legitimacy sources would therefore allow greater distance and emancipation from the heavily disputed totalitarianism paradigm. By doing so, the narrow empirical focus on a handful of historical cases of totalitarian regimes and the general theoretical stasis can be simultaneously overcome. We can learn much from this classic debate for the study of contemporary autocracies; however, at the same time, the classic debate needs to open up to new insights.

Repressing potential opponents either simply eliminates personal alternatives or disables the organization of dissent. Economically speaking, both forms of repression reduce the costs for ideological legitimization efforts. If opposition is blocked from the public, it makes ideational legitimization easier. The economics definition of complementary goods that was outlined earlier can so be applied. Given hard budget constraints, if repression becomes less expensive, more demand for ideational legitimization can be realized. And, vice versa: if ideational legitimization becomes less expensive, more repression can be realized. Ideational legitimization and repression follow the complementarity logic in the economics sense.

⁵ Please also refer to Chapter 2 in the theory section for a more detailed discussion.

The cross price elasticity between ideational legitimation and both forms of repression is negative.

The similarity and economic understanding of complementarity also applies to the interaction between repression and formal co-optation as well as between ideational legitimation and formal co-optation. Repression and co-optation pull in the same direction as they share a compatible incentive structure. The main function of repression lies in channeling demands toward the political system in such a way that these demands do not endanger the reigning autocratic logic. The function of repression is to systematically suppress, repress, or at least control oppositional demands. The function of co-optation can be characterized as inclusionary. It works as a transmission belt to ensure the intra-elite cohesion and the steering capacity of the elite. While the former refers to the settlement of potential conflicts and the countervailing of potential rebellion, the latter touches upon the effectiveness of the "conversion process" (Almond and Powell 1966, 29) per se, that is, how systems transform the (channeled) demands and support into authoritative decisions.

In turn, controlling demands enhances the conversion process. Authoritative decisions can be issued more efficiently without disturbing background noise. The steering capability of autocratic regimes is easier to maintain. The autocratic regime is freed from unwelcome interference and is backed by repression. Both forms of repression raise the mobilization cost of oppositional demands and of oppositional leading figures. The effect of repression on co-optation can therefore be described as a safeguarding effect, securing the regime elite from dealing with (too many) oppositional demands.

In a similar vein, the relationship between ideational legitimation and co-optation can also be assumed to be synergetic. The logic of similarity applies. The key in this relationship is to avoid oppositional figures who carry a new, challenging *Weltanschauung*. Co-optation binds intra-elite actors to the ruling regime and therefore reduces the danger of deviant elites. A smoothly functioning co-optation strategy hinders the emergence of both oppositional actors and ideas. The danger of an upcoming (charismatic) personal alternative is reduced. It has often been witnessed in empirical reality that the rise of such an oppositional leader also brings about new ideas. An effective, functioning co-optation strategy undercuts such a move. A different *Weltanschauung* or a full-fledged political ideology that represents a rival to the established system of thought is therefore preempted.

Viewed from the economics definition of complementary goods, the relationships between repression and co-optation as well as between legitimation and co-optation can be judged as being complementary.

Repression and co-optation are complementary goods. If the price for repression sinks, more repression can be applied for the same budget; that is, more demands to the political system can be controlled. If more demands are controlled, there is less disturbing noise and background static for the co-optation, that is, the efficiency of the conversion process. As co-optation becomes less expensive, demands for it will increase. A sinking of the repression price leads therefore to an increase in the demand for co-optation. The cross price elasticity of demand c_d is negative. The relationship between repression and co-optation is – viewed from economics market logic – complementary.

Similarly, a functioning ideational legitimization process is beneficial for co-optation. To gain public support via ideational sources is compatible with the incentives to bind strategic actors. Ideational legitimization decreases the persuasion costs of potentially deviant elites. If a regime bases its rule on strong ideational sources or economic performance, its success in producing a loyal following within the population spills over positively to support its efforts to bind strategic elites. The strategic elites then can be confident that a significant portion of the population backs the regime. This elite-level self-legitimation positively affects the cost-benefit calculus (Barker 2001). In economic terms, if we assume that the price for legitimization falls, making legitimization easier, the more legitimacy will be produced. The other good, co-optation, is then also easier to produce as the persuasion costs sink. Maintaining elite cohesion is easier to realize if more diffuse support is produced. If the price of legitimization falls, then the demand for co-optation rises. The cross price elasticity of demand is negative; the two goods are complementary.

When it comes to the type of co-optation in the over-politicization logic, more formal means of co-optation can be expected. Political ideologies do not only justify repressive means but also often entail an explicit emphasis on strong institution building. In most cases, this is the political party as the core state institution. Parties should be – according to Mussolini's famous dictum – the “capillary organization” of the regime (Gentile 1984, 264). They should cover the whole territory and penetrate the political body, reaching out to all parts of society. They are, in the words of Philipp Selznick (1952), “the organizational weapon” of the regime.

In contrast, informal means of co-optation rely on personal relationships. Be it patronage networks or clientelistic relations, they normally do not span across the whole country but are instead limited in geographical scope and are more often built on an ad hoc base. These dependencies are on a private and personal level, making them prone to the aim of de-politicization, defined as pushing issues out of the political

arena into the private realm. Therefore, although not mutually exclusive, the theoretical assumption would be that formal ways of co-optation are more susceptible and predispositioned to the first configuration of over-politicization than are informal ways of co-optation.

When it comes to the third logic of complementarity, the logic of contrast, all three pillars of legitimation, repression, and co-optation need to be taken into account. The logic of contrast argues that (1) each of the components makes up for the others' deficiencies and (2) together they form a whole. The previous chapters leaned toward general systems theory. In a nutshell, legitimation, repression, and co-optation provide the most basic functions of a system. The input side is routinely divided into demands and support (Easton 1965b). In the autocratic logic, the demands to the system need to be controlled with institutionalized repression. Support is sought in the over-politicization logic via ideologies. The efficiency of the conversion process between inputs and outputs lies within the realm of co-optation. Intra-elite cohesion is secured and steering capacity maintained. This theoretical background suggests that, taken together, legitimation, repression, and co-optation are interrelated parts of a political system. They form a Sartorian "bounded whole" of "constitutive mechanisms and principles" (Sartori 1987, 184; 1991). They make up for possible deficiencies of the other pillars and put together a regime logic that addresses the people, the opposition, and the elite. With this in mind, complementarity can be theoretically expected (Table 5.2).

Complementarity in the De-Politicizing Logic

In general terms, the politicization of any issue means that what was before nonpolitical becomes political. In its widest literal sense, the political is to make collectively binding decisions that go beyond the individual case. A political issue is not treated as reserved to an individual but has bearing on a broader population. It becomes a subject that is dealt with in the contested political arena. In this sense, the political is the antonym to the private.

Earlier, it has been argued that the degree of the antagonism between friend and foe defines the degree of politicization (Schmitt [1932] 2002). An over-politicization strategy involves maximizing this antagonism and defining a public foe against which even hard repressive measures can be justified. De-politicization does not mean that this antagonism is dissolved; it still exists as the backbone of political decision making. De-politicized regimes clearly do know and can identify who is friend and

Table 5.2 *Complementarity in the over-politicization logic*

Relationship between Forms of Legitimation, Repression, and Co-optation	Logic of Complementarity		
	<i>Logic of contrast</i> (providing missing ingredient and forming a whole)	<i>Logic of similarity</i> (displaying synergies and pulling in the same direction)	<i>Economics definition</i> (Complementary goods)
<i>Ideational legitimation vis- à-vis hard and soft repression</i>	No, not forming a Sartorian “bounded whole” [danger of elite splits remains]	Yes, ideology serves as maximizing friend- foe distinction and as hermeneutic frame that can be leveraged to justify even hard repression; in turn, repression channels oppositional demands	Yes, more disabling of dissent and instilling of fear makes ideational legitimation efforts less costly
<i>Hard and soft repression vis- à-vis formal co-optation</i>	No, not forming a Sartorian “bounded whole” [danger of public protest remains]	Yes, safeguarding effect of repression by channeling oppositional demands and formal co-optation preventing emergence of oppositional leader	Yes, if more formal co-optation is applied, it makes repression less costly
<i>Ideational legitimation vis-à-vis formal co-optation</i>	No, not forming a Sartorian “bounded whole” [danger of oppositional movement remains]	Yes, ideational legitimation facilitating intra- elite persuasion and formal co-optation preventing the emergence of oppositional leader	Yes, if more formal co-optation is applied, it makes ideational legitimation less costly
<i>Ideational legitimation vis- à-vis hard and soft repression vis-à-vis formal cooptation</i>	Yes, forming a Sartorian “bounded whole” in which people are mobilized, opponents are kept at bay, and intra-elite cohesion is secured All key actors are addressed simultaneously	Yes, three-way interaction based on the respective two- way interactions above	Yes, three-way interaction based on the respective two-way interactions above

who is foe. I argue in a slight modification of the Schmittian idea, however, that de-politicization means that instead of singling out a specific enemy and maximizing the antagonism to it, the dividing line between the ruler and the ruled is blurred. It is not so much the outside projection of an enemy that is significant here but rather the inward-looking obscuration and beclouding of political spheres. Collectively binding decisions are not contested publicly but are accepted, tolerated, and tacitly consented to.

Back in the mid-1960s, Juan Linz introduced the regime type of authoritarianism into the Comparative Politics debate. He spoke of the Spanish Francoist elite that tried to de-politicize political life to uphold political stability (Linz 1964, 304). I follow Linz here and term the second combination of factors a de-politicization logic. The desired result of de-politicization is what Guillermo O'Donnell (1979, 143) has pointedly termed "low-intensity citizenship." Participation in the political process is suppressed and intentionally dis-incentivized. Therefore, the need to gain diffuse support via ideologies is lowered. Regimes in this cluster rely more on their performance output. In an implicit social contract, the population is held silent if the regime is able to provide it with economic growth, internal order, and social provisions. The rentier state approach follows this similarity logic most explicitly between a performing elite and a population rendered passive (Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004; Beblawi 1987; Mahdavi 1970; Schlumberger 2007).

Yet, this elite-society link is fragile. The social contract between ruling elites and obedient populations is unspoken and can be terminated from either side. It is a balancing act. The use of hard repression becomes incompatible with the other factors. It would deviate from the logic of similarity that demands that all instruments pull in the same direction. The relationship between performance legitimation and hard repression is not complementary. Instead, repression's Janus-faced characteristics can be seen here. Hard repression can be a politicizing catalyst that mobilizes opposition against the regime and increases the antagonism. Hard repression can backfire in a de-politicized environment. Instead of controlling the demands from the population, social protest is triggered – with destabilizing consequences for the ruling regime.

In contrast to hard repression, soft repression and performance legitimation follow the logic of similarity. Soft repression with its aim of disabling the organization of dissent by curtailing political rights is compatible in its incentive structure with performance legitimation that attempts to render people passive and apathetic. While performance legitimation justifies soft forms of repression by keeping people

socioeconomically satisfied, soft repression disables dissent. In economic terms, if the cost for soft repression decreases, performance legitimization becomes easier as well, and vice versa. As such, they can be characterized as complementary goods.

As outlined earlier, the co-optation efforts in this combination are theorized as being mostly informal. Strategic business and military elites are bound to the regime on an individual and ad hoc basis. Unlike the capillary penetration of society by formal party organization, the informal co-optation strategy refers more to personalized relationships and the distribution of spoils and business privileges. However, formal ways of co-optation via parliaments or political parties cannot be ruled out. With this in mind, both forms of co-optation might be exercised in the de-politicizing logic.

Formal and informal ways of co-optation are also complementary to soft repression as well as to performance legitimization. With regard to the former relationship, soft repression disables dissent by violating political rights and civil liberties. This means that it raises mobilization costs for oppositional elites. In turn, a smoothly working co-optation arrangement reduces the emergence of oppositional leaders in the first place. It binds those actors to the regime. They do not only pull in the same direction and therefore follow the logic of similarity, but they also constitute complementary goods. The cross price elasticity is negative. If soft repression becomes less expensive, more formal and informal co-optation can be realized.

The same holds true for the bilateral relationship between co-optation and performance legitimization. A working co-optation undermines the emergence of personal alternatives that might challenge the legitimacy claim of the regime. And, a high degree of socioeconomic performance makes elite cohesion easier and provides the necessary spoils and economic privileges that are needed, particularly for a successful informal co-optation arrangement. Thus, performance legitimization is complementary vis-à-vis co-optation in the logic of similarity as well as in the economics understanding.

The third understanding, the logic of contrast, refers as in the over-politicization logic to the arrangement of all three pillars. They form a Sartorian bounded whole in a sense that the deficiencies of one aspect are complemented. Each is the others' missing ingredient, with one entity making up for the gaps of the other. In the de-politicization logic, all three key actors are addressed. The people are kept satisfied by economic performance and do not protest in the streets, the opposition is rendered passive by soft repression, and the elite is tied to the political inner sanctum by formal and informal means. As such, existential threats that stem from the three key groups are minimized.

Table 5.3 *Complementarity in the de-politicization logic*

Relationship between Forms of Legitimation, Repression, and Co-optation	Logic of Complementarity		
	<i>Logic of contrast</i> (providing missing ingredient and forming a whole)	<i>Logic of similarity</i> (displaying synergies, pulling in the same direction)	<i>Economics definition</i> (Complementary goods)
<i>Performance legitimation vis-à- vis soft repression</i>	No, not forming a Sartorian “bounded whole” [danger of elite splits remains]	Yes, performance legitimation making people satisfied and apathetic and soft repression disabling organization of dissent – without igniting protest due to too harsh repressive means	Yes, more disabling of dissent makes performance legitimation easier
<i>Soft repression vis-à-vis formal and informal co-optation</i>	No, not forming a Sartorian “bounded whole” [danger of public protest remains]	Yes, soft repression disabling organization of dissent and co-optation reducing risk of emergence of oppositional leader	Yes, if more co-optation is applied, it makes soft repression less costly
<i>Performance legitimation vis-à-vis formal and informal co-optation</i>	No, not forming a Sartorian “bounded whole” [danger of oppositional movement remains]	Yes, performance legitimation facilitating intra- elite persuasion and co-optation preventing the emergence of oppositional leader	Yes, if more co-optation is applied, it makes performance legitimation less costly
<i>Performance legitimation vis-à- vis soft repression vis-à-vis formal and informal cooptation</i>	Yes, forming a Sartorian “bounded whole” in which people are kept passive, opponents are kept at bay, and intra-elite cohesion is secured All key actors are addressed simultaneously	Yes, three-way interaction based on the respective two-way interactions above	Yes, three-way interaction based on the respective two-way interactions above

To sum up, the second combination of factors that is expected theoretically is the de-politicizing logic. It consists of an absence of ideational legitimation but has a strong emphasis on performance-based legitimation, softer (but not harder) forms of repression, and co-optation that takes place mostly informally but does not rule out the possibility of formal ways as well. Their mutual interrelationships are characterized as complementary – in all three understandings of similarity, contrast, and in the economics sense of complementary goods (Table 5.3).

Conclusion

Autocrats face existential threats that emanate from the people, the opposition, and within the elite. The book starts from the assumption that autocrats are inherently insecure. To organize certainty and avoid any kind of surprise, autocrats attempt to legitimate their rule vis-à-vis the ordinary citizens, repress the opposition, and co-opt potential rival elites. These are the three ways that autocrats want to achieve the unachievable.

The three pillars of legitimation, repression, and co-optation are the building blocks of a modular theory. This chapter has brought them into dialogue. Instead of looking at their individual functions and effects, it has used the concept of complementarity to theorize their joint effect. The theoretical expectation guiding this book is that autocratic regimes have two major ways of stabilizing their rule. Autocracies can either over-politicize, maximizing the friend-foe distinction, or they can de-politicize society and keep the population passive. Both logics show a high complementarity between each combination's respective components. They form the two worlds of autocratic rule. The following chapters will put this theoretical expectation to a thorough empirical test. They will explore to what extent the theoretical expectation matches with empirical evidence from forty-five autocratic regimes in East Asia since the end of the Second World War in 1945.

Part III

Empirical Test

6 East Asia as a Testing Field

The book proposes a macroscopic theory of autocratic stability that is written in a Linzian spirit. In the previous chapters, I discussed the importance of legitimization efforts to cultivate a following among the population, of repression to keep domestic opponents at bay, and of co-optation to guarantee intra-elite cohesion. Based on these three modular theory frames, I develop a theoretical expectation about why and how they complement one another, constituting two regime logics that are expected to yield stable autocracies. The first logic is an over-politicizing configuration of factors that places strong emphasis on ideological legitimacy that even overshadows performance goals and depends on both hard and soft repression instruments and usually relies on a political party as the “organizational weapon” to co-opt elites (Selznick 1952). The second logic is the de-politicizing logic, which is instead reliant on socioeconomic performance and soft forms of repression, shying away from hard repression and skeptical of ideological commitments. These two logics of over-politicization and de-politicization constitute two distinct paths to regime stability. They are the two worlds of autocratic rule.

The macro-theoretical framework is developed in an interactive dialogue between classic grand theorizing and newer empirical research. It synthesizes three waves of autocracy research into one coherent framework. The three waves of autocracy research are (1) the totalitarianism phase that lasted until the mid-1970s, (2) growing interest in authoritarianism as a new research agenda from the 1960s onward, and (3) the contemporary renaissance in comparative authoritarianism that began at the turn of the twenty-first century. These three waves of research emphasize different aspects of autocratic rule, differing in their empirical focus as well as in their arsenal of methodical instruments.

The theory proposed here synthesizes findings of the three waves of research literature and proposes a theory of autocratic stability that can be applied across all types of autocratic regimes. It argues that the main concepts employed here are on such a structural macro level that they allow for a meaningful comparison among autocracies. It zooms out of

the particularities of different concrete autocratic regimes and climbs up one rung in the ladder of abstraction, identifying macro-structural features that are common to all autocratic regimes. As such, it follows in the footsteps of the Linzian research agenda. Yet, instead of using his typological dimensions of (1) monistic power center vs. limited pluralism, (2) ideology vs. mentality, and (3) societal mobilization vs. no mobilization, resulting in (a) totalitarian and (b) authoritarian regimes (Linz 1964; 1975), this book suggests new dimensions. It remains firmly rooted in classic writings but significantly “updates” Linz in light of newer research. It proposes (1) ideational vs. performance legitimation, (2) hard vs. soft repression, and (3) formal vs. informal co-optation as the major axes that – in certain combinations – result in (a) over-politicization and (b) de-politicization logics.

As such, the theoretical framework needs to prove two things. In a first step, it needs to show its general empirical applicability. It needs to demonstrate that the three partial theory frames of legitimation, repression, and co-optation prove to be a useful heuristic that facilitates empirical comparisons of a diverse set of autocratic rule arrangements. In a second step, it needs to empirically demonstrate that the theoretical expectation of over-politicization and de-politicization actually holds in an empirical comparison.

To test these theoretical claims, I use empirical case studies drawn from East Asia. As will be detailed later, this region is particularly suited for a robust theory test because it hosts a broad variety of autocratic regime subtypes. Selecting cases in this region allows us to compare diverse autocratic experiences over time within the same region. This book offers a medium-N comparison based on extensive case narratives that are disciplined by one comprehensive theoretical framework. All case narratives have been cross-checked by country experts.¹ As such, it follows the advice of a “structured, focused comparison” (George and Bennett 2005, 67). The idea is straightforward: to compare, a researcher should be very clear and concise regarding three steps: identifying the universe of cases, selecting one or several cases, and identifying analytical variables of theoretical interest. Doing so ensures that comparative research remains

¹ I would like to extend my gratitude to a number of colleagues for their generous feedback on the case narratives. Of course, all remaining errors are mine. Also, while I relied heavily on their expertise, the judgments and evaluations in the case narratives mirror my interpretation of the respective cases and should not be attributed to them. For their insightful and constructive feedback, I thank William Case, Jörn Dosch, Björn Dressel, Alexander Dukalskis, Dafydd Fell, Thomas Heberer, Heike Holbig, Patrick Köllner, David Kühn, Junhyong Lee, Jasmin Lorch, Edmund Malesky, Patrick McEachern, Marcus Mietzner, Lee Morgenbesser, Stephan Ortmann, Marie-Eve Reny, Jürgen Rüland, Gunter Schubert, Kearnin Sims, and Andreas Ufen.

theoretically focused. Otherwise, an unfocused comparative case study risks missing the point.

Case studies represent temporally and spatially bound political phenomena that represent a larger population of cases. Case studies are always a *pars pro toto*, a part of a whole, and it is therefore important to first explicitly name what the *toto* actually is. Early reference to the larger population is essential and defines what a case study is and what it is for: “In order to qualify as a case study, it must be possible to put the study into a larger context – even if this was not the intention of the author” (Gerring 2017, 30). This is the crucial difference between saying “a study of X” and “a case study of X.”

With this in mind, the larger population that this book deals with is autocratic regimes. The subset of East Asian autocracies is used to speak to this larger global population. All East Asian autocracies since their inception and until 2008 will be employed.² Selected empirical cases are autocratic regimes whose start and end dates are marked by a change in the political leadership: if the effective head of government of an autocratic country changes, the successor regime is considered as a new case. Forty-five empirical cases will be distinguished that will be systematically compared along their forms of legitimization, repression, and co-optation and their expected autocratic stabilizing configurations.

The empirical section of this book is organized along two methodological perspectives. Chapter 7 discusses paradigmatic cases that empirically support the theoretical reasoning, relying on case narratives. These case narratives combine quantitative indicators and insights from qualitative case-based knowledge and represent a synthesis of diverse information that was collected for each case. They can therefore be read as a disciplined, case-based comparison of the diversity of autocratic experience in East Asia. Second, in Chapter 8 a formalized comparative method is used to test the theoretical expectation of complementarity among the three pillars. It will make methodical use of fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA). This method’s particular strength is in detecting complex causation and the interplay of factors. It is therefore extremely well suited to testing this book’s theoretical expectation.

In the rest of this chapter, it will be clarified in more detail why a research focus on East Asia is so beneficial to comparative research on autocracies. The chapter then outlines the selection of cases and discusses the sources for the original dataset on autocratic regimes in East Asia (AREA).

² As I will describe later in more detail, the year 2008 has been chosen due to data constraints.

Why East Asia?

In general, if a comparativist wants to compare, the heterogeneity and homogeneity of factors must be balanced. Heterogeneity is needed for causal leverage, while homogeneity is needed to control factors (Gerring and Thomas 2005). As such, an intra-regional comparison of East Asia strikes a good balance between heterogeneity and homogeneity. The selected cases share an Asian tradition, in terms of both culture and history, while diverging in terms of substantive autocratic experience. Arguably, the variance among East Asian autocracies is higher than that within other world regions. Eastern and Central Europe, for example, were dominated by national variants of a communist one-party regime that resembled the Soviet model to varying degrees. Eastern and Central European regimes shared also a similar power architecture, in which the ruling party held a vanguard position and was organized by Leninist principles of democratic centralism while wholesale attempts were made to restructure society and the economy along communist ideals. Meanwhile, the most widespread template of Latin America's autocratic experience in the twentieth century was, arguably, a form of military dictatorship in which military coups brought new leaders to power. In Latin America, single-party regimes have generally been the exception. Or, consider the Middle East and Northern Africa. Here, autocracies are split almost in half between republics and traditional monarchies. As such, I argue that the heterogeneity of East Asia is greater than that of other regions (Croissant 2018; Croissant and Lorenz 2018), making it a particularly suitable testing field for the comprehensive theory of the three pillars and the ruling logics of over-politicization and de-politicization.

East Asia's diversity in terms of autocratic experience is enormous. Even today, East Asia hosts two of the most different non-democratic regimes in the world. On the one hand, East Asia includes the most reclusive, repressive state in the world, North Korea. On the other hand, the region also contains hyper-modernizing Singapore, whose economic success is sometimes even regarded as a role model for mature democracies. North Korea's totalitarian excesses, however, are no exception in this region. The People's Republic of China, particularly under the rule of Mao Zedong, or Pol Pot's tyranny of the Khmer Rouge come close to the North Korean experience. In contrast, across the North Korean border the Southern part of the peninsula saw a military dictatorship for several decades. While North Korea initially was stronger in terms of economic well-being, it has been outpaced by the authoritarian developmental state of South Korea and its economic miracle at the Han River. Like South Korea, Taiwan also experienced an autocratic economic success story before the regime finally fell and democratized. The economic success also holds partly true for Indonesia, which

can moreover be characterized as a country with a majority Muslim population and that has brought an electoral and political machine named *Golkar* almost to perfection. In contrast, Marcos’s personalist rule in the Philippines refrained from developing such strong institutions and could instead be described as a kleptocratic regime that robbed the country. On mainland Southeast Asia, Myanmar (formerly Burma) can be best described as a special case of a military regime. The military forces, *Tatmadaw*, function as much more than just a military, far exceeding the role that is usually played by the armed forces in a standard military regime (Croissant and Kühn 2018). Instead, the *Tatmadaw* is a party-like institution that served as the backbone of the Burmese autocracy for many decades. Consider also the last communist regimes in Vietnam and Laos, let alone the puzzling and perhaps simultaneously overexplained and underexplained case of China. This kaleidoscopic overview of East Asia’s empirical cases already offers a taste of the heterogeneity of autocratic regimes in the region.

As we know from the classic dictum of Giovanni Sartori (1991), to compare is to control. And if we do not compare, we lose an important yardstick assessing to what extent an explanation in country A is valid for country B. The empirical section of this book seeks to explore the analytical utility of comparing the diversity of autocratic experiences along one coherent theoretical framework. In what follows, the book provides the first comprehensive empirical test of the theoretical expectations. It does so by comparing all autocratic regimes in East Asia since 1945. It weaves together insights from forty-five autocratic regimes in thirteen East Asian countries, namely Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, North Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

“Casing”

“Casing” is often an underappreciated process of choosing the cases that one wants to study and draw conclusions about. According to Charles Ragin, casing should be seen as an essential step in the research process. Cases are not just empirical units selected because of convenience or convention. Instead, casing is an active process of creating units. Generic empirical units are objectified (Ragin 1992). For this book, the casing process consists of three steps: first, the East Asian region is defined; second, the autocratic regimes in the region are identified; and third, the spatial and temporal boundaries of the discrete autocratic episodes are demarcated, resulting in forty-five concrete empirical cases.

Geography is political and the definition of a region is therefore a politically sensitive topic. I have chosen to adhere to the United Nations

geographical scheme to delineate the different world regions. This book is only interested in comparing East Asian countries, which means that it intentionally excludes Central and Western Asia as well as South Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Among the remaining candidate countries, three additional criteria are applied. First, micro-states or very sparsely populated countries are excluded, setting a limit of a constant population size of more than 1 million inhabitants. This criterion excludes Brunei and Mongolia. Second, the universe of cases is restricted to states that are constantly recognized by the international community as independent. This criterion excluded Timor-Leste, whose independence was internationally recognized only in 2001. Third, it is argued that a certain degree of stateness must prevail and is a necessary condition. Times of war over territory, civil war, and foreign occupation were therefore excluded. East Asia has seen the war on the Korean peninsula, the Vietnam War, and the civil war on Mainland China. Domestic authority was challenged during these times, which makes a theory of domestic stability fruitless. This criterion excluded the following time spans: Cambodia 1970–75 and 1979–87; China 1946–49; Laos 1959–62 and 1963–73; South Korea 1950–53; North Korea 1950–53; Myanmar 1964–70; South Vietnam 1955–75; and North Vietnam 1965–75.³

Chapter 1 in the theory section discusses different ways of defining an autocracy. Applied to the East Asian region, there is only one country that has been ruled democratically since the end of World War II: Japan. All other countries have experienced autocratic rule. The empirical section of this book relies on the three most widely used datasets on political regimes. The first is the Democracy and Dictatorship (DD) dataset, which was originally set up by Adam Przeworski and his colleagues (Alvarez et al. 1996) and has been updated under the aegis of Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010). This dataset relies on a minimal, Schumpeterian understanding of democracy, focusing on competition as the discriminating feature between democracies and non-democracies. The second dataset that is used is the one by Barbara Geddes and her colleagues (GWF dataset). While the DD dataset defines autocracy *ex negativo* as non-democracy, the GWF dataset is explicitly designed for autocratic rule (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). Finally,

³ This criterion is based on the dataset by Milan Svoblik (2012), who merges information of the UCDP/PRIO dataset of Gleditsch et al. and Polity IV into a coding of “no authority.” A civil war over government or a war over territory is a high-intensity conflict with at least 1,000 battles in a single year that lasts longer than twelve months. The conflict is either about the control of the government or at least 25 percent of the country’s territory. Foreign occupation is defined as a status in which a foreign power is imposed on a government and this status lasts longer than twelve months (the variable “foreign interruption” in the Polity IV dataset).

I take the dataset by Boix, Miller, and Rosato (BMR) that uses a dichotomous coding of democracy and non-democracy (Boix, Miller, and Rosato 2013). This dataset reaches back to 1800 and – in its updated version – covers the time period until 2015. It relies on a Dahlian understanding of democracy, along the dimensions of contestation and participation.

All three datasets agree in a very large majority of cases about which countries have been autocratic and when. But it is important to note that disagreements occur in the respective time spans in which a country was considered autocratic.⁴ This can be traced back to slightly different definitions of democracy and autocracy. For example, Geddes and her colleagues code the Philippines under Marcos as autocratic from 1972, which is when Marcos imposed martial law. The DD and the BMR datasets, however, code the Philippines as autocratic in 1965 when Marcos came to power. When in doubt, priority is given to the DD dataset, as it is the longest established one. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the autocratic regimes in East Asia after 1945.

At the heart of casing lies the following questions: What is the appropriate level of analysis? At which level of abstraction can the phenomenon be best explained, while also ensuring that cases remain independent from each other? Casing therefore always entails making decisions among conflicting goals; casing is a trade-off. Things get even more complex as time sensitivity needs to be accounted for as well. While this book is interested in factors affecting autocratic stability, stability itself is a time-dependent concept. As has been discussed earlier in more detail, stability can be understood as persistence and refers to the time period of a given status quo. The possible explananda for this study can therefore be on the level of the nation-states (e.g., Indonesia), the regime (e.g., one-party regime in Taiwan as in Geddes’s tripartite typology), the ruling coalition⁵ (following Svobik [2012] as uninterrupted succession of affiliated leaders), and the effective head of government (e.g., the rule of Mao Zedong). The decision for the appropriate level of analysis also implies a hidden corollary decision regarding the time dimension. Usually, states last longer than regimes, which themselves last longer than ruling coalitions, while the effective head of government is usually the most short-lived unit.

⁴ Also, when reaching out to the individual country experts, the periodization and the proper identification of a starting and end point for the respective autocratic regime period were at times intensively debated.

⁵ In Svobik’s dataset, this is the variable “pol_aff.” A ruling coalition is the uninterrupted succession of leaders who are affiliated with the ruling regime. This can be the case when the successor is a pro-regime candidate who has explicitly stated his pro-government stance before assuming office, being either a civilian or a military officer. The same holds true for succeeding members of royal families who are coded as being within a ruling coalition if they have not openly taken an oppositional attitude toward the government.

Table 6.1 *Autocratic regimes in East Asia after the end of World War II*

Country	Datasets (with time span covered by dataset)		
	Cheibub et al. (1946–2008)	Geddes et al. (1946–2010)	Boix et al. (1800–2015)
<i>Cambodia</i>	1953–2008+	1953–2010+	1955–2015+
<i>China</i>	1946–2008+	1949–2010+	1945–2015+
<i>Indonesia</i>	1949–98	1949–98	1945–54 1957–98
<i>Laos</i>	1959–2008+	1975–2010+ ^a	1959–2015+
<i>Malaysia</i>	1957–2008+	1957–2010+	1957–2015+
<i>Myanmar</i>	1958–59 1962–2008+	1960–62 1966–2010+	1958–59 1962–2015+
<i>North Korea</i>	1948–2008+	1948–2010+	1948–2015+
<i>Philippines</i>	1965–85	1972–86	1945 1965–85
<i>Singapore</i>	1965–2008+	1965–2010+	1965–2015+
<i>South Korea</i>	1948–59 1961–87	1952–87	1948–59 1961–87
<i>Taiwan</i>	1949–95	1949–2000	1949–95
<i>Thailand</i>	1946–74 1976–78 1991 2006–7	1947–73 1976–88 1991–92 2006–7	1945–74 1976–82 1991 2006–10 2014–15+
<i>Vietnam</i>	1954–2008+	1954–2010+	1954–2015+

^aIn the updated GWF dataset, Geddes et al. include Laos 1959–60 and 1960–62 as autocratic regimes.

Note: “+” indicates an ongoing regime that was still in power after the end of the time period covered by this dataset.

Opting for the state or the regime level of analysis represents a too coarse-grained approach that hides more than it reveals. Variation over time is averaged out in time spans that are too long. On a country level, China and Vietnam at their origins in the 1950s were fundamentally different in their regime stabilization recipe than they are today. Performance legitimacy has, for example, increasingly become more important, while the communist ideology gradually lost its grip on society. Case-based comparisons at the level of thirteen country experiences would lose this variation. In a similar vein, the regime level is too broad. Again, important variation is hidden by too-long time periods. For example, Taiwan is coded as a one-party regime, but the rule of Chiang Kai-shek differs from that of his son Chiang Ching-kuo and later from that of Lee Teng-hui. Ideological legitimization efforts decreased and repression

diminished over time. The stabilizing configuration between these autocratic episodes within one regime type is different.

Thus, the head of government is selected as the most adequate difference and independence maker. Changes in the effective head of government will be used as markers that differentiate the cases. The effective heads of government will be taken from the Archigos dataset (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2005). These effective heads (and not the nominal heads of government as cosmetic appearances are not that uncommon in autocratic regimes) can be the general secretaries in communist regimes and the presidents, monarchs, kings, or de facto rulers in non-communist regimes.

Autocracies are almost always highly personal in the sense that most autocrats have their own ruling style. It is rare that the logic of an autocratic ruling style changes within the tenure of one autocrat. More probably, such a shift is marked and symbolized by a change in the incumbent leader. While politics can change within one reign of an autocrat, it is rare that an autocrat presides over *policy* changes, and even much rarer that they oversee structural *polity* changes. As the configuration of the three pillars of legitimization, repression, and co-optation touches on the policy and the polity dimension of political systems, casing along the effective head of government makes the most sense. It is also common to attach phases of autocratic rule with the label of their respective ruler. The Mao era differs fundamentally from the rule of Jiang Zemin, Chiang Kai-shek exercised power differently compared with his son, and the same holds true for even seemingly unchanging regimes like that in North Korea. Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il represent different ruling styles and to argue on a system or regime level would overlook this important variation. The autocratic episode marked by the effective head of government constitutes a meaningful Sartorian “bounded whole” in which the configuration of explanatory factors results in the explanandum. Viewed from a different perspective, the effective head of government is also the most basic unit that is independent enough from other episodes to be analytically useful here.

To rule out only temporary and transitional governments, the duration of rule should be longer than one consecutive year in power. Interim governments of very short time spans could not create a stabilizing power configuration. Take, for example, the Cambodian case in which Norodon Sihanouk took over power in 1975 and was overthrown later the same year by Pol Pot. Another case in point is the South Korean interim government led by Chang Myon, who succeeded Syngman Rhee after student protests in 1960 but was overthrown some months later by a coup d'état led by Park Chung-hee. To be able to bring about a stabilizing configuration, a minimum amount of time is needed.

Combining the criteria mentioned – independent East Asian countries with a minimum number of inhabitants, ruled autocratically, and whose effective head of government stayed in power longer than one consecutive year – produces the following list of cases. They are the autocracies that East Asia has experienced and that form the basis for comparison here. Table 6.2 gives an overview of the selected cases that are compared in the empirical section of this book.

Table 6.2 *Selected autocratic regime episodes*

Regime	Starting Year	Ending Year	Effective Head of Government
<i>Cambodia</i>	1953	1965	Norodom Sihanouk
	1975	1978	Pol Pot
	1993	1996	Hun Sen and Ranariddh
	1997	2008+	Hun Sen
<i>China</i>	1949	1975	Mao Zedong
	1978	1996	Deng Xiaoping
	1997	2001	Jiang Zemin
	2002	2008+	Hu Jintao
<i>Indonesia</i>	1949	1965	Sukarno
	1966	1997	Suharto
<i>Laos</i>	1975	1991	Kaysone Phomvihane
	1992	2005	Khamtai Siphandon
	2006	2008+	Choummaly Sayasone
<i>Malaysia</i>	1957	1969	Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra
	1970	1975	Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein
	1976	1980	Hussein bin Onn
	1981	2002	Mahathir bin Mohamed
	2003	2008+	Abdullah Ahmad Badawi
<i>Myanmar</i>	1948	1955	U Nu
	1962	1987	Ne Win ^a
	1988	1991	Saw Maung
	1992	2008+	Than Shwe
<i>North Korea</i>	1948	1993	Kim Il Sung ^b
	1994	2008+	Kim Jong Il
<i>Philippines</i>	1965	1985	Ferdinand Marcos
<i>Singapore</i>	1965	1989	Lee Kuan Yew
	1990	2003	Goh Chok Tong
	2004	2008+	Lee Hsien Loong
<i>South Korea</i>	1948	1959	Syngman Rhee ^c
	1961	1978	Park Chung Hee
	1979	1987	Chun Doo Hwan
<i>Taiwan</i>	1949	1974	Chiang Kai-shek
	1975	1977	Yen Chia-kan
	1978	1987	Chiang Ching-kuo
	1988	1995	Lee Teng-hui

Table 6.2. (*cont.*)

Regime	Starting Year	Ending Year	Effective Head of Government
<i>Thailand</i>	1947	1956	Luang Phibunsongkhram
	1958	1962	Sarit Thanarat
	1963	1972	Thanom Kittikachorn
	1977	1979	Kriangsak Chamanan
<i>Vietnam</i>	1954	1965	Ho Chi Minh ^d
	1975	1985	Le Duan
	1986	1990	Nguyen van Linh
	1991	1996	Do Muoi
	1997	2000	Le Kha Phieu
	2001	2008+	Nong Duc Manh

^aNo authority between 1964 and 1970.

^bNo authority between 1950 and 1953.

^cNo authority between 1950 and 1953.

^dNo authority between 1965 and 1975; therefore, end year of Ho Chi Minh is 1965 and beginning year of Le Duan is 1975 (transition was in 1969).

The Three Pillars of Stability in East Asia

The empirical test will be conducted for all selected East Asian countries beginning in 1945. To do so, I have constructed an original dataset, the Autocratic Regimes in East Asia dataset (AREA).⁶ In the following, I outline the methodological procedure used in compiling the AREA dataset, with more detail on operationalization of the concepts provided in the appendix. The major strengths of this dataset lie in its regional empirical scope, its conceptual differentiation allowing for alternative aggregation and simplified modification, and its comprehensive use of existing data sources. It was important to use quantitative indicators where applicable and reasonable and to rely on qualitative judgment when deemed necessary and appropriate.

In accordance with the theory development in the previous chapter, legitimization, repression, co-optation as well as the outcome, stability, are operationalized. Let me briefly review these major concepts used in the empirical analysis.

Stability: Prima facie, the stability of an autocracy seems to be a straightforward concept. However, it implies several hidden aspects that need to be considered. As mentioned in Chapter 1 in the theoretical section of this book, stability means different things to different people. Two broad understandings of stability can be distinguished: (1) the persistence or durability understanding of stability that takes into account how long-lived

⁶ I thank Marcus Spittler and Simon Haux for their help in compiling this dataset.

an autocratic regime is and (2) the continuity understanding of stability that takes into account how well prepared an autocratic regime is when power is transferred from one leader to the other. When it comes to persistence, Svoblik's (2012) measure of ruling coalitions is adopted because it effectively captures the succession of affiliated pro-regime supporters. While the number of years of the ruling coalition is a continuous variable, an ordinal variable is introduced to account for the continuity understanding of stability. Focusing on times of leadership transfer and in decreasing order of stability, it is argued that a regime proves to be most robust when it remains an unchanged autocratic regime. It is less stable if it changes its regime subtype (say from one-party to military rule), even less stable if it needs to accept a hybridization process, and unstable if the autocratic regime collapses and the polity democratizes. In the empirical analysis of selected cases in the following two chapters, both understandings of stability will be used.⁷

Legitimation: When it comes to legitimation, I opted for a two-stage procedure. As explained in Chapter 2 in the theory section of this book, it is set forth that the official legitimacy claim by a regime must be met by the actual legitimacy belief of the ordinary citizen. Only if they converge can we speak of a legitimate regime. If there is a mismatch between what people ought to believe and what they actually believe, the regime is seen as illegitimate. To assess the extent of congruence, a yardstick (the claim) is necessary against which the belief is measured. Therefore, the official claim of the regime will be detailed first, using the legitimacy matrix introduced in the theory section. It distinguishes between two modi – ideational (diffuse) legitimation and performance (specific) legitimation – and three objects: political community, regime, and concrete authority. This allows for a fine-grained picture to emerge regarding the specific regime's legitimation strategy.

Based on this necessary first step, it is then evaluated to what extent individual belief converges with the official claim. As there is no satisfying quantitative (survey) data that could be used, secondary sources and the judgments found in the relevant country-specific literature will be used. Four subdimensions of ideational legitimation are critical: validity, justifiability, transfer mechanism, and the uncontestedness of the claim.

⁷ In the empirical Chapter 7, I place more emphasis on the persistence measure. I report all empirical results in the online appendix of this book. As a robustness check, I also use different thresholds for the effective head of government as a persistence measure instead of the ruling coalition measure and also use a subset of only those regimes that have naturally ended prior to 2008 when the dataset ends. More details on conceptualization and the empirical results can be found in the online appendix.

- a) Validity. The core questions for the first dimension are the following: To what extent do the official legitimacy claims of the regime resemble “settled expectations” (Beetham 1991, 65) on the side of the citizens? Are they already habitualized and is normative predictability ensured?
- b) Justifiability. The core questions here are as follows: To what extent can the official legitimacy claims be justified by harking back to tradition, national history, revolutionary legacy, or any other (founding) myth of the regime? To what extent can the legitimating legend be bolstered by recourse to emotional sentiments?
- c) Transfer mechanism. For the third subdimension, the core questions are the following: To what extent is legitimacy transmitted from the citizens to the regime? Is there a viable route that can be taken, either by mass rallies, events, elections, or any other transmission belt that confers legitimacy on the powerful?
- d) Uncontestedness. The last subdimension asks the following: To what extent is the official legitimacy claim of the regime challenged by oppositional ideologies? To what extent has the official claim gained dominance or even constituted a monopoly?

When it comes to regime performance, the AREA dataset uses three subdimensions that indicate to what extent the regime “delivers” socio-economically (Schmotz et al. 2021):

- a) Economic Growth. The first subdimension of performance legitimacy asks: To what extent does the regime provide its citizens with economic growth?
- b) Social Welfare. The second subdimension turns its attention to social welfare: To what extent does the regime provide its citizens with public goods like health and education?
- c) Physical Security. The third subdimension poses the following question: To what extent does the regime provide domestic physical security for its citizens?

Repression: Following the theoretical discussion in Chapter 3, I use the distinction between hard and soft repression. Hard repression is defined by the violation of the personal integrity rights and consists of the following:

- a) The extent to which opponents of the regime are tortured.
- b) The extent to which opponents of the regime are killed.
- c) The extent to which opponents of the regime disappear.
- d) The extent to which opponents of the regime are imprisoned for political reasons.

In turn, soft repression refers to the curtailing of political rights. This includes the following quartet of human rights abuses:

- a) The extent to which the freedom of expression is violated.
- b) The extent to which the freedom of assembly is violated.
- c) The extent to which the freedom of movement is violated.
- d) The extent to which the freedom of religion is violated.

Co-optation: The third pillar of stability, co-optation, is operationalized in close dialogue with the theoretical explanations offered in Chapter 4. Co-optation refers to the ability of a regime to bind strategic elite members so that they do not use their material endowments against the regime. This can be done via formalized channels or via informal ones. For formal co-optation, the following two subdimensions are used:

- a) Policy Responsiveness. The core questions ask: To what extent is the regime responsive to the demands of strategic groups? Does the regime include the political demands of military and business elites?
- b) Personal Representation. The second subdimension for formal co-optation goes beyond policies, asking the following instead: Are potentially rival elites personally represented? Are these strategic elites co-opted by holding important offices?

The AREA dataset tries to tackle the informal side of co-optation by assessing four subdimensions:

- a) Duration of Bonds. The core questions ask: How long have the informal ties already been intact? Do the informal ties between co-optee and co-opter have a long shared history?
- b) Scope of Exchange. The core questions here are not about the time but about the extent of relationships: How far-reaching is the quid pro quo exchange? How many policy fields are covered? Are important decisions about relevant personnel included?
- c) Network Density. The questions to answer here are the following: How dense is the informal network? Is it a rather loosely organized and sparsely populated group or does it span the whole country and is it densely populated?
- d) Resource Basis. The final subdimension evaluates the following questions: How is the informal network materially endowed? How many resources are used to maintain the informal exchange?

Some of these subdimensions are easier to assess than others. Some subdimensions could rely on quantitative indicators from various datasets, while others demand a more qualitative assessment. Against this backdrop, the research-intensive task of drafting narratives for each case

that rely on both types of evidence is adopted. In combining these different data sources, I am confident that I do justice to the complexity of the concepts used.

Legitimation, repression, and co-optation are all complicated concepts that evade clear-cut and straightforward quantification via existing indicators. Take legitimation: the performance part of legitimacy can be measured with existing data.⁸ The same holds true for data on repression that relies on annual reports of Amnesty International and/or the US State Department.⁹ In contrast, the ideational side of legitimacy is a harder nut to crack. How do we know that people actually believe in what the regime says that they should believe in? To what extent is a regime seen as legitimate in the eyes of subordinates?

As such, legitimacy is an unknown known, that is, we know about its general importance, but it is difficult to concretely know much about it. It is an evasive concept that poses enormous empirical challenges. The qualitative coding employed here relies on linguistic qualifiers that are detected in the secondary literature. Linguistic qualifiers are hints in the case study literature that give important clues about how widespread, robust, deep, and exclusive the legitimacy belief is among the people.¹⁰ Needless to say, these linguistic qualifiers paint a vague picture. Yet, they offer important and often even unparalleled clues in measuring the almost unmeasurable.

The complexity of the concepts employed in this book is also evident for the two ways in which co-optation takes place. In the renaissance of comparative authoritarianism, the institutional turn has a tendency for quantification, using the number of parties in parliament (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007) or the number of cabinet members (Arriola 2009) as

⁸ The Penn World Tables or the Quality of Government Dataset (QoG) provide detailed information, for example, Heston, Summers, and Aten (2012); Teorell et al. (2013).

⁹ Widely used datasets are the Cingranelli and Richards (2010) CIRI dataset, the Political Terror Scale (PTS) by Wood and Gibney (2010), and the Civil Liberties Dataset (CLD) by Møller and Skaaning (2013).

¹⁰ When I employ a qualitative coding that is based on linguistic qualifiers in secondary literature, I distinguish broadly between low (0), medium-low (0.33), medium-high (0.66), and high (1). For assessing, for example, the frequency of a measure, linguistic qualifiers in the secondary literature would be terms like “very frequent,” “often,” “repeatedly,” “regularly,” “habitually,” “traditionally” for a coding of 1 (high) to “rare,” “hardly ever,” “seldom,” “infrequently” for a coding of 0 (low). The same applies for geographical scope: “countrywide,” “across the territory,” “widely,” “widespread,” “pervasive,” and “extensive” would indicate a coding of 1 (high) to “limited,” “in very restricted areas,” “small-scale” for a coding of 0 (low). Last, take the example of the resource base that is important for informal co-optation networks: “resource rich,” “very wealthy,” “affluent network,” “very prosperous” are used to justify a coding of 1 (high) to “poor,” “weak,” “insignificant resources” for a coding of 0 (low).

Table 6.3 Sources for the *AREA* dataset

Pillars	Secondary Level	Dimensions	Indicator	Source
Legitimation	Ideational Legitimacy	Validity	Linguistic qualifier	Secondary literature
		Justifiability	Linguistic qualifier	
		Transfer Mechanism	Linguistic qualifier	
		Uncontestedness	Linguistic qualifier	
	Performance Legitimacy ^a	Economic Performance Social Welfare	GDP growth per capita; power consumption growth per capita; inflation rate; GINI household income Life expectancy; years of schooling	Penn World Tables and QoG dataset (UNESCO)
Repression	Hard Repression	Physical Security	ICRG Quality of Government Indicator	QoG dataset (ICRG)
		Torture	Modified CIRI “Physical Security Index”; PTS sub-scores	CIRI and PTS; before 1976, secondary literature
		Killings		
		Disappearance		
	Soft Repression	Imprisonment		
Co-optation	Formal Co-optation	Freedom of Expression	Modified CIRI “Empowerment Rights Index”; CLD sub-scores	CIRI and CLD; before 1976, secondary literature
		Freedom of Assembly		
		Freedom of Movement		
		Freedom of Religion		
	Informal Co-optation	Responsiveness	Linguistic qualifier	Secondary literature
		Representation		
		Duration of Bonds		
		Scope of Exchange		
		Density of Network	Linguistic qualifier	Secondary literature
		Resource Basis		

^aDue to missing data, the autocratic episodes of U Nu (Burma/Myanmar, 1948–55), Syngman Rhee (South Korea, 1948–59), and Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam, 1954–65) have been coded based on secondary literature.

proxies for co-optation (for an alternative conceptualization see Schmotz 2015). I frame formal co-optation in a different way: first in terms of representation of personal interests in formal institutional arrangements and, second, in terms of policy receptivity and responsiveness of the regime. It is difficult, if not impossible, to nail down such an understanding of formal co-optation with only quantifiable indicators. Instead, a medium ground of combining quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments is suggestive. The same holds true for the even more challenging informal ways of co-opting elite members to the inner sanctum. By its very definition, informal practices and conventions take often place in unstandardized, exceptional, and hidden settings. Assessments by country experts are often the only viable route for comparing such informal exchanges.

Thus, the strength of case study narratives and the AREA dataset is in the validity of the data presented, which complements available quantitative data with deep case knowledge. Yet, it might suffer from lower reliability due to the subjective coding. This is a typical trade-off in constructing datasets (Rueschemeyer 2009). To ease the reliability problem, the case narratives lay open what my anchor literature is, so that agreements and disagreements with the coding are facilitated. Moreover, the disaggregated data is made transparent and available so that diverging assessments about sub-scores can be integrated easily. In the operationalization appendix, the justification for the aggregation rules are laid open. The application of alternative aggregation rules or competing concept building by other scholars is therefore made possible. Adding, subtracting, or modifying sub-scores is made easy.

Table 6.3 lists the conceptual differentiation as well as the empirical sources that are condensed in case narratives for the forty-five autocratic episodes in thirteen East Asian countries.

The AREA dataset is an original dataset that tries to make key aspects of autocratic rule comparable. I see an additional advantage in compiling such a comprehensive dataset, which lies in the cumulative nature of doing social science research. The basis for the AREA dataset, the individual case narratives, is made transparent. Future studies might want to build on these case narratives, challenge them, and modify them. These case study narratives are understood to be an initial steppingstone. I anticipate that there will be disagreement about some of the coding and assessments in the selected cases. Yet, I remain hopeful that it will initiate a fruitful debate about engaging in region-wide comparisons of East Asia's diverse autocratic regimes.

7 Empirical Explorations

This book compares the autocratic experiences of forty-five cases in thirteen East Asian countries since 1945. It is done in two interrelated steps. First, within this chapter it provides descriptive evidence about the cases. This first step demonstrates the empirical applicability of the modular theory frames. It will be shown that the theory frames of legitimation, repression, and co-optation are on such a macro-structural level that they can be fruitfully applied to all types of autocratic regimes, irrespective of the concrete regime subtype. The case studies also illustrate the interplay of these three frames, suggesting that the theoretical expectation of over-politicization and de-politicization logics holds. The second step in Chapter 8 is then dedicated to a more rigorous and formalized empirical test of the theoretical two-logics expectation.

As outlined earlier, the legitimation dimension occupies a special position in the two logics. It focuses on the role that ordinary citizens play in stabilizing autocratic rule. Although almost neglected in the recent renaissance of comparative authoritarianism, it was the *fundamentum divisionis* in classic accounts of autocratic rule. These attempts at grand theorizing placed much more emphasis on ideologies – or mentalities (Arendt [1951] 1966; Linz 1975; Perlmutter 1981) and how ordinary people are affected by autocratic rule. I connect to these scholars and revive the idea of putting ordinary citizens back at the center of research.

The legitimation dimension is not only of utmost importance; it is also pivotal in theory building. In developing the theoretical expectation of over-politicizing and de-politicizing logics, the nexus between legitimation and repression was the most fragile and ambivalent one. This ambivalence is taken as the starting point for theorizing the two configurations. With its origin in the “punishment puzzle” (Davenport 2007), the relationship between repression and legitimation can be either a source of stability or a source of erosion and decay (Gerschewski 2021). Legitimation and repression can sometimes be complementary and mutually reinforcing, but this relationship can also turn out to backfire and become the Achilles’ heel of autocratic regimes. I have argued

that ideological forms of legitimation not only go hand in hand with hard repression but also justify and sometimes even demand the use of such forms of repression. In contrast, performance legitimacy and hard repression are counterproductive in tandem, weakening the regime as a whole. If the overarching goal of an autocratic regime is to de-politicize its people and render them passive, hard repression should be avoided so as not to ignite protest.

As such, the relationship between legitimation and repression serves a theoretical hinge function, channeling the emergence of two logics. Depending on the concrete combination of legitimation efforts and repression instruments (ideational legitimation and hard repression vs. performance legitimation and soft repression), a regime either follows an over-politicizing or a de-politicizing logic. The descriptive part of the empirical analysis section of this book is structured along this dividing line between over-politicization and de-politicization. In a coarse-grained manner, it could be generalized that in East Asian regimes, the former strategy usually refers to a communism-cum-nationalism legitimacy formula that coincides with hard repression instruments, while the latter strategy relies on a development-cum-nationalism legitimacy formula that fits with soft repression measures.

This empirical chapter provides exemplary case descriptions that are disciplined and structured by the discussion of legitimation, repression, and co-optation. The online appendix (www.cambridge.org/Gerschewski) to this book gives more detailed insights into each case, offering case narratives and justifications for coding decisions for all forty-five regimes under study. Here, I present only paradigmatic cases that serve more illustrative functions. The lead case for over-politicization will be North Korea. For the de-politicization logic, Singapore is selected as the most illustrative lead case. These two lead cases will be supplemented with empirical material from other cases. The motivation for this chapter lies therefore in demonstrating the inner workings of the two contrasting logics in most clarity and with the least disturbing noise. In some sense, the paradigmatic lead cases are the closest empirical approximation to the Weberian ideal type of over-politicizing and de-politicizing logics. In modern case selection language, the chapter follows a “typical” case design that has its particular merits in demonstrating an assumed theoretical relationship and is by definition representative of the broader universe of cases (Gerring 2017; Goertz 2017; Seawright and Gerring 2008).¹

¹ I am aware that there is a difference between what Gary Goertz and John Gerring would qualify as a “typical” case. For Gerring, a typical case would be an on-liner on a regression line, that is, a case with low residuals, while Goertz emphasizes that the explanans

This chapter has therefore three modest objectives. First, it provides initial empirical evidence that the three partial frames of legitimization, repression, and co-optation are a fruitful theoretical approach in studying the wide range of (East Asian) autocracies. Second, it will provide initial empirical evidence that over-politicization and de-politicization are the most robust ruling strategies for autocracies, highlighting the hinge function that the linkage between legitimization and repression plays. And third, the chapter aims to familiarize readers with concrete autocratic experience in different East Asian countries.

Paradigmatic Cases for the Over-Politicization Logic

The most paradigmatic and typical case for an over-politicizing regime in East Asia is North Korea. This holds true for both autocratic periods that are analyzed here: the rule of Kim Il Sung from the founding days until his death in 1994 and the period under his son and successor Kim Jong Il who ruled the country until he died in 2011.² The regime has proven exceptional stability in the wake of internal and external pressure. It has weathered crises yet has remained stable since 1948. It has also remained unchanged in that neither the autocratic logic nor the autocratic subtype changed when power was handed over in 1994. As such, North Korea, under both Kim Il Sung and his successor Kim Jong Il, has proven both exceptional durability (seventy-plus years of existence) and continuity (unchanging nature).

When it comes to the first theory frame of legitimization, it is safe to say that North Korea is one of the most ideologized countries worldwide. Its efforts to penetrate all parts of society are unparalleled. From its founding days, it has placed heavy emphasis on the ideological education and indoctrination of its people (Dukalskis 2017). Although initially under Soviet tutelage, it soon bred its own nationalistic version of communism. The historian Charles Armstrong (2003, 58–95) argued that Kim Il Sung only borrowed the communist ideological frame and filled it with nationalistic undertones. Szalontai (2005), a Hungarian colleague, agrees with the “Koreanization of communism” hypothesis. It is remarkable that it was only in 1955, seven years after the founding of the new nation-state, that the Juche ideology was mentioned publicly for the first

and the explanandum must be present. In set-theoretic language, such a case follows the “principle of maximum set membership” (Schneider and Wagemann 2012, 310–12) of condition and outcome.

² As mentioned earlier, due to data constraints, I limit the comparative data of the AREA dataset until 2008.

time (Kim Il Sung 1975a, 150). Since then it has been rapidly disseminated and the number of propaganda materials skyrocketed in the first years (Yiu 1969).

The essence of the Juche ideology, which has quickly developed into the omnipresent and all-pervading ideology of the country, is difficult to grasp. It is either almost banal – highlighting only the country's excessive emphasis on independence, which is deeply rooted in the traumatic experience of Japanese colonialism – or it is treated as a complex, all-embracing political philosophy. A literal translation of the neologism refers to *ju* as “main, essential” and *che* as “body, self, origin” (Cumings 1997, 403–4; Oh and Hassig 2000, 17). The ideology is best described as an amalgam of Marxism-Leninism, traditional and Confucian political thought,³ and hyper-nationalism. Yet, it ascribes to itself a scientific outlook and propagates a vanguard position in the course of history. It argues that it is not only a creative adaptation of Marxism-Leninism but also a further development and perfection of it (Kim Il Sung 1975b; Kim Jong Il 1985).

North Korean ideologues argue that the route to the Marxist utopia of a classless society can be reached directly from feudalism. For North Korea, they assert that the capitalist phase can be leapfrogged. Critics who bring up a transitional phase of capitalism are defamed as right-wing theorists who fail to recognize the exceptionalism of North Korean conditions (Kim 1975, 3–5). Oh and Hassig, two of the international leading country experts, refer to the ubiquitous propagandistic line that the “objective conditions,” that is, North Korea's colonial past and geo-strategic location, have met the “subjective conditions,” that is, the creative strength and charisma of the leader Kim Il Sung who is therefore perceived as being “virtually a divine gift to the people” (Oh and Hassig 2000, 23). In a similar vein, Park Han-shik (1996, 12) has argued that the ideology “has been promoted so pervasively that complete loyalty to the nation is considered natural.”

In its basic understanding, North Korean society forms a socio-political body in which the leader represents the brain that develops the ideological imperatives. The party is compared with the nerve system

³ Some scholars refer to the legacy of the ancient Chosun dynasty. For example, Cornell (2002, 119–27) argued that the North Korean leader can therefore hark back to the tradition of the “mandate of heaven” in which the ruler follows the ethical task of ruling in the name and for the common good of the people. The leader is seen as a type of benevolent and morally superior king – which renders opposition unnecessary. The deep traditional roots in society have also led the historian Bruce Cumings (1997, 407; 1993) to propose his controversial corporatism hypothesis, which states that the North Korean polity is “closer to a Neo-Confucian kingdom than to Stalin's Russia.”

that permeates the body and that transmits the ideological decisions to it (Park 2002, 33–35). It is an organicistic understanding of society and, although not explicitly mentioned, the parallels to European fascist ideologies are evident. Mussolini's famous dictum that the party should penetrate the socio-political body like capillaries finds its closest East Asian analog in North Korea.

When Kim Il Sung died after more than four decades as the country's sole leader, his son, Kim Jong Il, succeeded him. The younger Kim immediately experimented with ideological modifications and introduced the "Red Flags" ideology, which borrowed historically from the Chosun revolution of the fourteenth century. It emphasized Kim Jong Il as the new leader and praised recent socialist achievements. It was presented as a variant of the Juche ideology. As the North Korean population was hit extremely hard by a famine in the mid-1990s, the Red Flag ideas were paralleled by slogans about the "Arduous March." The Arduous March of the 1930s symbolizes the toughness and robustness of the North Korean people and appeals to their morale. It can be compared with Mao Zedong's "Long March," which also had been instrumentalized and elevated to the founding narrative of the country's revolutionary zeal.

Yet, the Red Flag ideas were abruptly aborted in 1998 to be completely replaced by the "theory of the strong and prosperous nation" (*kangsong taeguk*) (Cheong 2001; 2004). Within this umbrella theory, the slogan of "Military-First-Politics" (*songun chongchi*) was the most pronounced one. It increasingly found entry into the propaganda machine. Like Juche, "Songun" is a neologism. It literally means to prioritize the military over the nonmilitary sectors to build a strong and independent nation. Yet, it does not only refer to security and foreign politics and a country that is able to fend off international pressure. Instead, it is also used domestically. The military should constitute the exemplary force for the entire population and a militaristic spirit of command and obedience should be (further) strengthened (Suh 2002). Songun gradually developed into the single most important term in North Korean ideology.

While being mentioned for the first time either in 1995 (Suh 2002, 151–52) or in 1997 (Kim 2006, 63), it was elevated from politics (*chongchi*) into the status of an ideology (*sasang*) in 2001 (Kim 2005, 49). This elevation was meant to document the independence of Kim Jong Il's Songun ideology from that of his father, catapulting the son out of the shadow of his almost almighty father. Yet, the ideology did not have a similarly strong grip on society, forcing Kim Jong Il to backpedal. He gave up the originality claim, making instead a rhetorical turn in 2004 that positioned the Songun ideology as an offshoot of the Juche ideology. Kim Jong Il also proclaimed that he would go back to the anticolonial struggle

Table 7.1 *North Korea's legitimacy profile*

	Objects of Support		
	<i>Political Community</i>	<i>Regime</i>	<i>Authorities</i>
1948–93 Kim Il Sung	Nationalism (unification), anticolonialism Confucian elements	Juche ideology	Charisma
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il	Nationalism, anticolonialism	Juche ideology Songun (military-first) policy/ideology	

of his father – which he had not mentioned earlier in the 1990s (Kwon and Chung 2012, 75). In doing so, he connected his ideological stance to the previous one, in a sense effectively borrowing legitimacy from his father.

In Chapter 2 in the theory section of this book, a matrix for legitimacy claims was outlined. Following the classic work of David Easton, this matrix distinguishes among the three objects of support: the political community, the regime, and the authorities. Table 7.1 applies this conceptual matrix to North Korea, displaying the legitimacy profile of the two North Korean rulers. In the online appendix to this book, the same procedure has been undertaken for all forty-four other East Asian autocratic regime episodes.

With regard to the actual legitimacy belief in the North Korean society, that is, the scope and extent to which the legitimacy claims are internalized by the people, one needs to state first that the Juche ideology infiltrates all aspects of private and public life (Hoare and Pares 2005). Hunter (1999) has offered deep insight into the daily life in Kim Il Sung's North Korea, describing the immense ideological efforts that start literally from the cradle and reach into the grave. She reports, for example, the surprising accuracy by which North Korean schoolchildren can remember dates of their history, of on-site instruction visits, and passages of ideological texts (Hunter 1999, 22). When at the beginning of the 1980s, a group of Western scholars was allowed to travel to North Korea, they were astonished how strictly structured the daily rhythm of ordinary citizens was: a third of the day was dedicated to work, a third to sleep, and a third to the study of ideological works of Kim Il Sung (Koh 1983).

In more recent years, quantitative survey research with North Korean refugees has provided an extremely helpful new perspective that goes beyond anecdotal evidence, shedding light into the most reclusive country in the world. A study from the South Korean-based and

government-sponsored think tank Korean Institute of National Unification (KINU) included more than 600 survey respondents and concluded that the legitimacy belief among North Koreans under Kim Il Sung had been enormously widespread in society (Chon et al. 2007). This finding is empirically corroborated by the more recent survey efforts of Haggard and Noland (2011; 2017). Concurrent in-depth studies with qualitative interviews come to similar conclusions (Dukalskis 2017), making it safe to say that under the aegis of Kim Il Sung, the legitimacy belief in the ruling regime was emotional, deep, widespread, and uncontested.

In contrast, certain caveats need to be added for the autocratic rule of Kim Jong Il. The younger Kim always stood in the shadow of his father. Despite having undergone a party career dating back to the 1970s, he never emancipated himself from his father's charisma. A famous Korean proverb neatly describes the situation: if the father was a tiger, the son is a dog. This applies to North Korean leadership as well. Kim Jong Il never attained the high support his father had achieved. Instead, the coincidence of the power transfer and the biggest countrywide famine in the mid-1990s reinforced the impression of him as a weak leader. Dissatisfaction with the quality of his leadership grew in all societal classes as the KINU study shows empirically (Chon et al. 2007).⁴ In the aftermath of the famine and the collapse of the state-run food provision program, the uncontestedness of North Korea's socialist ideology began to crumble (Dukalskis and Lee 2020; McEachern 2010). Haggard and Noland (2011, 45) report of mushrooming capitalist orientations among the citizens and "entrepreneurial coping behavior" to secure food. An influx of new ideas challenged the ideological monopoly. Nevertheless, the effects of long-standing ideological indoctrination efforts should not be underestimated. North Korea remains one of the most ideologized countries existing today.

In terms of performance legitimization, North Korea's record is mixed. It is an oft-forgotten fact that until the 1970s, the regime was economically stronger than neighboring South Korea. As a socialist country, it placed particular emphasis on social welfare with relatively high spending on education and health compared with other autocratic regime types. Although overall at a low economic level, North Korean society was, however, relatively equal. The economic situation of the country deteriorated in the 1990s and culminated in the aforementioned famine in the mid-1990s. Depending on the estimates, the number of victims varies considerably. An estimate by Haggard and Noland can be considered middle ground. They estimate that between 600,000 and 1 million

⁴ The KINU study distinguishes between the core classes, that is, the elite, the workers, the unstable class, and the hostile class.

Table 7.2 North Korea's *legitimation*

Episode	Ideational Legitimation				Performance Legitimation		
	Validity	Justifiability	Transfer	Uncon-testedness	Economic Performance	Social Welfare	Physical Security
1948–93 Kim Il Sung	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	0.17	0.8	0.526
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium-high</i>	0.119	0.832	0.382

people – amounting to 3 to 5 percent of the whole population – died during the famine (Haggard and Noland 2007; Noland 2003). It was “truly a national trauma” (Haggard and Noland 2011, 6) as almost all societal strata (except the nomenklatura) and all regions (with the three Northern provinces most affected) suffered from the famine. Table 7.2 summarizes North Korea’s performance and ideational legitimation efforts.

In general, over-politicizers are characterized by strong ideological appeal that justifies and sometimes even demands the use of hard and soft repression against the opposition. In the North Korean case, the Juche ideology explicitly defines the state’s enemies. The North Korean ideology is Manichean, drawing a sharp dividing line between friend and foe, between in-group and out-group. It is explicitly anti-colonial (i.e., anti-Japanese), anti-imperial (i.e., anti–United States), and anti-capitalist (i.e., anti-Western world including South Korea) and claims to strive for the establishment of a classless society of workers and farmers. In a Schmittian sense, these groups are not only private foes, disliked rivals, and “inimical” adversaries (*inimicus*) but are instead publicly declared, “hostile” enemies (*hostis*), which means that the regime perceives itself as being entitled to identify them as collective enemies of the state. From the North Korean perspective, the definition of a domestic foe justifies the use of violence against these oppositional groups.

North Korea’s repression apparatus is excessive and almost unparalleled worldwide. The relevant datasets all code North Korea as being the most repressive system – with rare exceptions for some years. When it comes to soft repression and the violations of civil liberties and political participation rights, the North Korean regime, under both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, did not tolerate freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movement, or freedom of religion. It also most frequently and pervasively violated personal integrity rights. The regime did not shy away from extrajudicial killings, torture, forced disappearance, and the imprisonment of opposition members for political reasons. North

Table 7.3 *North Korea's repression*

Episode	Hard Repression	Soft Repression
1948–93 Kim Il Sung	0.861	0.948
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il	0.898	0.95

Korea's repression apparatus operated throughout the country. A differentiated labor camp system was installed in the 1950s, consisting of four components. Depending on the nature of the crime, political opposition can be arrested and detained in political labor camps, ideological reeducation camps, collection centers, and labor training centers (Haggard and Noland 2011, 86–93; Hawk 2003; Lankov 1995; 2013). Table 7.3 gives an overview of the use of hard and soft repression in North Korea.

The third pillar of stability, co-optation, is difficult to assess. Co-optation deals with the way in which elites secure intragroup cohesion. Due to North Korean opaqueness, it is difficult to assess to what extent the elite was united or divided. From all the available information, it appears that the formal co-optation mechanism had been kept by and large intact during the regimes of both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. From historians, we know today that the biggest factional struggle took place at the end of the 1950s, before Kim Il Sung finally consolidated his power. Archival sources reveal open severe elite rivalries and factional struggles. The most serious controversies took place in 1956 (Lankov 2005; Szalontai 2005) when five factions competed for power: the Yanan faction, sponsored by the Chinese Communist Party; the Kapsan faction under the aegis of Kim Il Sung; the nationalistic faction led by Cho Man-shik; the domestic faction under Hyon Chun-hyok; and the Soviet faction. It was a “complex interplay of interests, motivations, and actions” (Armstrong 2003, 435), in which different factions, aligned with different superpowers and with different ideological orientations and positions, struggled over dominance. In this interfactional struggle, Kim Il Sung managed to gradually eliminate rivaling factions and installed loyal followers in strategic state positions. Interestingly, he most frequently used the field of cultural policy to denounce his rivals. Cultural policies were a domestic domain in which the Soviet Union or China could not intervene as easily as in other areas (Szalontai 2005, 78–79).

Since this open power struggle at the beginning of Kim Il Sung's tenure, we do not know of any open splits. The cement that bound the ruling elite together was shared revolutionary experiences and the anti-colonial war against the Japanese, as well as the Korean War (1950–53). These shared historical experiences (still) define who belongs to the

inner sanctum and who does not. Even until today, it can be said that the higher the burden of war on a family, the higher its social status (*songbun*). The category “orphans from war” is still connected to the highest social status and almost all members of the nomenklatura can claim such a personal fate. The second-highest *songbun* is the category “civilians killed/fallen soldiers,” those who have been victimized by having lost a civilian or soldier who was a close family member. “Workers,” “peasants,” and “white-collar-workers” follow only after these two groups.⁵ The transmission belt for intra-elite cohesion among party cadres and top bureaucrats, therefore, has been forged in blood and steel.

This overemphasis on military experience was also a hindrance for a smooth power transfer from father to son. The years between 1994 when Kim Il Sung died and 1997 when Kim Jong Il officially took over power have been euphemistically called the “mourning period.” The regime tried to mask the internal struggle over power by referring to the Confucian tradition to mourn for three years for the dead. It has been suggested that these three years were a period of an intense and open intra-elite power struggle. Kim Jong Il was criticized (and even denounced as being inadequate) due to his lack of military experience (Noland 2004). Consequently, Kim Jong Il placed more ideological emphasis on the military to satisfy the demands of the old war veterans, while shifting his focus from the previous power center of the Workers Party of Korea (WPK) to the National Defense Commission (NDC) instead. While under Kim Il Sung, the Presidium, the Central Committee, and the Politburo of the WPK were the traditional power centers and major co-optation arenas, Kim Jong Il altered the political power architecture. During his tenure, the National Defense Commission was elevated to the status of the highest state organ and Kim’s favorite title was chairman of the NDC. Doing so signaled that co-optation patterns to neutralize potentially rivaling elites had changed slightly. When the third Kim, Kim Jong-un, took over power after the death of his father in 2011, he reconnected to the legacy of his grandfather. In ideological terms, Kim Jong-un refers significantly more to the Juche idea and the legacy of his grandfather and rarely mentions his father. In terms of co-optation, he reestablished the primacy of the party and even dissolved in 2016 his father’s former power hub, the NDC. Table 7.4 quantifies the North Korean co-optation efforts.

The co-optation of elite members still works today on the basis of societal status. Yet, the number who experienced war personally or even gained military merits decreased naturally. Despite some scattered

⁵ Interview with Kim Philo, Seoul National University, South Korea, October 29, 2013.

Table 7.4 North Korea's co-optation

Episode	Formal Co-optation		Informal Co-optation			
	Responsiveness	Representation	Duration	Scope	Density	Resource
1948–93 Kim Il Sung	<i>Medium-high</i>	<i>Medium-high</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il	<i>Medium-high</i>	<i>Medium-high</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium-high</i>

defections and reported intra-elite disputes in which high-ranking officials (and sometimes even family members) are purged, the strategy of co-optation via formal party structures functions. The WPK, which is organized around the classic principles of Leninist democratic centralism as well as the other formalized arenas such as parliament and bureaucracy serve as an intact institutionalized co-optation vehicle. With the Supreme People's Assembly on a national level and the regional and local subchapters of the party, the WPK is still able to bind most elites to the regime. The exchange is based on a reciprocal give-and-take. While these elites benefit from material endowments and policy concessions, they guarantee not to intervene in politics.

Yet, in recent years rumors of frustrations among the elites have been increasingly reported. The current party's dilemma is that entrepreneurial thinking pays more than ideological commitment. This has even led to the paradoxical situation of the so-called "August 3rd persons." These individuals buy their way off their North Korean workplace to work in neighboring China. Yang estimates that around 30,000 to 40,000 North Koreans make their living working in China.⁶ They not only do unskilled work but they are also employed in the programming and IT sector. They mostly stem from the privileged economy sector that surrounds the Kim dynasty. Kim Philo contributes to this picture by adding that, today, the party even allows its most loyal followers to work in China.⁷ It is a form of ideological selling out, but this concession is needed to co-opt these elites and prevent them from revolting. Disgruntled elites complain that they have always played by the rules and remained committed to the socialist stance, but they now see themselves overtaken by entrepreneurs (Gerschewski 2020a). The party thus grants them the opportunity to try their own luck. In today's North Korea, pragmatic co-optation trumps ideological orthodoxy.

⁶ Interview with Yang Un-Chul, Sejong Institute, Seongnam, South Korea, October 25, 2013.

⁷ Interview with Kim Philo, Seoul National University, South Korea, October 29, 2013.

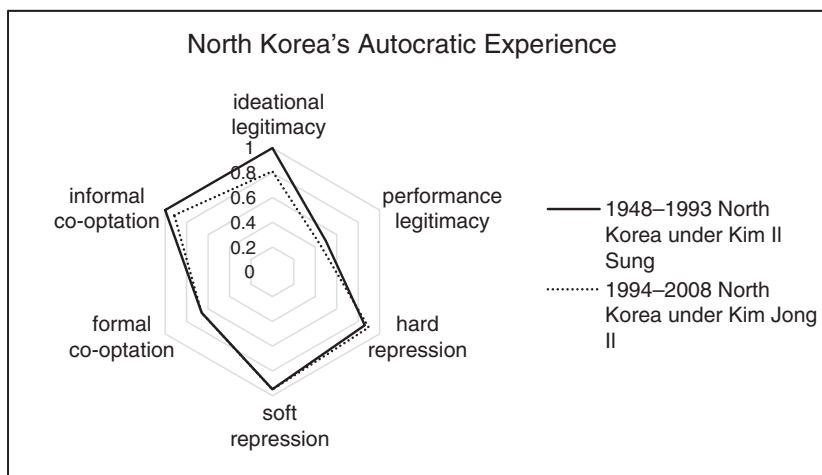


Figure 7.1 Radar chart for North Korea

Figure 7.1 shows a radar chart for the two North Korean autocratic periods. It demonstrates the combination of factors that stabilized the regime over time. The overlap between Kim Il Sung's power configuration and Kim Jong Il's strategy to maintain power is significant. Both demonstrate in stark clarity an illustrative example of the over-politicization logic, characterized by high levels of ideological legitimization, hard and soft repression, and various co-optation efforts.

While North Korea's co-optation pillar becomes increasingly vulnerable, the "masters" that brought co-optation to almost perfection are the Chinese. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) works as a co-optation arena par excellence. Its bonds were strongest under the rule of Mao Zedong. Due to shared military experience in the anticolonial war, a core group developed. Among them were prominent field commanders like Peng Duhai, Lin Bao, and Zhou Enlai and party builders like Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Fairbank and Goldman (1998, 345) describe the group of leaders as a "tested and closely knit group," and Lieberthal (1995, 185) argues that the apex of power consisted of only twenty-five to thirty-five people who "oversee virtually all sectors of work and politics." Under Mao, the co-optation network was personalist and resembled concentric circles with Mao at the center. Yet, particularly during the Great Leap Forward, Saich (2011, 40) argues that Mao's personal dominance frustrated those who saw the need to create sustainable institutions. Instead, Mao's co-optation efforts oscillated between a personalistic style of placing loyal followers in key positions and repressing

internal rivals. While he could rely on a tightly knit network of former comrades-in-arms, he also impeded institutionalization efforts and fell generally short of responsiveness toward alternative policy interests. It was only after his death that the CCP became what it is today: the major vehicle of maintaining intra-elite unity. When Deng Xiaoping followed Mao, he was more of a power broker behind the scenes and acted as a *primus inter pares*. After the caesura of the Cultural Revolution, Deng's tenure provided more fertile ground for the CCP's institutionalization process. A legalization process culminated in 1982 in a new constitution, and a multilayered leadership composition finally took shape during these years. The succession question, usually a fragile one for all autocratic regimes, is particularly institutionalized in China to such an extent that is "unusual in the history of authoritarianism and unprecedented in the history of China" (Nathan 2003, 7).

The CCP has developed a finely calibrated co-optation machine (Tsai 2006; 2007). Below the top positions, elders are incorporated as strategic resources and executive members are supported by their own secretaries and assistants (*mishu*). Functionally, they are differentiated into *kou* (gateways). Organizationally, they are headed by members of the Politburo Standing Committee and are supported by functionally related bureaucratic groupings called *xitong*. The *kou* and *xitong* are of crucial relevance, as they are a "bridge between the leaders at the apex of the political system and the major bureaucracy that generate information and implement policy" (Lieberthal 1995, 187). Besides the *kou* and *xitong* system, the nomenklatura system is of heightened importance for stabilizing the regime by co-optation. Heberer (2008, 77) described a cadre system of fifteen hierarchical levels and Lieberthal added to this elaborated picture the rank equivalents that hold across county and province levels. A rule of thumb is according to Lieberthal the "two-rank-down" procedure of nomenklatura appointments. He concluded that "through its nomenklatura system the CCP exercises control over who attains leading position not only in the party, but also in the government, judicial system, schools and universities, enterprises, research establishments, religious organizations, museums, libraries, hospitals and so forth" (Lieberthal 1995, 209). The structural resources of the party to determine individuals' careers were immense. Although some scholars are more skeptical, arguing that there are not just increasing ways of circumventing the cadre system but that this system itself faces mounting problems of dysfunctional corruption (Ji 2006; Pei 2006), a party membership is still widely sought after and pays off.

The co-optation machinery has changed compared with Mao's days. It has become a fine-tuned institutional safeguard for maintaining

intra-elite cohesion. It prolongs time frames, makes politics more predictable, reduces uncertainty, settles intra-elite conflict, and smoothens power transitions by providing balanced and clear-cut procedures and shared rules. Over the decades, the co-optation machinery has changed and the party's ideological directions have changed in parallel. Mao Zedong's revolutionary zeal has ebbed away today. Yet, he once enjoyed a relatively widespread legitimacy among ordinary citizens; some groups, like the peasants, were fervent followers. He was the first to unite the country after the humiliating defeat in the Opium Wars (1839–42). Like Kim Il Sung, he developed a nationalistic version of communism that was tailored to him as the only legitimate interpreter. East Asia saw a third leader who propagated a nationalism-cum-communism legitimacy formula. Ho Chi Minh ideologically based his rule on the same symbiotic components. Ho was also capable of exploiting anticolonial sentiments, the liberation from French domination, and the goal of national unification of North and South Vietnam as a founding myth of the Vietnamese nation that he enriched with communist thought and a socialist drive for egalitarianism (Vasavakul 1995). Considering these commonalities, it is not surprising that the ruling period of this triad is most often equated with their names: Maoism, Kimilsungism, and Ho Thought.

In the case of Vietnam, the personalization of politics also impeded formalized institutional co-optation. Ho's co-optation network worked in concentric circles in which distance to the power center was a measure of political influence. Informal arrangements that had been built on shared military experience were prioritized over formal structures. After Ho, different sectors of society like the military, women, or trade unions were included in formal governing institutions following a flexible quota system. When more workers were needed in 1976, the Fourth Party Congress reacted to this need; the same holds true for 1980 with military officers, and in 1986 for intellectuals and economists. The regime respected representatives of different factions who ranged from reformers, conservatives, balancers, and opportunists to military officers. Nevertheless, it faced mounting pressure due to growing societal pluralism and intra-elite conflict (Koh 2001). Yet, it needs to be stated that even for communist standards, the party's reach into society was relatively high in the 1980s. It is estimated that 42,000 base-level organizations on which today's leaders can still build were established to guarantee the vertical integration of societal demands (Beresford 1988, 79–97; Porter 1993, 65–69). The Fatherland Front was and remains the most important umbrella organization uniting different mass organizations like the Vietnamese Confederation of Trade Unions, the Women's Union, and the Ho Chi Minh Youth Union. Even up to today, the regime has been

responsive to societal demands, via both party and parliamentary structures (Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng 2011; Malesky and Schuler 2010; Malesky and Taussig 2019; Morgenbesser 2020, 8–19).

In China, it was Deng who introduced a technocratic turn and helped to “heal deep-rooted factionalism, and restore economic vitality” (Guo 2001, 160). In Vietnam, it was the reform era of *doi moi* (renewal) in 1986 that demanded ideological readjustments. As it became increasingly clear that China would no longer serve as the socialist vanguard after the fall of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the socialist bloc, Vietnam issued the slogan of “market economy with socialist orientations” (Thayer 2010, 427). Although the idea of market socialism was depicted as “ideological gymnastics and ex post facto retrofitting of reality” (Elliott 2012, 204), it nonetheless worked as the new ideological header. This came at the expense of the previous Le Duan regime, which served as the public scapegoat. Ho Chi Minh Thought was revived as a nationalistic backing for the new ideological course. This provided the regime with more room to maneuver. It gave the subsequent leaders an opportunity to undermine the view that a capitalist and a socialist world are incompatible. Furthermore, it gave party ideologists more ground to argue that economic integration is actually beneficial to socialism. Table 7.5 summarizes the discussion about the legitimacy claims of the Chinese and Vietnamese autocratic regimes.

Paradigmatically, the triad of Kim Il Sung, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh stands for the strategic over-politicization logic. The parallels between their respective ruling strategies are striking. All three relied on a Manichean ideology that justified repression against domestic enemies. All three developed a nationalism-cum-communism legitimacy formula with heavy anticolonial undertones and a strong element of personalization. Their individual charisma was to a large extent derived from their personal status as military heroes. Their comrades-in-arms constituted the core elite leadership group, and it was only after their death that the Communist Party could move on to develop into the finely calibrated co-optation machinery it is until today. North Korea remained almost unchanged after the death of Kim Il Sung, staying on the over-politicization path. China and Vietnam, however, have proven to be more flexible and reformist, changing course to embark instead on a de-politicization path.

Figure 7.2 shows a radar chart for China and Vietnam. It demonstrates the changing configuration of factors for the different autocratic periods in China and in Vietnam. In both countries, ideological legitimation decreased while performance legitimation increasingly mattered more. As such, these two countries moved gradually across the spectrum from the over-politicizing pole to the de-politicizing pole.

Table 7.5 *China's and Vietnam's legitimacy profiles*

	Objects of Support		
	<i>Political Community</i>	<i>Regime</i>	<i>Authorities</i>
<i>China</i>			
1949–75 Mao Zedong	Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marxism-Leninism - Mao Zedong Thought (mass line and agrarian socialism) 	Charisma and personality cult
1978–96 Deng Xiaoping	Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deng Xiaoping Theory (Pragmatism and Theory of Primitive Socialism) - Developmentalism (Socialism-cum-Capitalism) - Legal Equality 	Charisma
1997–2001 Jiang Zemin	Nationalism (to a lesser extent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentalism and pragmatism - Socialism-cum-Capitalism - Technocratic rationality - Three Represents 	
2002–8 Hu Jintao	Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socialism-cum-Capitalism - Technocratic Rationality - Scientific Outlook and Harmonious Society (sustainable growth and social equality) 	
<i>Vietnam</i>			
1954–65 Ho Chi Minh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional peasant culture - Anticolonialism and patriotism - Traces of Confucianism 	Marxism-Leninism	Charisma
1975–85 Le Duan		Marxism-Leninism	
1986–90 Nguyen Van Linh		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doi moi (renewal) - Reference to Ho Chi Minh Thought (pragmatism) 	
1991–96 Do Muoi		Market socialism	
1997–2000 Le Kha Phieu		Market socialism	
2001–8 Nong Duc Manh		Market socialism	

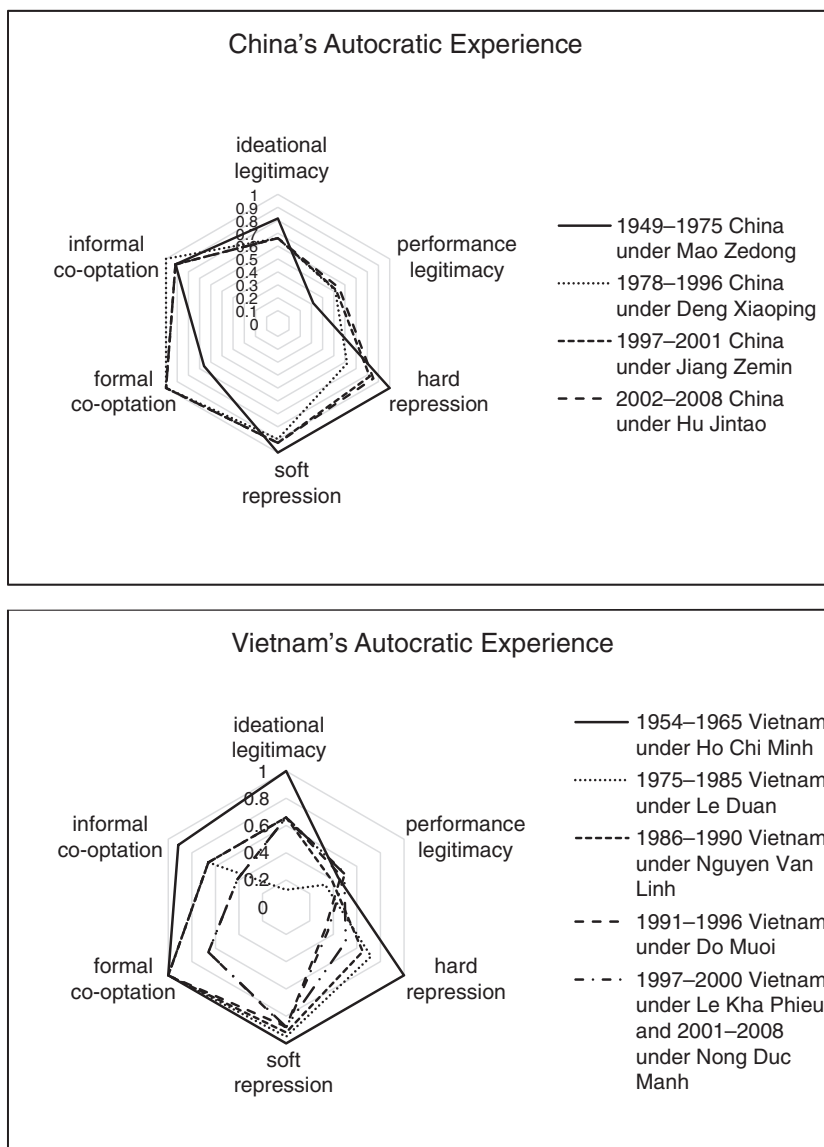


Figure 7.2 Radar charts for China and Vietnam

Paradigmatic Cases for the De-Politicization Logic

Both logics of over-politicization and de-politicization acknowledge that threats to regime survival can stem from ordinary citizens, from an organized opposition, or from within the elite. While the over-politicization logic aims at mobilizing ordinary people, ideologically justifying the use of violence against nonbelievers, de-politicization refers to a strategy in which normal people are also viewed with suspicion but are kept passive. It aims to demobilize the masses, thus preempting revolts against the incumbent authoritarian regime. The people should be satisfied, most importantly in terms of socioeconomic well-being, so that they have no cause to renege on the implicit autocratic social contract with the ruling regime. The regime guarantees socioeconomic satisfaction and grants its citizens a private space. In turn, the citizens guarantee their nonintervention in political matters. The strong emphasis on gaining performance legitimacy demands that successful de-politicizing autocracies shy away from using hard repression. Because there is no ideological buffer that can be exploited as a hermeneutic frame for justifying these measures, it would increase the probability of open protest.

In contrast, soft repression is often seen as an acceptable instrument for maintaining law and order or for securing national development. While killings, torture, and political imprisonment cross a red line in the eyes of ordinary citizens, violations of political participation rights are of course not welcome, but under certain conditions tolerated. However, if the authoritarian regime publicly proclaims that some curtailments of freedom of expression, freedom of movement, or the like are needed for the sake of public order, then it does not provoke the same outcry as if the regime had executed hard repression. What I suggest here is that hard repression is a probability raiser for the downfall of a de-politicizing regime, while soft repression is a probability raiser for its survival.

Like all autocratic regimes, the subset of de-politicizing regimes always needs to deal with opponents to the regime. De-politicizing regimes are not immunized against this basic threat to their survival. Yet, to maintain stability, they emphasize suppression more than repression, particularly if repression involves harsh measures against an individual's personal integrity.

The rentier states in the Middle and Near East provide rich historical material demonstrating this phenomenon. For a long period of time, these states maintained a status quo-oriented governing arrangement based on reciprocity. As explained in Chapter 5, these regimes rely on a hidden social contract: as long as they secure their citizens' material well-being, these citizens do not engage politically. The tacit understanding is low taxation in exchange for low demands for representation. To some

extent, this hidden contract can be seen in East Asian counterparts as well. With a strong nationalistic emphasis, both South Korea's and Taiwan's autocratic legitimacy formula was economic performance. While neighboring countries exaggerated a communism-cum-nationalism formula, South Korea and Taiwan emphasized a developmentalism-cum-nationalism formula.

The South Korean political scientist Yang Un-chul (Yang 1994, 198) summarized the South Korean *raison d'état* as "economy firstism." To a large extent, liberal freedoms were traded for development and national economic strength. This economy firstism was publicly propagated, mainly by instrumentalizing the imminent threat from the communist North, by emphasizing that national order and economic growth rank first – and that political participation rights only come second (Cumings 1997, 322–31; Kil 2001; Suh 1987; Vu 2010). Taiwan's legitimizing formula has similar roots. As in the Korean case, national unification with Mainland China was the major goal of its first president, Chiang Kai-shek. Yet, with its hyper-nationalism and frequent use of hard and soft repression measures, Chiang Kai-shek's rule was closer to the over-politicizing pole. It was only in the 1980s that Taiwan's development was famously described as move from hard to "soft authoritarianism" (Winkler 1984). Unlike during Chiang Kai-shek's rule, hard and soft repression was less intensively used. Taiwan moved more and more toward the de-politicizing pole, whereby the nationalistic ideology and hard repression of Chiang Kai-shek's rule were gradually replaced by a de-politicized stance where hard repression was scaled down and governing performance propelled. Empirical evidence has so been summarized as "freedom had to be traded for security" (Roy 2003, 89).

In Taiwan, a strong growth imperative was implanted from the very first days. Taiwan's authoritarianism was justified by a developmentalist orientation and a strong focus on economic recovery. As such, it is a prime example of a regime that gradually moved away from the over-politicizing pole where a nationalist ideology aimed to justify harsh repression toward the de-politicizing pole where performance matters more and hard repression is used less often. Figure 7.3 displays the changes in Taiwan's autocratic ruling strategy.⁸

In Southeast Asia, developmentalism was a leitmotif for authoritarian regimes as well. Similar to the Taiwanese case, Malaysia, particularly under the rule of Mahathir, serves as a prime example of the inner workings of such regimes. Malaysia's legitimacy formula traditionally was a

⁸ For further information, please consult the online appendix with the detailed case narratives as well as the following chapter.

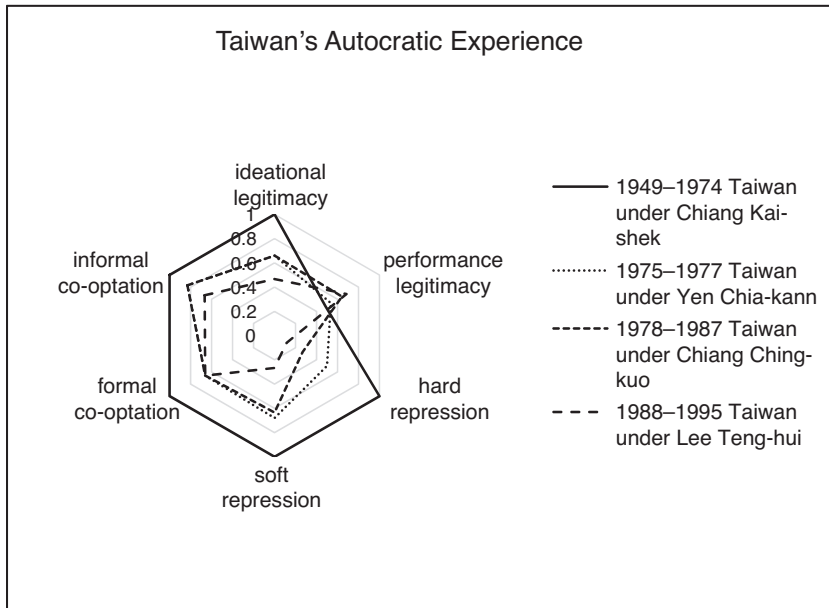


Figure 7.3 Radar chart for Taiwan

mélange of loyalty to the king, religious elements, and some promises for democracy and rule of law. It was termed *Rukunegara* (pillars of the nation), but Funston (2001, 188) argues that – due to its vagueness – it has remained a façade ideology. The triad of nation, king, and religion is a rather common feature across East Asia, be it Indonesia's *Nasakom* (nationalism, religion, communism) and *Pancasila* (five meanings) idea or Thailand's *Chart, Sasana, and Mahakasa* and Cambodia's *Cheat, Sasna, and Mohaksath* (both nation, religion, king).

With differing levels of intensity and success, these regimes also gradually included developmentalism in their legitimacy portfolio. Malaysia under Mahathir increasingly emphasized market mechanisms to reach this goal. His predecessors, Tun Abdul Razak and Hussein bin Onn, already started a New Economic Policy (NEP). Because it was a state-run program that supported Malays who suffered from domestic discrimination, the NEP is often interpreted as a reaction to the legitimacy crisis and riots in 1969. It is estimated that at the beginning of the 1970s, only 1.5 percent of Malaysia's equity belonged to Malays, while the rest was in Chinese hands or belonged to foreign investors (Case 2002, 107). The NEP therefore aimed to create a middle class among the *bumiputra* (the sons of the soil – Malays and a range of ethnic minorities, especially

in East Malaysia [Sabah and Sarawak]) and to reduce poverty among the Malays. It introduced a wide-ranging quota system in which, for example, three-quarters of all university places were reserved for Malays, state jobs were preferentially given to Malays, and private businesses were forced to fulfill a 30 percent minimum quota of Malay employees.

Mahathir could have built upon these economic efforts, yet he took a different stance. He was not completely opposed to state patrimonialism measures but acted more pragmatically. He identified and selectively targeted those entrepreneurs whom he deemed promising to create a new *bumiputra* industrial and commercial class (the “Malay millionaires”). This group was meant to compete immediately with Chinese capital owners. Mahathir’s regime marked a transition toward more liberal and market efficiency principles. Malaysia’s economic performance improved and social welfare benefits increased. Economic developmentalism found a place in society and boosted the regime’s legitimacy. Since Razak and the NEP, all following regimes governing Malaysia justified themselves through economic performance and social welfare. There seemed to be no credible ideological alternative to the developmentalism-cum-nationalism legitimacy formula that remained in place. All of these regimes kept their socioeconomic promises, leading Case (2002, 107) to conclude that the legitimacy shared by these regimes was based on the “widespread perception that the UMNO-led Barisan (a party coalition led by the United Malays National Organization [UMNO]) had delivered the goods.” Table 7.6 gives an overview of the legitimacy formulae in Taiwan and Malaysia over time.

De-politicizing the people also means to avoid provoking them through the use of hard repression. This is true for the Malayan autocratic periods after Tun Abdul Razak. In the 1960s, communists were declared the internal enemies and were harshly persecuted by the Internal Security Act (ISA), which allowed for detention without trial. It is estimated that between 1961 and 1981, a total of 3,102 people were detained, most of them affiliated with the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), the Labor Party, or radical workers’ unions (Crouch 1996, 80–81). Yet, the ISA was not only directed against communists. It was also instrumentalized to create a general climate of fear and to block oppositional actors, including religious groups. The Mahathir government changed this practice and there is only one reported incident involving 119 arrests (Funston 2001, 177). In 1987, racial protests threatened the stability of the regime. This decline in the use of hard repression is also mirrored in the relevant indices that are based on yearly reports of Amnesty International and/or the US State Department. Figure 7.4 illustrates the autocratic configurations of Malaysia’s different governments over time.

Table 7.6 *Taiwan's and Malaysia's legitimacy profiles*

	Objects of Support		
	<i>Political Community</i>	<i>Regime</i>	<i>Authorities</i>
<i>Taiwan</i>			
1949–74 Chiang Kai-shek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three Principles of the People (Sun Yat-sen), particularly (Chinese) nationalism - Unification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anticommunism - Social welfare 	Charismatic appeal
1975–77 Yen Chia-kan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Chinese) Nationalism - Unification 	Developmentalism	
1978–87 Chiang Ching-kuo	(Chinese) Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentalism - Democratization as a future promise 	
1988–95 Lee Teng-hui		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentalism - Taiwanization of politics - Further democratization as a future promise 	Charismatic appeal to native islanders
<i>Malaysia</i>			
1957–69 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Islam - Traditional elements (Melaka sultanate) - Relaxed attitude toward ethnicity 		
1970–75 Tun Abdul Razakbin Hussein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rukunegara as a blend of royal, traditional, religious, and democratic elements (impact questionable) - Growing importance of ethnicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentalism via NEP (state patronage) - Pro-Malayan policies - Anticommunism 	
1976–80 Hussein bin Onn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nationalism - Ethnicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentalism via NEP (state patronage) - Pro-Malayan policies 	
1981–2002 Mahathir bin Mohammed	- Nationalism	Developmentalism (liberalism and market efficiency)	
2003–8 Abdullah Ahmad Badawi	- Nationalism	Developmentalism (liberalism and market efficiency)	

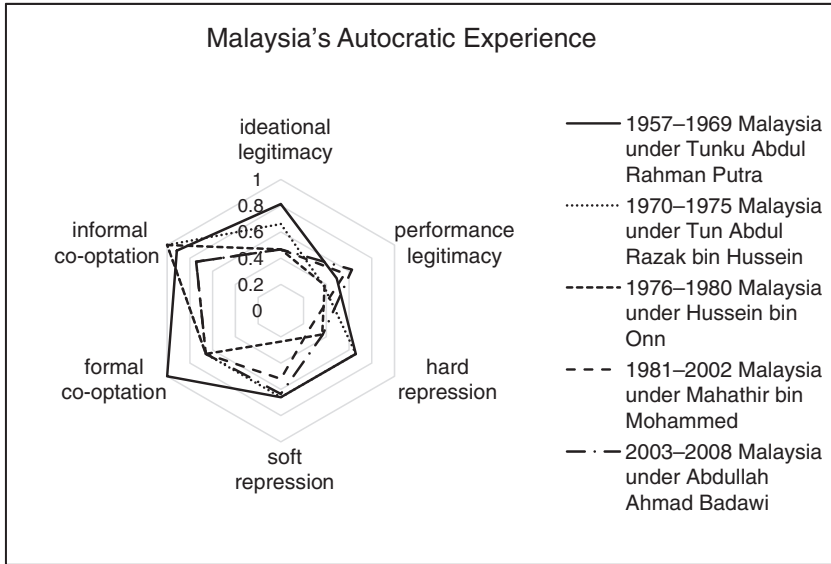


Figure 7.4 Radar chart for Malaysia

Finally, I provide descriptive evidence for the most paradigmatic and emblematic case of developmentalism-cum-nationalism in combination with soft repression and an avoidance of hard repression: Singapore. Singapore stands out as a classic empirical case of the de-politicization logic, both within and beyond Asia. Nonetheless, Singapore contains many idiographic peculiarities. To include Singapore in a comparative empirical study usually exposes certain challenges. Singapore is a city-state, is exceptional in its economic success story, and is entrenched between two neighboring countries with different religious compositions that have historically claimed dominance over the city-state's territory. As such, Singapore can only be understood when remembering the *tabula rasa* moment in which Singapore was founded, which still contains most elements of its founding national myth. After a period of British colonialism and a two-year interregnum as the Federation of Malaya, Singapore technically withdrew but was actually expelled from this union in 1965. Being geographically small, ethnically heterogeneous, and in a delicate geopolitical position, the core imperative of the city-state was nothing less than survival. Singapore's economic security basically "evaporated overnight" (Cheong 1999, 123). The leadership's reaction was to call upon the people for unity and to develop a siege mentality. Similar to the Philippines, they could not hark back to a traditional legitimacy formula

as other (revolutionary) regimes in the region could. Thus, economic efficiency and a guarantee of internal security became quickly the leitmotif of the country. Khong (1995, 115) describes the exceptional capacities of Lee Kuan Yew in this delicate situation who “clearly emerged as the standard-bearer of Singapore’s interest” and who, in turn, enjoyed widespread public support for his leadership.

Singapore’s founding years were characterized by two challenges: a multiethnic society and the threat of communism. Singaporean multiethnic society needed to integrate Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Eurasian populations while reinterpreting this task into a founding myth. Indeed, it effectively dealt with the challenges posed by multiethnicity, and it is still today one of the major legitimating narratives (Mauzy and Milne 2002). Anticommunist sentiments were prevalent during British colonialism and surfaced particularly after the country was forced into independence (Ortmann 2010, 55–57). The dominant party in Singapore, the People’s Action Party (PAP), effectively repressed communist movements, especially the *Barisan Socialis*, which served as the domestic scapegoat.

As indicated earlier, for the period that this book analyzes, the survival imperative was deep-seated in Singapore. Singaporean nationalism was historically rooted in the uncertainty of the independence era. Singapore makes such a well-suited example for the de-politicizing logic of autocracy because its strong nationalism was unambiguously coupled with developmentalism. Tellingly, it was reported that the founder of the PAP and foreign minister S. Rajaratnam pointedly called the ideological orientation of Singapore “moneytheism” (Mauzy and Milne 2002, 51). And, indeed, the regime emphasized its pragmatic stance toward economic growth and argued that it had transcended ideological partisanship. It argued that it was explicitly not guided in its decision making by abstract theoretical considerations but rather by rational responses weighted against empirical reality. This pragmatic hands-on approach was initially well received by the people. And when the regime delivered in socioeconomic terms, nationalism-cum-developmentalism became the ideological orientation of the country. Its reciprocity is demonstrative of de-politicizing regimes: As long as the regime keeps its technocratic promise, people are kept passive and their demands for further political participation are limited. Table 7.7 summarizes the legitimacy claims in Singapore.

Besides the nationalism dimension, Singapore was also the motor of the “Asian Values” debate. Rajaratnam famously argued that there is a Confucianism-based cultural affinity to authoritarianism that is peculiar to Asia. He claimed that to avoid relapse into anarchy, “more not less authority and discipline are necessary” (Rajaratnam 1977, 98). Needless to say, the argument regarding potential Asian values that are

Table 7.7 *Singapore's legitimacy profile*

	Objects of Support		
	<i>Political Community</i>	<i>Regime</i>	<i>Authorities</i>
1965–89 Lee Kuan Yew	Survival imperative	- Developmentalism (pragmatism, elitism, meritocracy, and multiracialism) - Anticommunism	Charisma
1990–2003 Goh Chok Tong		- Developmentalism - Five Shared Values - Asian Values	
2004–8 Lee Hsien Loong		Developmentalism	

distinct from those of the Western world was self-serving. It legitimized authoritarian rule by insinuating not only a need for authoritarianism but also a natural inclination toward it. Yet, the “Asian Values” debate did not resonate to the same degree as developmentalism. The country expert Cho-Oon Khong (1995, 124–25) has always been skeptical of the internal effects of this debate and, after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, this skepticism rose considerably (Wong and Huang 2010, 529). Furthermore, other ideological additions and reforms like the “Five Shared Values” left less of an imprint on society. The hallmark of Singapore’s legitimacy formula remained the hyper-emphasis on socioeconomic performance and pragmatism (Tan 2012).

The de-politicizing attitude of the Singaporean regimes was intensified by strong emphasis on elitism and meritocracy. Key decisions were seen to be the exclusive prerogative of a small group of highly educated elites who obtained the highest government offices. Educational efforts were extremely well regarded in the country, and it was widely held that only the smartest should enter a political career in the state bureaucracy. The promotion of those elite officials should not be based on race, religion, and social background, but solely on the basis of personal achievements and performance (Chua 2009; Mauzy and Milne 2002, 52–57; Ortmann 2010, 112–19).

These elitist and meritocratic principles were also at the heart of the party’s co-optation efforts. The PAP ruled Singapore and its core elite consisted of ministers and members of the Central Executive Committee (CEC). It was Lee Kuan Yew who instituted the CEC party cadre system. In general, Singapore’s co-optation efforts were highly formalized. Informal institutions might have played some role in the 1970s with the influence of the old boys’ network; however, already under Lee and then later under Goh Chok Tong, the selection procedures became highly formalized. Singapore’s party leadership established a rigorous

and multistage selection system. In short, “the PAP is very good at co-opting talent” (Mauzy and Milne 2002, 49).

In organizational terms, the party consisted of a two-tier system of cadres and ordinary members. Ortmann (2010, 105) estimated that around 1,000 cadres and 15,000 members are in the PAP so that it constituted an elitist party rather than a mass party. Mauzy and Milne (2002, 40–41) added to this picture by detailing the complex internal selection procedure. To qualify, a cadre needed the recommendation of a Member of Parliament (MP) before undergoing a strict interviewing process by a committee of four or five ministers and MPs. Only about 100 individuals were recommended each year; the exact number of cadres was unknown and members were sworn to secrecy. Moreover, the selection of the party’s secretary-general was a circular process. Like the selection of the pope in the Vatican, whereby the incumbent pope selects the cardinals who then select the next pope, the election of a new secretary-general stems from the ranks of cadres who had been elected by the previous secretary-general.

The co-optation system in Singapore was responsive to the extent that ordinary citizens saw their demands represented in the political process. It needs to be stated that it was explicitly designed to be a responsive system; Lee Kuan Yew strongly emphasized this point, demanding that the ministers and MPs conduct weekly meet-the-people sessions and walkabouts in their respective constituencies to keep communication channels with the local population open (Cheong 1999, 124). Party organization represented a finely calibrated system. All party cadres fulfilled one of the following four functions: technocrat, mobilizer, Malayan vote getter, and/or Chinese intellectual. Since the 1970s, the cabinet has always consisted of at least one Malayan, one Indian, and one Chinese-educated minister (Mauzy and Milne 2002, 47).

In sum, Singapore’s co-optation efforts rested on the ruling party and an efficient bureaucracy, known as the “twin organizational bases” (Case 2002, 85). These two bases worked hand-in-hand and sometimes it was even said that Singapore resembled a no-party state, as the PAP, the government, and the administration had melted into one indistinguishable ruling entity (Khong 1995, 117–18; Slater 2008, 76). Singapore’s co-optation patterns came close to a corporatist, bureaucratic authoritarianism model based on formalism, elitism, and meritocracy that balanced potential interethnic tensions – all of which, ultimately, have de-politicizing effects.

Singapore is no exception to the hypothesized repression pattern. To keep the population satisfied and less concerned with politics, repression instruments are expected to be subtle and concentrated on the curtailment of political participation rights. When Singapore joined the

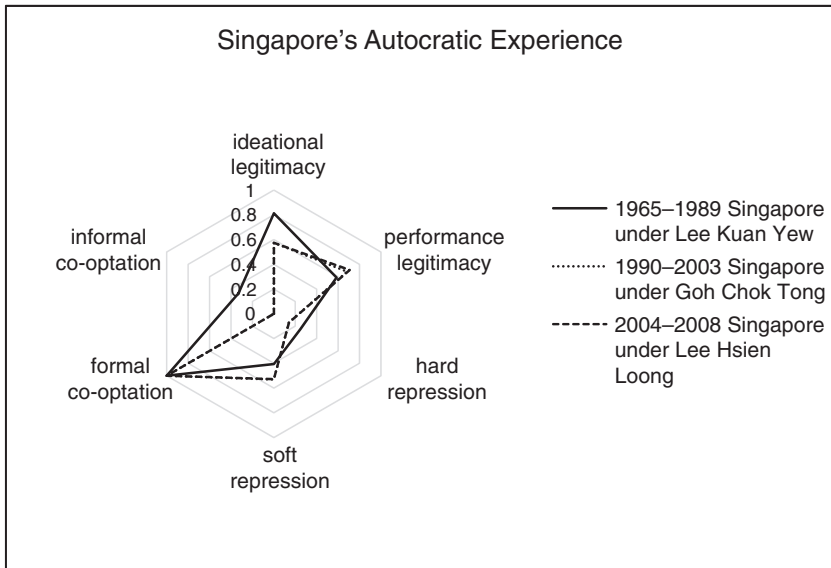


Figure 7.5 Radar chart for Singapore

Federation of Malaya in 1963, it instituted the Internal Security Act (ISA). The ISA, which was pointedly equated with a “karate chop – clean, specific, direct, and, of course, effective” (Cheong 1999, 124), was complemented in 1967 by the Societies Act, which was directed against Marxist and religious (mainly Catholic) group activities. The Newspaper and Printing Press Act of 1974 added censorship of the free press and has been used ever since to control the media. The regime had a tight grip on freedom of assembly and kept labor unions in check (Case 2002, 91–93). Singapore’s leaders have never relied on excessive hard repression instruments. In contrast, the regime can be characterized as prototypical of a “soft authoritarianism” (Means 1998) or as the role model for a “sophisticated authoritarianism” (Morgenbesser 2020).

Figure 7.5 presents an overview of the combination of factors whose complex interplay has stabilized the Singaporean regimes since 1965. As mentioned, more details regarding the Singaporean case can be found in the online appendix, which also provides case narratives for all other selected East Asian autocracies.

Singapore serves here as the paradigmatic example of the depoliticization logic. Additional illustrative material has been drawn from the case study narratives on Malaysia and Taiwan. The combination of a nationalism-cum-developmentalism legitimacy strategy and the use of

soft repression represents the core of their de-politicizing logic. In contrast, North Korea is the paradigmatic case for the opposing logic, over-politicization. Besides North Korea under Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il, I used empirical evidence from China under Mao Zedong and Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh to elucidate the core of over-politicization. Besides illustrating the inner workings of the two contrasting logics, the chapter also demonstrated the general fruitfulness of the three-pillars theory of autocratic stability. It provided descriptive background information of selected empirical cases and exemplified the coding procedure for the encompassing Autocratic Regimes in East Asia (AREA) dataset. The following chapter engages in a more rigorous and systematic empirical testing of the two-logics theory.

8 A Systematic Test

In the previous chapter, the paradigmatic cases of North Korea and Singapore were used to illustrate the over-politicizing and de-politicizing logics of autocratic regimes. These two most typical cases were supplemented with empirical material from China and Vietnam for the over-politicization logic, particularly from the Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh eras, and Taiwan and Malaysia for the de-politicization logic.¹ Each of the two logics is based on different complementarity relationships among the three modular theory frames of legitimation, repression, and co-optation.

This chapter puts the two-logics theory under a thorough and systematic empirical test.² It conducts a comprehensive macro-qualitative comparison of all autocratic regimes in East Asia since 1945. With the methodical help of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), it argues that it can explain the stability “recipes” of a very diverse set of autocratic regimes by boiling them down to a small number of basic ideas.

In this chapter, original empirical results are presented that are derived from the QCA analysis.³ QCA is a method based on causal complexity and has its particular methodological strength in explaining the interplay of multiple factors. It is therefore the method best suited to the empirical test of this book’s core claim of complementarity. The empirical results are discussed in light of the two logics of over-politicization and de-politicization, before the book concludes and highlights avenues for future research in the final chapter.

¹ As the methodological literature on Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) usually refers to “paths” as their *terminus technicus*, I will refer to “logics” and “paths” interchangeably.

² For a systematic test for electoral autocracies, see the article by Schneider and Maerz (2017).

³ I am particularly grateful to Seraphine Maerz for generously sharing her insights and providing support for the QCA analysis.

Testing Complementarity

Imagine a house catching fire. What could be the reasons for such an event? It could be an electric short circuit. But such an electric short-circuit *alone* is usually not sufficient cause of a house catching fire. Instead, when there is a concatenation of bad things coming together at once, that is, the proverbial perfect storm, then a fire breaks out. Let us assume that we have a short circuit (A), inflammable material next to it (B), and a nonfunctioning water sprinkler in the house (c) that result in a house catching fire (Y).⁴ Here, the combination of A, B, and the absent c causes Y ($ABc \rightarrow Y$). The presence of A alone is not sufficient.⁵ But A is a necessary part in this combination. Without the short circuit, there is no fire. Yet, the combination of ABc is not necessary for Y, because there could be multiple alternative ways in which a house catches fire, for example, a dysfunctional chimney (D), flying sparks (E), or an old wooden building (F). If we assume some third combination of potential factors causing a fire GhI, then we could say that $ABc \vee DEF \vee GhI \rightarrow Y$ – with the “ \vee ” denoting a logical “OR.” In other words, it is the disjunction (connected by a logical OR) of different conjunctions (ABc, DEF, and GhI) that causes an effect (Y).

A house catching fire is exactly the example that J. L. Mackie used in his classic account of causation. He develops what he calls an INUS condition: “an insufficient, but necessary part of a condition which is itself unnecessary, but sufficient for the result” (Mackie 1965, 245). In the example, the short circuit A is such an INUS condition. A is in itself insufficient, but it is a necessary part of a sufficient but unnecessary condition (ABc) for a house catching fire (Y).

It will be these INUS conditions and – as described by John Stuart Mill (1911, 214) – the “assemblage of conditions,” that is, the “concurrency of antecedents,” that is at the heart of this empirical analysis. This chapter is interested in to what extent one condition, say the ideational legitimacy, is an INUS condition and which assemblage of factors causes the outcome.

The theoretical and empirical interest in complementarity is also a move away from physical causation and toward an understanding of “chemical causation” (Mill 1911, 213). The analysis presented here is

⁴ Usually, uppercase is used to describe the presence of a condition, and lowercase for the absence of it.

⁵ Sufficiency means that whenever the condition A is present, the outcome Y is present as well. The condition is sufficiently strong enough to produce the outcome. As such, the cause arrow runs from $A \rightarrow Y$. Necessity, in turn, means that whenever the outcome Y is present, the condition A had to be present as well. As such, the arrow runs from $A \leftarrow Y$.

not primarily interested in the effect of one condition but rather on the effect of a joint interaction of factors. It does not focus on the *ceteris paribus* clause and the idea of isolating and estimating the effect size of one factor by means of (quasi-)experimental methods and assessing its statistical significance given a certain confidence interval; instead, the focus is the conjunction of multiple factors. As in chemistry, it is interested in why certain elements react (or do not react) with each other to produce a new substance.⁶

The method for showing chemical causation and for identifying INUS conditions is Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Ragin 2000; Rihoux and Ragin 2009; Schneider and Wagemann 2012). Its major strength lies in displaying combinations of factors. It is particularly suited to the kind of “multiple conjunctural causation” (Ragin 1987, 19–30) that is of importance here. This method is appropriate for genuine research in configurations – rather than estimating the effect of single factors. Despite being technically different from statistical analyses, it might be helpful to view QCA as a method “built from complex interaction terms” (Goertz 2017, 10). Yet, QCA uses Boolean algebra with truth values of conditions and rests on set theoretical relationships. As such, it is based on the rules of formal logics.

One more word on the initial example of the house catching fire. Let us assume that there are two houses that catch fire (Y) because of the combination of short circuit, inflammable material, and absence of water sprinkler (ABc). Yet, this time, one house catches fire in winter (D) and one in summer (i.e., nonwinter: d). It is obvious that winter or summer is not causally responsible for either fire: a house catches fire due to ABc in both summer and winter; D and d are logically redundant (Baumgartner 2008; Baumgartner and Graßhoff 2004, 94). The principal idea of the QCA method lies now in detecting these redundant factors. It shows only the “minimally sufficient condition” (Mackie 1965, 246). QCA relies (mostly) on the so-called Quine-McCluskey algorithm that logically minimizes and deletes these redundant factors (Ragin 1987, 85–124; Schneider and Wagemann 2012, 91–112; Thiem and Dusa 2012).

In sum, this chapter relies on chemical causation to test complementarity relationships. It is interested in the interplay of factors, more than in their isolated effects. As such, it concentrates on detecting INUS conditions that are parts of a larger assemblage as well as in highlighting minimally sufficient combinations of conditions that are stripped of

⁶ This should not rule out that the interplay of factors can also be understood in terms of physical causation.

redundant factors. In less technical words, it is interested in what works with what best, and what are then the most important combinations in explaining the stability of autocracies.

The Two Logics of Autocratic Regimes in East Asia

In the following, the major empirical findings of the systematic macro-qualitative analysis from the forty-five selected autocratic regime periods that occurred in East Asia since 1945 will be summarized. Methodically, I have opted for the variant of fuzzy-set QCA (fsQCA) that allows for more fine-grained distinctions than the binary crisp-set variant. While the appendix to this book details all of the empirical results, the most important findings will be distilled here.

Soft Repression as the Most Crucial INUS Condition

Before detailing the combinations that give rise to the two-logics theory of autocratic rule, this section emphasizes the extraordinary role of soft repression, which serves a crucial function in stabilizing autocratic rule. The various empirical analyses that are conducted demonstrate that soft repression is the most important INUS condition. Analogous to the house catching fire example, soft repression is one condition that works in combination with other conditions to produce a certain outcome, here, the stability of autocracies.

Soft repression does not only appear most often in the combinations that lead to stability, but it also shows a high polyvalence. “Polyvalent” in this context means that soft repression works in conjunction with a lot of different factors. This might become clearer if the idea of valence is translated from chemistry to the social sciences. Valence in chemistry means the affinity or combining power of an element to form molecules with other atoms. For the context of this book, it means to what extent a factor is “ready” to be combined with other factors to form a bloc of factors that is sufficient for producing the outcome. Soft repression is able to “react chemically” with almost all other stabilizing factors to produce such a compound of factors – put simply, it goes well with a diverse set of factors.

The contrast with hard repression helps to illustrate this point. Hard repression displays lower valence in comparison with soft repression. It is striking to see that if hard repression is present as an INUS condition, it demands the simultaneous absence of performance legitimization. These two factors do not go together. Substantially, this finding shows that if an autocratic regime chooses to legitimate its rule via economic or social

performance in its stability recipe, then it should shy away from using hard repression. The use of hard repression would backfire. Targeting the opposition by violating human integrity rights (killings, torture, disappearances, or political imprisonment) on the one hand while trying to gain a following among ordinary citizens by delivering socioeconomically on the other hand are not complementary. This does not imply that there are no stable autocracies displaying exactly this combination. Think of China, for example. The autocratic regimes in China, particularly in recent years, use both hard repression and performance legitimation. However, the point is that in a logical reduction process that eliminates redundant factors and arrives at a minimally sufficient assemblage of conditions, hard repression is canceled out. One of the two factors, performance legitimation or hard repression, is eliminated. As such, they do not contribute to explaining the stability of the forty-five selected East Asian autocracies. I will elaborate on this incongruence later in more detail; for now, it suffices to illustrate the lower valence of hard repression when compared with softer forms of repressing dissent.

Soft repression works as a hinge between the over-politicizing and the de-politicizing paths. It is present in both paths. Soft repression either works in conjunction with hard repression and ideational legitimation to form the core of the over-politicizing path, or it works in conjunction with performance legitimation and demands the absence of hard repression to keep people passive, satisfied, and apathetic. The people then do not engage in politics and are instead socioeconomically accommodated, while their participation possibilities are curtailed.

The key positioning of soft repression holds true across both measures of stability, the persistence and the continuity measurements.⁷ It might be worth noting that soft repression alone is a close candidate for a necessary condition but does not fully qualify as such, neither for the length in office nor for the power transfer idea of stability.⁸ As such, soft

⁷ Please consult the online appendix for all empirical results. In the following, I am going to concentrate on the persistence measure of stability.

⁸ The consistency of soft repression as a single necessary condition for persistence is 0.849, the coverage is 0.852, and the relevance of necessity is 0.784. For the continuity measure, the consistency of soft repression as a single necessary condition is 0.817, coverage is 0.862, and relevance of necessity is 0.795.

Please see the appendix for the necessity results of the other factors. None of the factors pass the usual threshold of consistency that is set at 0.9. Yet, formal co-optation for the persistence understanding of stability and hard repression for the continuity understanding are close candidates.

Newer research is also able to assess complex necessary conditions, the so-called SuperSubset procedure; for an overview, see Dusa (2019), Thiem and Dusa (2012), and Schneider and Wagemann (2012, 76–90). This means that the procedure tests all logically possible conjunctions (e.g., A and B) or disjunctions (e.g., A OR B) for necessity. With the usual consistency threshold of 0.9, a decent coverage of >0.6, and a relevance of

repression alone does not need to be present whenever we find a stable autocracy, although in empirical reality it often is. Against this backdrop, I favor an interpretation that soft repression is a strong enabler that works in conjunction with other factors to produce a stable autocracy. It is the single most crucial INUS condition for stabilizing autocratic rule.

Empirical Support for the Two-Logics Theory

In the following, I present empirical support for the two-logics theory. In analyzing the forty-five selected autocratic regimes in East Asia since the end of World War II, an empirical pattern emerged that gives rise to the explanation that autocracies either over-politicize or de-politicize. The empirically most relevant “chemical” explanations demonstrate these combinations.

Table 8.1 shows the full truth table. A truth table forms the basis of the empirical analyses, condensing the empirical material gathered about all the cases. It displays the selected cases and their respective configuration of factors as well as the outcome.

Table 8.2 shows the empirical results for the conservative and intermediate solution of the fuzzy-set QCA analysis.⁹ As indicated above, QCA analysis allows for multiple conjunctural causation (Ragin 1987,

necessity of >0.6 , there is no close candidate for the continuity understanding of stability. For the persistence idea of stability, only the disjunction of (1) ideational legitimization OR performance legitimization OR soft repression, and (2) performance legitimization OR soft repression OR the absence of informal co-optation qualifies as a candidate. Yet, it is difficult to interpret here the disjunction of three factors as a combined necessary condition in a meaningful way.

⁹ QCA analyses usually have three types of solutions: the most parsimonious solution, the conservative solution, and the intermediate solution. They result out of the following problem. The logical reduction of redundant factors is based on a truth table. The truth table is the configuration of possible combinations that lead to a certain outcome. However, it is sometimes the case that not all logically possible combinations have an empirical referent. For example, I use six conditions that makes sixty-four logically possible combinations. Yet, I have only forty-five cases so that the problem of “empty” combinations automatically arises. This is the problem of limited diversity. There is no empirical equivalent to all logically possible combinations.

The distinctions among parsimonious, intermediate, and conservative solutions are based on how these logical remainders (i.e., logically possible combinations with no empirical counterpart) are treated. If we allow the Quine-McClusky algorithm to use these logical remainders for the minimization process, the most parsimonious solution results. It has the smallest numbers of conditions and can be interpreted as a superset of the conservative solution. In turn, the conservative solution makes use only of those combinations that have an actual empirical counterpart. It excludes logical remainders from the minimization process. It usually has a higher number of conditions. Broadly speaking, one could argue that the most parsimonious solution gives an answer to the question of what is logically possible, while the conservative solution tells us what is empirically observable. The intermediate solution differs from the other two as here the researcher

Table 8.1 *Truth table*

Cases	Ideat.		Perf.		Hard		Soft		Form.		Inf.		Out	n	Incl.	PRI
	Leg.	Leg.	Leg.	Leg.	Rep.	Rep.	Rep.	Rep.	Co-opt.	Co-opt.	Co-opt.	Co-opt.				
Singapore (Lee Kuan Yew)	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0.966	0.887
Singapore (Goh Chok Tong); Singapore (Lee Hsien Long)	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0.887	0.879
Laos (Choummaly Sayasone); Taiwan (Yen Chia-kan); Taiwan (Chiang Ching-kuo)	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	0.933	0.871
Myanmar (Saw Maung)	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0.932	0.838
China (Deng Xiaoping); China (Jiang Zemin); China (Hu Jintao)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	0.931	0.875
China (Mao Zedong); Indonesia (Suharto); Laos (Kayson Phomvihane); Malaysia (Tunku Abdul Rahman); Malaysia (Abdul Razak Hussein); North Korea (Kim Il Sung); North Korea (Kim Jong II); Taiwan (Chiang Kai-shek); Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh); Vietnam (Nguyen Van Linh); Vietnam (Nong Duc Manh)	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	0.928	0.877
Myanmar (Ne Win); Myanmar (Than Shwe); Vietnam (Le Duan)	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	0.916	0.847
Malaysia (Mahathir bin Mohammed); Malaysia (Abdullah Ahmad Badawi)	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0.909	0.813
Cambodia (Sihanouk); Laos (Khamtai Siphandon); Vietnam (Do Muoi); Vietnam (Le Kha Phieu)	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	4	0.894	0.794
Taiwan (Lee Teng-hui)	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0.874	0.699
Malaysia (Hussein bin Onn); South Korea (Chun Doo-hwan)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0.867	0.685

Cases	Ideat.		Perf.		Hard		Soft		Form.		Inf.		n	Incl.	PRI
	Leg.	Leg.	Leg.	Leg.	Rep.	Rep.	Rep.	Rep.	Co-opt.	Co-opt.	Co-opt.	Co-opt.			
South Korea (Park Chung-hee)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0.858	0.667
Thailand (Luang Phibunsongkhram)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.839	0.469
Thailand (Thanom Kittikachorn)	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.831	0.604
Indonesia (Sukarno)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0.817	0.597
Cambodia (Ranariddh and Hun Sen); Cambodia (Hun Sen)	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0.802	0.524
Philippines (Marcos)	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.799	0.389
Cambodia (Pol Pot); Thailand (Sarit Tharat)	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.776	0.447
Myanmar (U Nu); South Korea (Syngman Rhee); Thailand (Kriangsak Chomanan)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.657	0.268

“Out” = output value; “n” = number of cases in configuration; “Incl.” = sufficiency inclusion score; “PRI” = proportional reduction in inconsistency

Table 8.2 *Conservative and intermediate solution*

	Combination	Incl.	PRI	CovS	CovU
1	IDEALEG* HARDREP*SOFTREP* FORMCOOPT*INFORMCOOPT	0.926	0.884	0.511	0.196
2	PERFLEG* hardrep*SOFTREP* FORMCOOPT*INFORMCOOPT	0.922	0.852	0.365	0.051
3	IDEALEG*PERFLEG* hardrep* FORMCOOPT*informcoopt	0.954	0.892	0.239	0.041
4	idealeg*perfleg* HARDREP*SOFTREP* FORMCOOPT	0.915	0.844	0.356	0.060
	M1	0.934	0.904	0.699	

“Incl.” = sufficiency inclusion score; “PRI” = proportional reduction in inconsistency; “CovS” = solution coverage parameter; “CovU” = unique coverage parameter

19–30). Moreover, QCA results are equifinal: they allow for different and mutually nonexclusive pathways to a certain outcome. In this solution term, we see four equifinal paths that lead to stable autocracies. Stability is defined here as persistence, measured in how many years the ruling coalition has been in office. The results for the alternative measures of stability can be found in the online appendix. They corroborate the empirical pattern.

There are four parameters that are reported in the table. The proportional reduction in inconsistency (PRI) in the second column refers to a measure of fit that is rarely used. It captures to what extent a primitive expression is as sufficient for the outcome as it is sufficient for the negation of the outcome (for more details, see Schneider and Wagemann 2012, 242–44). CovU in the last column is the unique

can set theoretical expectations that allow for some logical remainders to be included while others are excluded (for a detailed discussion, see Schneider and Wagemann 2012, 167–177).

The only theoretical direction that I define here for the intermediate solution is that soft repression leads to stable autocracies. The fact that, in my analyses, the conservative and intermediate solutions are identical means that there are no easy counterfactuals, i.e., assumptions on the logical remainders that are consistent with the theoretical expectation and that contribute to parsimony.

coverage that indicates how many cases are exclusively captured in one of the rows.

The remaining two technical parameters are particularly important to assess the quality of the analysis. In general, the QCA analysis performs relatively well. The inclusion (sometimes also called consistency) cut-off point for the results (Incl.), that is, the score that indicates how much contradiction is allowed within the four paths, is very high. The overall value of 0.934 shows that the paths are internally highly consistent, measured on a scale between 0 and 1. A second parameter is particularly important to evaluate the solution. The solution coverage parameter in the third column (CovS) is the score that indicates how many of the cases that go into the analysis are actually explained by the four paths. With almost 70 percent, the overall solution coverage is acceptable.

Table 8.3 shows the solution terms in a more detailed fashion. Please note that the associative and commutative rules are used for collapsing the second and the third paths into one.

I call the first path the over-politicization path. It matches perfectly with the theoretical expectation developed earlier. It is a combination of ideational legitimation that goes hand in hand with both types of repression and co-optation. It is remarkable that performance legitimation does not play a role here. It gets logically eliminated and does not contribute to this path.

The second and third paths are different from the first one in important ways that are at the heart of the distinction between over-politicization and de-politicization. Paths two and three rely on the combination of performance legitimation and the absence of hard repression. While path one remains mute on performance legitimation, it explicitly demands the usage of hard repression for maintaining autocratic regime stability. In stark contrast, the theoretical expectation of the de-politicization logic has been that people are kept passive by satisfying their socioeconomic demands on the one hand. On the other hand, people are kept apathetic and outside the political arena by not igniting protest that might occur due to hard repression. This theoretical core of combining performance legitimation with the absence of hard repression is at the heart of paths two and three.

The fourth path is to some extent an exception and covers mostly the regimes in Myanmar. It constitutes an exceptional path to stability that relies on repression and strong intra-elite cohesion. In the following, I elaborate on the different paths in more detail. I begin with a brief discussion of the repression-cum-co-optation path, before I assemble

Table 8.3 *Solution terms for fsQCA analyses*

Number	Combination
(1)	<div><div>IDEALEG*HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT*INFORMCOOP</div><div><i>Ideational legitimation that justifies hard and soft repression and both forms of co-optation</i></div><div>= Classic Over-Politicization Path</div></div>
(2) and (3)	<div><div>PERFORMLEG*hardrep*</div><div><i>Performance legitimation with the absence of hard repression as the theoretical core of de-politicization combined with ...</i></div><div><div>[(SOFTREP*FORMCOOP*INFORMCOOPT)] +</div><div><i>... soft repression and both forms of co-optation OR</i></div><div>= Classic De-Politicization Path</div></div></div>
	<div><div>(IDEALEG*FORMCOOPT*informcoopt)]</div><div><i>... ideational legitimation and formal but no informal ways of co-optation</i></div><div>= The Singaporean De-Politicization</div></div>
(4)	<div><div>idealeg*perfleg*HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT</div><div><i>Absence of ideational and performance-based legitimation compensated with repression and formal co-optation</i></div><div>= Repression-cum-Co-optation Path</div></div>

empirical support for the two-logics theory and the distinction between the over-politicization and de-politicization paths.

Repression-cum-Co-optation Path

The fourth path of the solution covers a combination of hard and soft forms of repression that works in conjunction with formal co-optation arrangements as well as with the absence of ideological and performance legitimization. The empirical counterparts of this solution term stem mostly from Myanmar. The three consecutive regimes since the 1960s – the regime under Ne Win, under Than Shwe, and under Saw Maung – follow this stability recipe. Additionally, the rule of Le Duan in Vietnam also falls under this rubric. Table 8.4 displays the concrete empirical cases that are covered by this solution term.

Chapter 5 elaborated on the complementarity relationship between repression and co-optation. In a nutshell, repression aims at controlling or at least channeling political demands to the political system (Easton 1965b). These demands either can be suppressed at the prior stage of political wants before developing into full demands or can be repressed in a reactive fashion. In turn, the function of co-optation is to secure intra-elite cohesion and to maintain the steering capacity for an effective “conversion process” (Almond and Powell 1966, 29). Internal splits between hard- and soft-liners should be avoided (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Repression and co-optation can be seen as synergetic. Successful co-optation reduces the danger of open power challenges by an oppositional figure. Elites are bound to the regime so that they do not invest their material or symbolic capital in challenging or overthrowing the regime. In the best-case scenario, co-optation leads to an interweaving of the political elite’s interests with those of the military and business oligarchs. The latter know that their future profits and privileges depend on the continuation of the incumbent regime so that it is in their own interest to help maintain the status quo. In turn, political elites can trust their rivals and build upon their power. Co-optation is based on reciprocity. It works preemptively vis-à-vis the usage of repression. Successful co-optation prevents oppositional figures from growing too strong. Repression, in turn, enhances the effectiveness of the conversion process. It is easier for the political inner sanctum to rule if repression reduces any kind of opposition. If unwelcome interference and oppositional demands are controlled, then it is also less costly to maintain elite cohesion. The effect of repression on co-optation has therefore been characterized as a protective one.

This synergetic relationship between co-optation and repression can be observed across these four cases. All of them relied strongly on

Table 8.4 *Repression-cum-Co-optation path*

<i>Head of Government</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Years in Office</i>
Saw Maung	Myanmar	1988–91
Ne Win	Myanmar	1962–87
Than Shwe	Myanmar	1992–2008
Le Duan	Vietnam	1975–85

both forms of repression. Repression is often the backbone for autocratic regimes. Yet, it is noteworthy that the secondary literature on Burma¹⁰ emphasizes that the previous rule of U Nu between 1948 and 1955 was characterized by a period of “relatively free press and a plethora of civic organizations” (Than 2001, 233). Forms of hard and soft repression had been rather low, and it was only with the military coup in 1962 that the regime arrested and removed important ethnic leaders, especially among the Shans. Under the military regime of Ne Win, the repressive actions of the regime “resulted in the virtual disappearance of civil society groups” (Than 2001, 233–34). Since that time, hard and soft repression became widespread in the country (Callahan 2003). For the time period covered in this analysis, the leading CIRI and PTS datasets univocally rate Myanmar among the most repressive regimes in the world, in terms of violations against both personal integrity rights and civil liberties. The violent crackdown on nationwide protests in 1988 and the 2007 demonstrations stood out in the history of Myanmar’s repressive state apparatus. Both events did not only establish that Myanmar’s leadership did not shy away from repressing its people; they also signaled the legitimacy bankruptcy of the regime.

Socioeconomically, the three regimes in Burma/Myanmar since the 1960s have performed poorly. In worldwide comparison, these regimes ranked among the least advanced regimes. As legitimating political power through socioeconomic performance was always futile, Ne Win traveled the ideational route after coming to power in 1962. After several tumultuous years, Ne Win tried to establish what he called the “Burmese Way to Socialism.” It was a radicalized version of his predecessor’s attempt to provide a “synthesis of Buddhism and socialism, with an especially heavy dose of the former” (Cheong 1999, 87). Ne Win radicalized this slogan and shifted ideological emphasis by proclaiming an anticapitalist, antidemocratic, and anti-imperialist doctrine that demanded the political

¹⁰ Before 1988, “Burma” is used as the official name of the Southeast Asian state and “Myanmar” afterward.

prerogative for the Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP). Ne Win also tried to connect to nationalist sentiments and instrumentalized the pre-independence movement of the “We Burman” (*Do Bama*). Yet, these attempts were not fruitful: “For most Burmese, both Bama and non-Bama, the coup maker’s legitimacy was neither inspiring nor credible” (Yawngkhwe 1995, 186).

Nevertheless, Ne Win’s radical blend of Buddhism, socialism, and nationalism was the most elaborated ideological attempt of a Burmese regime to gain legitimacy among its people. After the nationwide protests in 1988 that forced Ne Win to step down (although he pulled political strings long after his resignation), successive leaders made no major attempt to reformulate a new ideological basis for the regime. The regimes of both Saw Maung and Than Shwe referred vaguely to so-called main causes that were, however, rather a “quasi-ideology” (Than 2001, 233) that hollowly praised national unity and political order. The long shadow of the devastating 1990 electoral loss to the National League for Democracy (NLD) weighed upon the military regime. In the 1990 elections, which were relatively free and fair and can therefore serve as an apt barometer for public opinion of the ruling regime, the BSPP’s successor party, the National Unity Party, won only a quarter of the votes. Moreover, it secured only 2.1 percent of contested parliamentary seats. In a landslide victory, the opposition, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won more than 80 percent of the parliamentary seats. It is safe to say that the post-1988 military junta never really recovered from this electoral debacle. It demonstrated to domestic and international audiences the regime’s obvious lack of legitimacy. To some extent, the 2007 demonstrations, in which highly respected monks protested in large numbers by symbolically turning their rice bowls upside down to show that they did not accept donations from the incumbent regime, could be seen as an acute manifestation of a latent legitimacy crisis that had already endured for decades.

The biggest strength of the three partial theory frames is that they make complex processes comparable. They avoid a biased fixation on certain actors or actions, instead, making seemingly different phenomena comparable. *Prima facie*, the legitimacy crises of Myanmar under Ne Win, Than Shwe, and Saw Maung on the one hand and Vietnam under Le Duan on the other seem to not have much in common. They are rarely, if ever, discussed in the same context. Nonetheless, they reveal interesting parallels. While Ho Chi Minh, Le Duan’s predecessor, was a charismatic leader who enjoyed widespread diffuse support among ordinary citizens, the regime under Le Duan was not able to carry on in the same way. As already outlined in Chapter 7, Ho exploited widespread

anticolonial sentiment in Vietnamese society and built the nation's foundational myth upon the goal of national unification. In Beetham's terms, the justifiability of his legitimacy claim was very high. Ho could reconnect to a widespread societal belief that he then imbued with communist and egalitarian thoughts (Thayer 2010; Vasavakul 1995, 261–67). Moreover, the traditional peasant-based culture made it easier to sell the new ideology not as new “but as an outgrowth of the popular working traditions” (Vasavakul 2001, 396). Not unlike the Burmese case, religious thought was included in this complex blend. Instead of Buddhism, the use of Confucian thought is described as a traditional source of legitimacy. Although Ho and most of his comrades rejected the social hierarchy immanent to Confucian thought, they were still mostly descended from traditional Confucian scholar families and were therefore so “deeply imbued with the Confucian notions of political legitimacy” (Porter 1993, 7) that it seemed natural for them to combine these traditional values with Marxist-Leninist thought.

What is important to note here is that the basis of Ho Chi Minh's legitimacy was much more deeply rooted in society, finding greater resonance among ordinary Vietnamese citizens than the legitimacy formula of his successor. After having reached the goal of national reunification, Vietnam's autocratic regime under Le Duan slipped into a legitimacy crisis. The North Vietnamese legitimacy formula proved incapable of uniting the country, let alone producing popular support in the South. Vasavakul (1995, 271–74) reports that the military means by which this unification was reached particularly alienated large segments of society. It became less feasible to exploit national foundational myths of anticolonialism as a form of societal cement. In theoretical terms: the justifiability fell. Moreover, the uncontestedness of Ho Chi Minh's original legitimacy formula suffered under Le Duan. While Ho Thought was almost omnipresent, Le Duan's ideas were never promoted in the same way. Economic inefficiencies also made it difficult to fall back on performance-based legitimation. Instead, this route was blocked as the second and third five-year plans (1976–80 and 1981–85) were unsuccessful. The deficits of Soviet-style economic planning with concentration on heavy industries and a collectivization of the agricultural sector became more and more evident; by the end of the 1970s, Vietnam needed to import 5.6 million tons of food from the Soviet Union (Porter 1993, 48–52). As such, it is safe to conclude that under Le Duan, “the party-state was not fulfilling its promise of improved conditions and its legitimacy ... was beginning to wear thin” (Dixon 2004, 17).

However, where the regimes in Myanmar and Vietnam under Le Duan diverge is in how they dealt with their respective legitimacy crises. While

Myanmar's elites seemed to not have learned their lesson at the end of the 1980s, choosing to keep muddling through, in 1986 the Vietnamese elites reacted and initiated widespread reforms. *Doi moi* (renewal) and the unorthodox combination of "a market economy with socialist orientation" (Thayer 2010, 427) was the Vietnamese answer to the disappointing Le Duan years.

While the four regimes that fall under this solution term (Myanmar under Ne Win, Saw Maung, and Than Shwe, as well as Vietnam under Le Duan) could not stabilize their rule by manufacturing support among ordinary citizens, their strength was a combination of a working repression apparatus and strong intra-elite cohesion within a closely knit group of elite members. Repression and formal co-optation were proven to be synergetic, even compensating for the absence of legitimacy. While repression raises mobilization costs for the opposition, working co-optation makes the emergence of an oppositional leader less likely. As will be argued later in greater detail, the complementarity logic of contrast in which the presence of all three pillars forms a "bounded whole" (Sartori 1987, 184) does not apply to Myanmar and Vietnam under Le Duan. In a stricter sense, this logic of contrast demands that different parts not only make up for one another's deficiencies but that the parts form together a complementary whole. For the cases of Myanmar and Vietnam under Le Duan, we can state that these regimes did have a blind spot on the legitimacy front and that the ordinary people were alienated by the regime. Yet, an alternative understanding of complementarity, the logic of similarity highlights the synergetic relationship between the formal co-optation machinery and the repression apparatus, counterweighing so the absence of legitimacy.

As mentioned earlier, the major advantage of this book's macro-theoretical framework is to make seemingly different phenomena comparable. Actor-centered approaches build their typology along the locus of power. Most prominently, Geddes and her collaborators (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014; 2018) have proposed the insightful tripartition of one-party regimes, military regimes, and personalistic monarchies. The framework in this book places less emphasis on the concrete power architecture of a regime. It is less concerned with the question of who acts and who is in the driver's seat, whether it is a monarch, a military junta, or an organ of a (mostly communist) party. Instead, it focuses more on the functions that are fulfilled. This leaves open the possibility for functional equivalents. For example, most typologies would categorize Myanmar as a prime example of a military regime and Vietnam as a clear-cut one-party regime. Obviously, this sort of approach has its own merits and inherent dangers of misclassification (Morgenbesser

2018). The framework proposed here, however, enables researchers to understand the Vietnamese Communist Party and the military organization of Myanmar, the *Tatmadaw*, as functional equivalents, which in fact serve as INUS conditions for stabilizing autocratic regimes. It is argued here that they are both vehicles for formal co-optation that work in tandem with other factors.

The literature in comparative authoritarianism has produced an abundance of novel insights into the working of parties and parliaments in autocratic regimes (Brownlee 2007; Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001; Greene 2008; Magaloni 2006; Smith 2005; Svobik 2012). These institutions serve as the major arenas in which intra-elite conflicts can be managed; they are incentive structures for rivaling elites to not openly challenge the regime but instead to settle their conflicts under the party umbrella. Political parties might even go so far as to have fine-grained succession rules while also minimizing the risk of moral hazard, prolonging time frames, and making politics in general more predictable. The Vietnamese Communist Party as well as the national parliament fulfill these tasks in an exemplary way (Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng 2013; Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng 2011; Malesky and Schuler 2010; Malesky and Taussig 2019).

At the apex of power, the three most important state positions (state president, party general secretary, and prime minister) were given to leaders from the North, the South, and the central region of the country. The Central Committee served as the major platform in which intra-elite consent was manufactured (Koh 2001, 537–38). Under Le Duan, the first cracks appeared and “increasing signs of discontent and non-compliance with central directives” were observed (Dixon 2004, 17), although it was still by and large intact. Under Le Duan, a somewhat weakened party still remained the major transmission belt that secured intra-elite cohesion. Vietnam was (and still is) a regime of “bureaucratic socialism” in which “countervailing extra-bureaucratic forces are weak or absent” (Porter 1993, xiv).

The functional equivalent in Burma/Myanmar was not so much a party but rather the *Tatmadaw*, the royal military. The aforementioned effects that the neo-institutionalist literature attributes to political parties are fulfilled in the Burmese context as well (Croissant and Kamerling 2013). Yet, they are not performed by a party or the parliament, but by a military organization. Even existing institutional structures are overwritten with military content and can only be understood with reference to the military as the regime’s major backbone. The lack of strong civil party structures can be traced back to the country’s founding days (Callahan 2003). Already under U Nu and after the death of Aung San in 1947, the

Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) was a rather loose alliance: "Cohesion as a party was lacking" (Cheong 1999, 88). When Ne Win took over power, he tried to establish a Revolutionary Council and subsequently the Burmese BSPP, which was initially only a cadre party formed around the "Thirty Comrades" who were famous for having fought against British colonialism. These Thirty Comrades also constituted the nucleus for the Burmese military. However, the BSPP's military texture can be seen in the fact that around 80 percent of the military belonged to it and that the major dividing line within the party remained the one between combat and party officers (Leifer 1995). The combat officers took great pride in their past military achievements and always remained suspicious of their bureaucratic counterparts.

The military is organized around the cultural norm of *saya-tapyit*, literally a patron-client relationship between student and teacher, or in the military between junior and senior officials (Win Min 2008, 1020). It is a highly personalized and exclusive network of comrades that rules the country in which loyalty to the military is hard currency (Hlaing 2009). Loyalty to the *Tatmadaw* is also secured by instilling an atmosphere of fear and mutual mistrust. By conducting interviews with former elite members, Hlaing (2009) describes, for example, the praxis under Ne Win of preparing positive and negative dossiers about all elite members for promoting loyal and sacking disloyal ones. As Ne Win is described as being cryptic and unpredictable, a cultural norm emerged within the military that "nobody wanted to be the troublemaker" (Hlaing 2009, 277). The "golden rule" was not to intervene in the domains of others and to avoid conflict at any cost. But the military-state complex also took care of its elite members, providing the loyal ones with various benefits and preferential treatment while the deviant ones feared persecution from the *Tatmadaw* more than from the opposition (Hlaing 2009, 285).

This situation is emblematic of the synergetic relationship between repression and co-optation. Repression makes co-optation less costly and vice versa. The emergence of threatening oppositional figures is prevented, either by negatively restraining through fear or by positively incentivizing potential power challengers via co-optation promises. From an economics perspective, the goods of co-optation and repression are complementary. These goods are not in competition and could not be substituted for each other, like butter and margarine. Instead, they are complementary like a printer and its ink cartridges, or pipes and tobacco. If the price for one good increases, the demand for the other falls. The cross price elasticity of demand is negative. If we assume that the price for repression rises, co-optation becomes costlier as well and – given a hard budget constraint – the demand for co-optation would fall, and vice versa.

What we clearly observe in the senior official's quote is that the working co-optation machinery within the *Tatmadaw* makes repression less costly for the autocratic regimes in Myanmar. The strong complementarity relationship between these two functions seems to have compensated for the lack of legitimacy. Ordinary people have not been included or considered in this power arrangement. These three regimes in Myanmar did not reach ordinary citizens, but they did keep the opposition at bay by using hard and soft repression instruments. And while the Communist Party in Vietnam was the major societal gatekeeper and bulwark for intra-elite cohesion, even in times of crisis during the Le Duan years, in Myanmar it was the *Tatmadaw* that occupied the same role.

The Two Variants of De-Politicization

In reference to the eminent work of Juan Linz, I call the second configuration of factors the de-politicization logic. Linz (1964, 307) used the famous example of Portugal's Estado Novo under Salazar to illustrate the point. The three Fs of Fatima, football, and *fado* stabilized the authoritarian state as they kept the population passive and outside politics. Binding decisions are accepted and tolerated by the majority of ordinary citizens, who are incentivized to become apathetic and to not engage in protest or other forms of collective action. Political, that is, potentially contestable, issues become neutralized. Later scholarly debates, particularly about rentier states in the Middle and Near East (Beblawi and Luciani 1987), on bureaucratic authoritarianism in Latin America (O'Donnell 1979) and parts of Asia (Im 1987), as well as the discourse about "developmental states" (Johnson 1982; 1999), inform my conception of de-politicization. These approaches point to the central role of socioeconomic performance and, if applied to autocracies, to the idea of an autocratic treaty or social contract between the citizens and the state. As long as the regime delivers, people are kept outside the political realm. The dis-incentivization of political engagement results in a "low-intensity citizenship" (O'Donnell 1979, 143).

In the empirical results of the QCA analysis, I subsume two configurations under the single umbrella of the de-politicization path. The first combination consists of performance legitimization and soft repression, which works in conjunction with formal and informal co-optation but also demands the explicit absence of hard repression. I label this combination the classic de-politicization path, as it displays in greatest clarity the underlying complementarity logic: satisfying the demands of the people by providing socioeconomic public goods; silencing the opposition by preemptive curtailing of political rights, while avoiding high-intensity

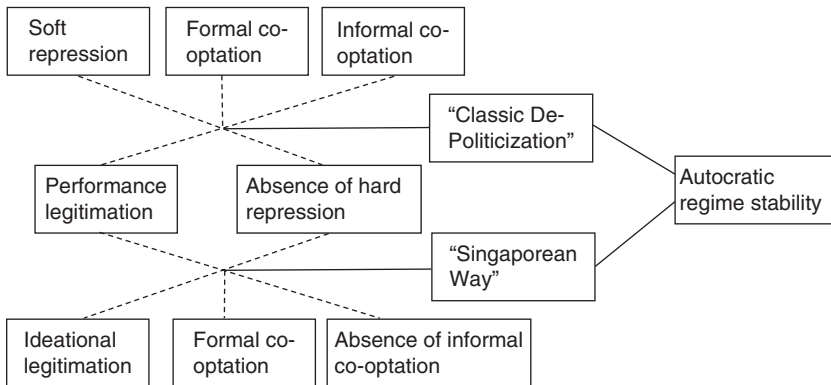


Figure 8.1 The two variants of de-politicization¹¹

coercion that might spur public protest; and maintaining elite cohesion by co-opting strategic groups. This combination of factors most clearly displays the idea of de-politicization.

The second path is called the “Singaporean Way.” Like the classic de-politicization, it highlights performance legitimacy and the absence of hard repression as its core. This combination is again at the heart of this de-politicization path, although it works here with a slight modification. Performance legitimacy and the absence of hard repression work in conjunction with formal co-optation, ideational legitimacy, and the absence of informal co-optation. It applies to Singapore since the rule of Lee Kuan Yew, for example. Figure 8.1 displays the two variants of the de-politicization path and Table 8.5 shows all concrete empirical cases that fall under the solution terms.

Table 8.6 displays the two variants of de-politicization in a different way, making the interpretation of differences and similarities easier. The darker-shaded grey cells indicate the presence of a condition, while the white cells indicate the absence. The lighter-grey cells mean that the condition gets logically eliminated and does not appear in the solution formula. It might be helpful to restate that the logical elimination of a factor does not tell us anything about the presence or absence of this respective factor in a concrete case but rather indicates that the factor does not contribute to the explanation.

What is argued here is that the combination of performance legitimacy in conjunction with the absence of hard repression is the key

¹¹ The graphic depiction of complex QCA results goes back to Patrick Mello. I am grateful for his advice and adopt it here for my purposes.

Table 8.5 *The two variants of de-politicization: empirical cases*

Classic De-Politicization Path: Performance Legitimation * No Hard Repression * Soft Repression * Formal Co-optation * Informal Co-optation		
<i>Head of Government</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Years in Office</i>
Mahathir bin Mohammed	Malaysia	1981–2002
Abdullah Ahmad Badawi	Malaysia	2003–8
Choummaly Sayasone	Laos	2006–8
Yen Chia-kan	Taiwan	1975–77
Chiang Ching-kuo	Taiwan	1978–87
Singaporean Way: Ideational Legitimation * Performance Legitimation * No Hard Repression * Formal Co-optation * No Informal Co-optation		
<i>Head of Government</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Years in Office</i>
Lee Kuan Yew	Singapore	1965–89
Goh Chok Tong	Singapore	1990–2003
Lee Hsien Loong	Singapore	2004–8

Table 8.6 *Condensed illustration of de-politicization*

	<i>Ideat. Leg.</i>	<i>Perf. Leg</i>	<i>Hard rep.</i>	<i>Soft rep.</i>	<i>Form. Co-opt.</i>	<i>Inform. Co-opt.</i>
<i>Classic De-Politicization</i>	Logically eliminated	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present
<i>Singaporean Way</i>	Present	Present	Absent	Logically eliminated	Present	Absent

component of both de-politicization paths, the classic one and the Singaporean version of it. The performance of the regime in terms of socio-economic development as well as the promise of law and order keep the people passive and make them tolerant of authoritarian rule. Demands for more political participation are “cushioned” and are sacrificed by the population for the allegedly greater good of national growth and order. In other words, the presence of performance legitimation and the absence of hard repression are the most fundamental INUS conditions for the two de-politicization paths. While the former keeps the people apathetic, the avoidance of hard repression contributes to this strategy by not igniting protest. Both variants of de-politicization also concur in the presence of formal co-optation arrangements that add to the robustness of the regime.

The classic de-politicization path is a three-way interaction among performance legitimization, soft repression, and co-optation forms. They form a Sartorian bounded whole in which the single factors make up for the gap that the other complementary pillars are not able to fill. The classic de-politicization follows so the complementarity logic of contrast. Deficiencies are compensated and a balance of different and contrasting parts is reached (Crouch 2006). Eastonian specific support secures a following of the people, soft repression secures oppositional passivity, and both formal co-optation and informal co-optation secure intra-elite cohesion. As such, these three functions address the people, the (potential) opposition, and the elite simultaneously. Threats to regime survival that emanate from these three groups (public protest, opposition party activities, and intra-elite coups) are reduced.

The classic de-politicization path also follows a different complementarity logic, the logic of similarity. Instead of canceling out potential deficiencies and making up for mutual gaps, this logic is about synergetic relationships pulling in the same direction. The most fragile bilateral relationship has been identified as between forms of legitimization and forms of repression. In Chapter 5, this was called the Achilles' heel of most autocracies, serving therefore as an adequate starting point for the two-logics theory. The empirical results provide empirical support for this theoretical expectation.

In the famous words of Machiavelli, it is safer to be feared than to be loved. Yet, in his seventeenth chapter of *The Prince*, he equally made clear that while the (autocratic) ruler should be feared, it is important not to be hated (Machiavelli [1532] 1986). This seems to be the credo of the de-politicization strategy. While soft repression induces fear among the people and dis-incentivizes them from taking political action, hard repression is a catalyst for hate. Hard repression can cross a red line that disturbs the implicit autocratic contract between ruler and ruled. Hate can backfire and mobilize protesters. As such, trying to keep people passive by performing socioeconomically and using hard repression at the same time is incompatible. They do not pull in the same direction and are not synergetic.

The incompatibility of hard repression and performance legitimization can empirically be shown in the QCA results. None of the four combinations (i.e., repression-cum-co-optation, over-politicization, and the two variants of de-politicization) displays a conjunction of performance legitimization and hard repression. If a regime performs, this demands either the explicit absence of hard repression or the logical elimination of one of the two factors that does not then contribute to the explanation of stability.

The most important future repercussions of this empirical finding refer to the Chinese stabilization recipe. China under Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao represent the only three autocratic regimes that unite performance legitimation with hard repression. They constitute a prominent exception to the rule. All three regimes did rely on their nationalized version of communism and propagated this effectively. Yet, they also increasingly backed their legitimation efforts with socioeconomic success and did not shy away from using hard repression.¹² The Chinese case will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, but by way of preview, it will be argued that China is divided between the two logics of autocracies. All other empirical experiences of the East Asian region since World War II show that performance legitimation and hard repression do not work hand in hand.

The concrete empirical cases that fall under the classic de-politicization path are Mahathir's and Badawi's rule of Malaysia, the most recent Laotian regime, as well as Taiwan after Chiang Kai-shek. As discussed in the descriptive case study in Chapter 7, these regimes have developmentalism as their leitmotif. Taiwan and Laos even reduced their use of hard repression over the years. While Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek as well as Laos under Kaysone Phomvihane tended more toward the over-politicization pole, successor regimes downplayed ideological legitimation and increased socioeconomic performance. Both countries underwent a remarkable shift in the 1980s. Paralleling Vietnam's *doi moi* in 1986, Laos altered its legitimacy formula from a socialist orthodoxy to a more liberal stance. To some extent, the New Economic Mechanism was a turning point for Laos. In close dialogue with international donors, this new policy direction also focused on the education of a new bureaucratic elite, transmitting a "kind of expertise that the old Laotian revolutionaries can never understand or contest" (Ivarsson, Svensson, and Tønneson 1995, 30). Simultaneously, the use of hard repression decreased (Freeman 2001, 123–25), while soft forms of repression have remained by and large constant over the years (Stuart-Fox 1997, 172). In other words, while the heart of the old Laotian stabilization formula had previously been the combination of ideology and hard repression, it is now performance and soft repression (Creak and Barney 2018; Sims 2018).

Taiwan, in turn, changed its course after the death of Chiang Kai-shek. His nationalistic tone and his strict adherence to the goal of national unification with Mainland China has been gradually replaced by a stricter

¹² The scope of the empirical investigation ends due to data constraints in 2008. Yet, it is worth noting that the current Xi Jinping rule (since 2012) seems to even intensify and fortify this configuration.

commitment to developmentalism and a milder demand for unification. Similar to the Laotian experience, the shift from ideational legitimation to performance-based legitimation was accompanied by a cutback in hard repression. While under Chiang Kai-shek, hard repression had not only been widespread but also very frequent, the hard repression index used here has fallen steadily since his death. The synergetic relationship between performance and soft repression became the stabilizing core of the new Taiwanese authoritarianism under his son, Chiang Ching-kuo.

Malaysia deviates from this pattern, as its history is not one of dramatic change. The initial ideological blend of *Rukunegara* that combined royal, traditional, religious, and democratic elements boiled down over the years to an emphasis on the nation and ethnicity. Yet, the ideational basis was never as strong in Malaysia as it was for Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek, nor was it promoted as pervasively as it was under Kaysone Phomvihane in Laos. Yet, the parallels can be seen in the major shift toward performance-based legitimation (Sims 2018). The roots of the New Economic Policy can be traced back to the late 1960s; since then, developmentalism has played a growing role in legitimating autocratic rule in Malaysia. A second parallel is the reduction of hard repression. While the Tunku and Razak still relied on these instruments, their use under Mahathir and Badawi has remarkably decreased (Case 2002, 119). As such, these two regimes are prime examples for the classic de-politicization path.

Both the classic and the Singaporean de-politicization strategies rely on strong formal institutions. The party organizes intra-elite unity and preempts destabilizing factional struggles. Examples include Taiwan's Kuomintang, Malaysia's United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), and Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP) with its strong Central Executive Committee, all of which serve as the crucial institutionalized transmission belt, consensus manufacturer, and conflict smoother to maintain elite cohesion in each country. The same holds true for the Laotian Communist Party (Baird 2018; Creak and Barney 2018). As institutions, they curb the ambitions of leaders, make actions more predictable, and prolong time horizons (Brownlee 2007; Gandhi 2008; Slater 2010a).

It is interesting to note that the Singaporean Way relies only on formalized arenas. While the classic de-politicization path also includes informal arrangements, Singaporean style co-optation only works in the absence of informality. The shadowland of informality that establishes personalized links in political niches seems to be detrimental to the survival of Singaporean authoritarianism. In contrast, Singapore needs a "drained swampland" for its regime stabilization to be in full effect.

Of course, all political systems do rely to some extent on personalized relationships – and so does Singapore. Yet, the idea here is that responsiveness toward potential oppositional perspectives and their representation via party and parliament structures overrides informal patron-client relationships. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, Singapore is characterized by hyper-formalization and an almost excessive emphasis on education, meritocracy, and efficient bureaucracy (Khong 1995). The “hierarchical corporatism” (Ortmann 2010, 66) of the PAP is almost unparalleled in its effectiveness of binding potential opposition to the regime (Slater 2008).

To sum up, the empirical analysis of complementarity via fsQCA reveals two forms of de-politicization. Both support the theoretical expectations. At the heart of the two de-politicizing paths are the conjunction of performance-based legitimation and the absence of hard repression. While performance makes people stay out of politics, violations of physical integrity rights can mobilize people to protest. As such, these two conditions would not be considered synergetic; instead, they would pull in different directions. The two variants of de-politicization differ empirically in their respective INUS conditions but converge on this important point: only soft repression works in the autocratic contract and keeps the ordinary people at a “low-intensity citizenship” (O'Donnell 1979, 143).

The Over-Politicization Path

While low-intensity citizenship is desired for securing the political apathy of ordinary people, the over-politicization path aims for a “high-intensity citizenship.” Following Carl Schmitt ([1932] 2002), the antagonism between friend and foe is maximized. Over-politicizing regimes try to mobilize the people and activate society, instead of keeping them passive, trying to permeate private realms in an attempt to fill them with political content. Such regimes seek ideational legitimacy to gain a following among ordinary people. As such, their particular strength lies in persuading people to obey the rules.

The over-politicization configuration that the empirical solution term reveals applies to all three understandings of complementarity – the logic of similarity, the logic of contrast, and the economic definition. Ideological demands are met by a popular belief, repression is justified by reference to higher ideological goals, and co-optation secures the inner elite cohesion with the party usually being the “organizational weapon” that Selznick (1952) described in his famous study on Bolshevism. These functions all point in the same direction: over-politicizing the polity. They are synergetic and mutually strengthening. In an economic sense, they

also form complementary goods, as the cross price elasticity of demand is negative. If, for example, the price of ideational legitimation falls and it becomes easier to persuade the people ideologically, then this has positive repercussions for the price and demand for hard and soft repression. The three-way interaction among ideological legitimation, forms of repression, and co-optation also constitutes a Sartorian bounded whole. The logic of contrast therefore applies as well. One institution makes up for the possible gap that the other institution might leave. Deficits can be compensated. While synergies and complementary goods would be only mutually strengthening, the logic of contrast is also compensatory. Legitimation, repression, and co-optation efforts together form a whole that can be sustained for long periods of time. All decisive actors in a polity are addressed, the people are mobilized, the opposition is suppressed and repressed, and the elite is bound to the inner sanctum. Figure 8.2 displays the classic over-politicization path graphically and Table 8.7 shows the respective empirical cases.

Chapter 2 of this book argues that we should perceive legitimacy in empirical terms and follow the Weberian tradition of a legitimacy belief – irrespective of the reasons upon which this belief is based. Weber himself argued in favor of charisma and tradition as two nondemocratic sources of legitimate political rule (Weber 1956). It is the transformation of mere power (*Macht*) into legitimate rule or domination (*Herrschaft*) that stabilizes a political order. Without this transformation from power into political rule, the regime is fragile. It goes without saying that there are nondemocratic regimes that do not turn into legitimate rule. Historically speaking, tyranny and despotism have been the two forms of nondemocracies that never attempted to legitimate their power. Instead, power was secured by means of violence and force only, and this capacity was upheld by the ability to pay guards and mercenaries. Instead, it was a type of mammonism and rule by money that kept these political orders stable. The tyrants and despots did not explain why they were entitled to rule, but they could nevertheless simply “afford” to exercise power. Tyranny is so a form of degenerated monarchy in which the monarchy loses its legitimacy and can only uphold its dominant power position by relying on paid agents (whose neutrality and impartiality are sometimes even regarded as their major strength). In tyrannies, power is not sublimated to legitimate rule in a Weberian sense.

Beyond these two forms of degenerated rule, all other forms of non-democracies do say something about why they are entitled to rule (Dukalskis 2017; Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017; Gerschewski 2018). Whether authoritarian or totalitarian, monarchies that refer to tradition and hereditary rule, one-party regimes that at least in the communist

Table 8.7 *Over-politicization: empirical cases*

Classic Over-Politicization Path: Ideational Legitimation * Hard Repression * Soft Repression * Formal Co-optation * Informal Co-optation		
<i>Head of Government</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Years in Office</i>
Mao Zedong	China	1949–75
Suharto	Indonesia	1966–97
Kaysone Phomvihane	Laos	1975–91
Tunku Abdul Rahman	Malaysia	1957–68
Tunku Abdul Razak	Malaysia	1970–75
Kim Il Sung	North Korea	1948–93
Kim Jong Il	North Korea	1994–2008
Chiang Kai-shek	Taiwan	1949–74
Ho Chi Minh	Vietnam	1954–65
Nguyen Van Linh	Vietnam	1986–90
Nong Duc Manh	Vietnam	2001–8
Deng Xiaoping	China	1978–96
Jiang Zemin	China	1997–2001
Hu Jintao	China	2002–8

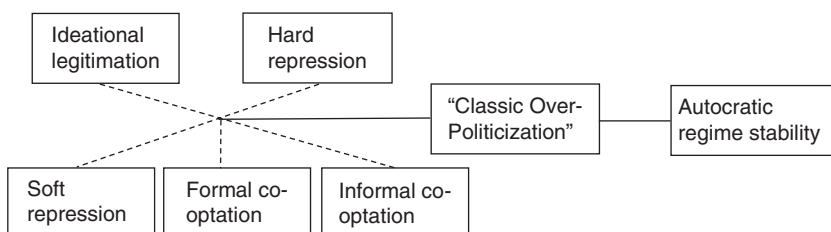


Figure 8.2 Classic over-politicization

form promise equality, or military regimes that claim to reinstall law and order (and sometimes economic growth) usually directly after the coup, they all refer to some form of legitimacy claims. The online appendix to this book lists all the legitimacy claims of the forty-five selected autocratic regimes in East Asia, demonstrating the width and depth of the different legitimacy formulae experienced in that region. While some regimes rely on revolutionary language, others favor more evolutionary ideas. While some employ religion, others distance themselves from transcendentalism and install an intramundane political religion. While some employ tradition, others see themselves as a modernist reaction and try to overcome traditional incrustations. While some have royal

roots, others follow an anti-elitist spirit. While some embrace the market, others reject it and justify their rule by a mixture of anticapitalism often paired with anticolonialism. The menu of legitimation in the region is rich, and a major motivation of this book has been to bring these ideas back into the scholarly discourse.

The picture that the empirical analysis depicts is therefore a colorful one. The legitimacy claims of regimes that fall under the over-politicization path are very diverse. On the one hand, the solution term reveals classic totalitarian ideologies. Following Hannah Arendt, these political ideologies are distortions from empirical reality that becloud rational judgment and make people lose touch by looking at real-world phenomena through doctrinaire lenses. The previous Chapter 7 referred to the North Korean Juche ideology as an amalgam of excessive nationalism, communism, anticapitalism, and anticolonial foundational myth. This claim is instilled in the hearts and minds of the North Korean people, arguably to an extent that has never before been reached in any other country worldwide. It is an omnipresent ideology that has been capable of legitimating political rule for decades. While this is, of course, ugly and bitter from a normative democratic viewpoint, one needs to concede that the autocratic regimes of Kim Il Sung and to a lesser extent the regime of Kim Jong Il have been successful in manufacturing empirical legitimacy and support by the North Korean people (Haggard and Noland 2011; Hawk 2005; Hunter 1999; Kim and Koh 1983; McEachern 2010; Suh 1989).

The strong basis of popular support applies to the cases of Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh, the two other examples that come close to the totalitarian pole. They fulfill most of the demands of the six-point catalog by Friedrich (1957) or Linz's (1975) three-dimensional typology of totalitarian regimes. In an Arendtian ([1951] 2005) sense, they also fulfill the combination of terror that isolates people from one another and ideology that strains people's sense of empirical reality.¹³ Like the two Kims, both relied on a nationalist version of socialist orthodoxy, enriched with anticolonial sentiments and military achievements in an independence struggle to maximize the friend-foe distinction.

These rulers share the nationalistic element with Taiwanese Chiang Kai-shek who was a fierce and charismatic anticommunist. But similar to the Chinese successors of Chairman Mao, which are also part of the

¹³ In a 1964 lecture series, Eric Voegelin ([1964] 2006, 249–67) made an interesting and insightful remark. He referred to classic literary works, in particular to Cervantes's *Don Quichote* and Musil's *The Man without Qualities*, and argued that ordinary people under National Socialism were seduced and misguided into losing their "first reality" and have instead embraced and fled into a "second reality."

solution term, these regimes do not qualify as totalitarian. China under Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao maintained high levels of legitimacy among the Chinese people. While they softened the revolutionary stance and strengthened a technocratic and pragmatic approach, whether in the form of the Three Represents or the Harmonious Society, their legitimacy formulae had less in common with our classic conceptions of totalitarian ideologies, which are characterized by Manichean and even eschatological elements.

The classical over-politicization path shows so in full clarity a major motivation behind this book. In the theory section, I synthesized different strands and traditions in the long and rich history of the study of autocratic regimes. The over-politicization path is theorized with an eye toward classic totalitarianism studies. These studies placed full-fledged political ideologies like communism and fascism at the heart of their analysis. This was understandable in light of the empirical cases that they examined. However, I argue in Chapter 2 on legitimation that we should overcome this narrow focus.

The debate about totalitarianism is highly controversial and has often been politically instrumentalized to denunciate political opponents of various couleur. As a result, there has been almost a moratorium on using the term “totalitarianism.” Nonetheless, a lot can be learned from these classical works, and we can extract from them enormous analytical and theoretical added value. However, to translate their insights to the twenty-first century, we need to broaden the term “political ideology.” Ideologies do not necessarily need to be as comprehensive and all-embracing as communism or fascism has been. Instead, I strongly advocate broadening the notion of ideology to include less comprehensive sets of ideas like nationalism, politicized religion, and ethnicity. I favor an understanding of ideology as a more general manner of political thought that underlies and motivates political and societal praxis. It is a patterned and connected assemblage of political ideas that are held together by an overarching theme (Freeden 1996; 1998; Freeden, Sargent, and Stears 2013). This definitional widening allows us to go beyond the narrow focus of totalitarian regimes understood as ideocracies. Instead, it relies on the idea of to what extent the life of ordinary citizens is influenced by a guiding nationwide ideology. The central question is therefore: To what extent are the ordinary citizens addressed by an official ideational legitimacy claim – whatever it rests on – and to what extent is this claim believed by the people?

In Indonesia, for example, Suharto’s rule was based on a blend of nationalism, humanitarianism, democratic thought, egalitarian welfare promises, and monotheism (*Pancasila*, “the five meanings”) that he

inherited from his predecessor Sukarno. *Pancasila* was meant to bridge the enormous societal cleavages and has been elevated to the status of a national ideology. Suharto claimed that he “saved the ideology from the political manipulation it suffered under the Sukarno regime” (Mietzner 2009, 65). In Linzian terms, *Pancasila* is not a coherent ideology but more of a “rigid mentality of corporatist control” (Case 2002, 45) that was widely spread among the population in an educational campaign known as the “P-4.” Nevertheless, it is important to note that the ideas of *Pancasila* were not as coherent as other political ideologies. Pabottingi (1995, 246–53) was among the most prominent scholar arguing that we should not overestimate the unifying effect of this stratagem. But, if we step back and think instead of ideational legitimation more in terms of promoting a certain set of patterned political thought, *Pancasila* did indeed underlie mobilized political action. Moreover, I concur with Liddle (1996) that Suharto’s turn to the New Order and a sense of corporatism and developmentalism with significant anticommunist and anti-Islam connotations was a widely held belief in society (also Vatikiotis 1998, 92–118).

This legitimacy belief was transmitted via one of the most effective political machines: Golkar. Golkar served as the main tool for both formal and informal co-optation. It was an “agglomeration of civil servants, the armed forces, women, youth, workers, farmers, veterans, even pedicab drivers” (Cheong 1999, 106–7); Golkar united 270 associations (Smith 2001, 104). It was Suharto’s main vehicle to mobilize support for his political rule and that kept diverging political positions together. Golkar worked smoothly and served as the arena in which he “artfully managed elites” by a *divide-et-impera* strategy and balanced the rival factions by “skillfully administering patronage and sanctions” (Case 2002, 29).

Furthermore, the military was a stabilizing force for Suharto’s regime. Despite the gradual decline of military officials in government positions, it remained one of the regime’s strongholds. Based on its *dwi-fungsi* doctrine (dual function), the military’s role was not limited to national security; it also had a socio-political role, which led military officers to take over lucrative business posts, particularly in state enterprises like Pertamina and also in high political organs. This dual role of the military was widely supported by the people (Vatikiotis 1998, 60–91). In sum, military personnel whose loyalty was bought off with promotions, rewards, and concessions but also medical programs and the preferential provision of educational opportunities heavily penetrated Suharto’s regime. “In this way, he [Suharto] transformed the armed forces into his own *permadamapi* [fire extinguisher]” (Case 2002, 39).

On a more general note, I follow Slater’s (2008, 73) interpretation that the military therefore “more closely resembled Geddes’ portrayal of

ruling party than ruling militaries.” Paralleling the prior discussion about Myanmar’s *Tatmadaw*, the strength of my theoretical suggestion lies in its macro-perspective that allows capturing these functional equivalents instead of inferring effects from power architectures. Golkar – and inextricably intertwined with it the military – has been the major vehicle by which the Indonesian regime reached out into the public. What we observe here is a symbiotic relationship between ideational legitimation strategies and efficient co-optation machinery.

Yet, and this is important to note, this is a different synergetic relation than what is observed in totalitarian regimes. In the latter, the political ideology occupies the role of a “primary phenomenon” (Drath [1954] 1968) that not only justifies the use of repressive means to uphold national order but can even demand it to fulfill ideological promises. In totalitarian regimes, the ideology is a cognitive construction that serves as *the* apodictically exclusive hermeneutic frame. The contrast between an authoritarian and a totalitarian ideology lies in the ideological goals that it seeks to follow. While totalitarian ideologies strive for a radical break with the past, authoritarian ideologies are more reformist in nature. While the former are revolutionary and seek a “permanent revolution” (Neumann 1965) of societal structures, the latter are evolutionary. Authoritarian ideologies use preexisting conditions and instrumentalize the present canon and consensus of political values, while totalitarian ones destruct them (Löwenthal [1954] 1968). Arendt ([1951] 2005, 877) argued in this context that the totalitarian ideology defines the “objective enemy” qua race or class. This objective enemy is not an enemy due to its subjective, individual actions but is instead framed as an objective obstruction that stands in the way of the formulated *Heil-ziel* and needs therefore to be destroyed. This attempts to justify the use of terror. In a similar vein, Friedrich’s “destruction-reconstruction” thesis, which he advanced in the introduction to his 1967 edition of *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, made a similar argument: ideology stands in a quasi-causal relationship to terror, demanding and even producing the use of repression (Friedrich 1957, 36). The over-politicization path that this book proposes is derived from these classic works of the 1950s to 1960s and is still committed to this line of scholarship. However, it branches out to capture newly emerging or changing autocracies in the contemporary world.

Before I show more empirical support for the two-logics theory that cuts across former totalitarian and authoritarian distinctions, a final word on the Chinese cases. China under Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao represents the only three of the forty-five East Asian cases that could rely on all six features simultaneously – both forms of legitimation,

repression, and co-optation. As such, these regimes are exceptional. All other regimes had to compromise on at least one of these six features. They suffered from deficiencies in one or the other pillar. The simultaneous presence of all six conditions makes it difficult to classify these three regimes as either primarily over-politicizing or de-politicizing the public. They do both. While they have reformed the socialist orthodoxy of the Mao days, they still enjoy a widespread legitimacy belief among the citizenry. It almost goes without saying that their performance legitimation has also increased. All three regimes did not shy away from using hard repression but also relied on more subtle forms of repression to undercut political participation. Finally, the Chinese Communist Party is still an anchor for stability that serves as a consensus-making machine, while informal networks remain intact.

The empirical picture of the fsQCA analysis that systematically tested complementarity relationships based on Boolean algebra and formal logics shows that the Chinese cases still fall under the over-politicization path. This means that they are closer to the ideal of reaching out to mobilize the masses instead of subduing them. As I highlighted earlier, differentiating between an absent condition and a condition that is eliminated in the logical reduction process is of crucial importance. China's performance legitimation gets eliminated in this process, which means that it does not contribute to the minimally sufficient explanation for autocratic stability. In comparison with all the other forty-two selected autocratic regimes, performance legitimation never worked in conjunction with hard repression. They pull in different directions. While the former tries to pacify people, the latter has the potential to activate people. They are not complementary.

When Mackie explained why a house catches fire, the presence or absence of winter was a redundant condition. Winter (or nonwinter) is not needed for the explanation. Analogously, hard repression is not needed to explain the stability of the Chinese regimes. It is not an INUS condition. Against this backdrop, it could be set forth that in light of East Asia's autocratic experience in the past decades, hard repression will sooner or later backfire. If China continues to use high-intensity coercive measures and simultaneously follows a performance legitimation strategy, its Achilles' heel will be the extent to which it can draw on a reservoir of ideational legitimation among the Chinese people. The official ideology still cushions the potential negative effects of hard repression. Yet, as soon as ideational support erodes, all empirical evidence from the region suggests that hard repression and performance legitimation alone will be incompatible and will ultimately destabilize the regime. Cynically speaking, it might therefore be in China's leaders' own best interest to

refrain from hard repression if they want to maintain their grip on power in the long run.

Of course, China is not merely one country among many others in the region. Traditionally, it played *the* leading role and set the example for other regimes. As such, it might be possible that the Chinese way of relying on all six conditions simultaneously will diffuse to other regimes in the region and beyond, thus creating a “third logic of autocracies.” It could be that the Chinese way is the perfection of autocratic stability, as it unites or even synthesizes over-politicization and de-politicization paths. It might be the best of both worlds. Yet, doubts can be raised. In the Introduction to this book, I argued that stabilizing an autocracy involves trade-off decisions. In the past decades, China has been able to tackle all tasks at the same time, making it an enormously robust regime. Yet, it could be argued that it runs on too much fuel and that, sooner or later, hard budget constraints will make it impossible to avoid trade-off decisions. And, indeed, if we can draw lessons from East Asian autocratic experience since 1945, then China needs to decide if it will either maintain its revolutionary legacy and seek support for a reformist nationalism-cum-socialism agenda that tries to justify hard repression or go fully toward a de-politicizing path in which it strengthens socioeconomic performance while decreasing the use of hard repression.

A Systematic Theory Evaluation

A formal way to assess the theoretical expectation of the two logics of autocracies can be undertaken by a systematic theory evaluation. Conjunctural theories can also be put to a systematic empirical test. Instead of looking at individual factors that compete in their explanatory value, in the Boolean approach scholars “are forced to think in terms of conjectures” (Ragin 1987, 120). Schneider and Wagemann (2012, 295–305) have taken up this idea and have proposed a formalized testing procedure. I follow their procedure here.

To recapitulate, the two-logics theory was that autocracies either over-politicize or de-politicize their polity in order to remain stable. In formal terms, the theoretical explication T has been:

T: (IDEALEG*HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT) +
(PERFELG*SOFTREP*(FORMCOOPT+ INFOMRCOOPT)) → STABILITY

This is the theoretical expectation T. The empirical result E of the fsQCA analysis has been intensively discussed above. The systematic theory evaluation adds to this picture. It gives answers to the following four questions:

1. Did the theoretical expectation predict stability (T) and did the empirical result identify this outcome (E)? This is the intersection TE, the area in which T and E overlap. TE is therefore the area in which the two-logics theory receives empirical support from the analysis. For regimes with an outcome greater than 0.5 – stable autocracies – the regimes that fall under the TE rubric are the covered most likely cases. They provide the strongest support for the theory.
2. Did the theoretical expectation T predict the outcome, but the empirical result did not show it ($\neg E$)? This is the intersection of $T\neg E$. While the theory would predict it, the empirical fsQCA analysis of the forty-five autocracies in East Asian fails to capture them. These are the theoretically most likely cases that are uncovered.
3. For which cases did the theoretical expectation T not predict the outcome, but it was actually present? This is the intersection $\neg TE$. In other words, these are autocratic regimes that I did not expect to find stabilizing their rule with a certain configuration, but they are nevertheless covered by the empirical findings. These cases give hints regarding further theory refinements, as they are overlooked by the theory. In the words of Schneider and Wagemann (2012, 299), these are the covered least likely cases “that suggest an extension of existing theories.”
4. Finally, for which cases did the theoretical expectation not predict the outcome of stability and the empirical result did not cover it? This is the intersection $\neg T\neg E$. These are the cases that are neither predicted theoretically nor can empirical support be found. They are the uncovered least likely cases.

These are the four possibilities in assessing the theoretical expectation against the empirical results that the fsQCA analysis revealed for the forty-five cases in East Asia since 1945. Table 8.8 shows the thirty-two of the forty-five cases that are stable; that is, their outcome $Y > 0.5$.¹⁴ Of these thirty-two stable autocracies, twenty-five cases fall in the

¹⁴ It is also possible to assess nonstable autocracies in this theory evaluation. Please refer for more information to the appendix in this book. These are cases in which $Y < 0.5$. Of the forty-five cases, thirteen cases have been nonstable. There are no cases in which I predict stability theoretically that are part of the empirical solution and that do not materialize as being stable. In other words, there is no empirically inconsistent most likely case $TE\neg Y$. Inconsistency refers to the difference between E and Y. There is only one empirically consistent most likely case $T\neg E\neg Y$. These are cases that I predict to be stable but that are not covered by the empirical solution and have an outcome below 0.5. As such, $\neg E$ and $\neg Y$ have been consistent, but I expected them to be stable. Cambodia under Sihanouk, between 1953 and 1965, is this consistent most likely case. There is no empirically inconsistent case that I do not predict theoretically $\neg TE\neg Y$. Finally, there are twelve cases that are empirically consistent and are not predicted theoretically $\neg T\neg E\neg Y$. These cases are the consistent least likely cases. As they are nonstable, they give no empirical evidence to contradict either T or E.

Table 8.8 *Systematic theory evaluation*

Empirical Finding (intermediate solution)		
<i>Covered by empirical finding (E)</i>		<i>Not covered by empirical finding ($\neg E$)</i>
Two-Logics Theory Predicts:	<i>Stable Autocracy (T)</i>	Uncovered Most Likely Cases: 4 Laos under Khamtai Siphandon; Taiwan under Lee Teng-hui; Vietnam under Do Muoi; Vietnam under Le Kha Phieu
	<i>Nonsable Autocracy ($\neg T$)</i>	Uncovered Least Likely: 2 Malaysia under Hussein bin Onn; Philippines under Marcos

intersection of TE. These cases support the theoretical argument about the two logics of autocratic regimes empirically. They have been predicted to be stable and the empirical findings cover them. The uncovered most likely cases are those four cases in which I expected stability, but the empirical QCA analysis did not capture them. There is only one case that I did not expect to be stable due to its configuration of conditions, but that has been covered in the empirical analysis. Moreover, there are two uncovered least likely cases in which the theory did not predict stability and they were not covered by the empirical result.

The systematic theory evaluation provides strong support for the two-logics theory. Twenty-five of the thirty-two stable autocracies that I theoretically expected have been covered by the empirical analysis. Stable autocracies belong to either the over-politicization or the de-politicization logic. Yet, the theoretically most troubling case is the one covered least likely case. I did not theoretically expect that Myanmar under Saw Maung would rely on a stabilizing configuration, but it is covered by the empirical result and has proven to be stable. As such, a more in-depth case study on Myanmar under Saw Maung can yield new theoretical insights beyond the two logics. Moreover, I did not theoretically expect that Malaysia under Hussein bin Onn and the Philippines under Marcos would be stable. Both are also not covered by the empirical finding, yet their actual outcome is higher than 0.5. These two cases are puzzling and future research might take them up for further in-depth studies to show which conditions are missing to explain their stability.

To sum up, this chapter provided a systematic test of the two-logics theory for forty-five autocratic regimes in East Asia since 1945. It makes methodical use of fsQCA to find the minimally sufficient combinations of factors that explain why some autocracies remain stable while others break down. While soft repression is singled out as the most important and most valent INUS condition, I present empirical support for the two-logics theory of autocratic rule. Autocracies remain stable by either over-politicizing their people and, with reference to Schmitt, maximizing the antagonism toward a public *hostis* to justify even harsh repression, or by de-politicizing their people and decontesting the very act of finding collectively binding decisions. People are so kept passive and outside the political realm.

Part IV

Conclusion

A Macro-Theory of Autocratic Rule

This book offers a comprehensive macro-theory on autocratic rule and tries to explain why some autocratic regimes remain stable while others break down. It synthesizes three waves of scholarship into one coherent theoretical framework that allows comparison of autocratic regimes across time and region. It is meant to facilitate comparative work on all types of autocratic regimes by zooming out of individual specificities and taking instead a macro-structural perspective. It theorizes that the complementarity among the three major tasks of legitimation, repression, and co-optation leads to stable autocratic regimes. It develops a theory of two ruling logics. It is put forward that over-politicization and de-politicization are the most successful ways to autocratic regime stability. In a systematic test of forty-five autocratic regimes in East Asia since 1945, the book found supporting empirical evidence for the two-worlds theory.

All autocratic regimes – and perhaps democratic ones as well – have three open flanks from which existential challenges can emerge: the people, the opponents, and the elites. This has been the analytical starting point for organizing the three waves of comparative autocracy studies. These literature waves gave different answers to the question of why some autocratic regimes remain stable, while others break down. I have distilled their major findings and compressed them into three modular theory frames. By so doing, I have leaned toward the former grand theorizing efforts of earlier scholarship and have tried to weave together different approaches to the study of nondemocratic rule.

When Juan Linz wrote his state-of-the-art encyclopedic entry in 1975 for the *Handbook of Political Science*, he submitted almost a book-length manuscript (Linz 1975). In a later reflection (Linz 2000), he argued that he was given so much space, because almost no other entry of the six-volume handbook project dealt with nondemocratic rule. In the past decades, this picture has changed considerably. Although a comprehensive treatise of autocratic theory, or a history of autocratic political thought, is still missing and might be a fruitful future endeavor, there is

an abundance of empirical results and a wealth of partial theories. Without doubt, comparative authoritarianism has developed into a vibrant research field in recent years.

The major motivation for this book has been to pause for a moment and take stock of what we actually do know about autocratic rule. It began by reviewing and digesting the classic totalitarianism literature of what is sometimes called the beginning of modern political science. Starting in the 1940s, social science scholars of various sorts – political scientists, social philosophers, state theorists, historians, and sociologists (of religion) – have tried to understand and explain the rise of what the Italian journalist and liberal opposition leader Giovanni Amendola called in 1923 a *sistema totalitario*. Mussolini's fascism but also later Hitler's Nazism, Stalin's communism, and Mao's hyper-nationalized variant of socialism were in their scholarly focus. In this book, I identified three scholarly answers to this new phenomenon of a total state: a structural-political one led by Friedrich and Brzezinski (1956), a socio-philosophical one led by Hannah Arendt ([1951] 1966), and a political-religious one led by Eric Voegelin ([1938] 1996; 1953). It is no surprise that most of these scholars were (German) scholars in exile. While they differ in their individual approaches and actual research goals, they share a strong emphasis on the ideological element. This emphasis was also shared by second-generation theorists like Linz (1975) and Schapiro (1972), who placed the role of ideology at the center of their explanations.

Yet, the legacy of these eminent scholars in the current study of autocratic regimes is ambivalent. Today, the vast majority of scholarly work does not aim at former grand theorizing efforts. Instead of attempting more comprehensive theories, today's research provides a stringent argument, often based on parsimonious rational choice assumptions, and then rigorously tests it by using innovative empirical methods. The contemporary research paradigm can be explained, at least partially, by the low portability of former work. Less attention has been paid to the concrete operationalization of key concepts – with Linz's idea of mentality being only the most obvious controversy. Until today, I am not aware of studies that spelled out in detail how this concept could be measured empirically. In addition, the corresponding term of political ideology has been so deeply rooted in the unique context of totalitarian regimes that it remains hard to free the comparative study of ideologies from this specific understanding. These ideologies distort reality and make people lose real contact with their environment. They are often portrayed as being rigid and doctrinaire, following an orthodox purity

that is preserved by a “priesthood of ideologues.”¹ Key ideological texts in the form of manifestos, speeches, books, or pamphlets cannot only be identified but are often elevated to a religious state, like Mao’s “Red Bible.” This particular understanding of a consistent ideological edifice has hindered the concept from traveling to broader autocratic contexts. Yet, as I detail later when I point to future research directions, we should be open to less formalized and also less “intellectualized” forms of political thinking that guide the legitimacy idea of a country. A vulgarized version of nationalism or a habitualized reference to monarchy or tradition is capable of gaining a sufficient following among people, too. This book has tried to distill the diversity of the legitimacy claims with an eye toward this broader understanding of ideology.

While the extreme cases of totalitarian regimes yielded important insights about the role of ordinary citizens and what over-politicization means in its most exaggerated form, the second wave of research placed more emphasis on socioeconomic conditions and informal politics. The starting signal for the second research wave is Linz’s (1964) seminal discussion of Francoist Spain and what an authoritarian regime actually is. Second-wave autocracy research has had a lasting influence on the field, setting the agenda for a new research focus on so-called third-world countries, and underlining the importance of economic and social performance to de-politicize society (Beblawi and Luciani 1987; O’Donnell 1979). It was also more interested in military or personalist regimes (Janowitz 1964; Nordlinger 1977; Perlmutter 1977; Schmitter 1977), it featured neo-patrimonial rule, and it emphasized patron-client relationships over formal party structures (Eisenstadt 1973b; Eisenstadt and Lemarchand 1981; Roth 1968; Scott 1972). In short, the object of study transformed and so have the academic approaches. These debates have not only informed the discussions of performance-based legitimation efforts in this book but also of the more encompassing path of de-politicization.

While Linz’s essay was the starting point for the second wave, Barbara Geddes’s (1999) review article on what we know about democratizations after twenty years of intensive study signaled the beginning of the third wave. With this third wave of autocracy scholarship, the methodical toolbox opened to include a wide range of approaches. Moreover, the regional bias that was typical in the preceding waves was overcome.

¹ The citation (and much more inspiration) stem from an excellent manuscript by Michael Freeden, “Authoritarianism and Ideology,” presented at the workshop “Ordinary Citizens in Autocracies,” University of Nottingham, June 6, 2018.

What the majority of these studies highlighted is the stabilizing effect of political institutions. With the rise of newly collected data, this could be shown in admirable clarity (Brownlee 2007; Gandhi 2008; Haggard and Kaufman 2016; Magaloni 2006; Svobik 2012).

Each of the three waves of scholarship has concentrated over the past seven decades on different facets of autocratic regimes. The major challenge was to bring these facets together in a unified theoretical framework. The three theory frames of legitimation, repression, and co-optation with their different dimensions and mechanisms are my attempt to do justice to these works.

Systems theory has also been helpful in thinking about the different functions that these three pillars of stability fulfill. It is not only that the three pillars address the three most important collective actors in political regimes but that they also cover three crucial functions. The legitimation pillar aims at the Eastonian input dimension of gaining support, both diffuse and specific. The repression pillar aims at channeling or controlling the demands to the political system. It has been argued that repression is even more successful if carried out at an earlier stage. If the regime's gatekeeper position is so powerful that it can even control the conversion process of a prepolitical "want" into a political "demand," it does not need to re-press the demand, because it has already suppressed the want before its public articulation. Finally, co-optation can be understood from a systems theory perspective by thinking of it as a steering capacity that necessitates internal unity and cohesion to be both effective and efficient. As such, these three functions form a bounded whole in which a complementary relationship among them has been assumed.

Complementarity is the key conceptual cement that binds the three partial theory frames together into one comprehensive theoretical framework. I argue that the theoretical parts are not only substitutive, neutral, or even detrimental toward each other but that they are complementary. Again, I saw the need to dig deeper into the concept of complementarity and carve out three understandings that guide my theory building. In the logic of contrast, A serves as the missing ingredient. In the logic of similarity, A and B pull in the same direction and develop mutual synergies. And in the logic of economics, a decrease in the price of A leads to an increase in the demand for B. These three understandings have led me to argue that the most stable combinations of factors can be seen in an over-politicization and a de-politicization logic. While the former maximizes the antagonism between friend and foe, relying on ideational legitimation that is even able to justify hard repression while the party secures intra-elite cohesion, the latter follows the contrasting

logic. Instead of activating the people, it passivates them and makes them apathetic followers. Instead of expanding the political sphere, it cuts it back and hopes for a withdrawal into the private realm. People should be kept satisfied and apolitical by a combination of performance legitimization and soft repression as the two most important INUS conditions, combined with formal as well as informal co-optation efforts. What proved to be imperative here is to simultaneously avoid hard repression. Over-politicization and de-politicization paths constitute the two logics of autocratic rule.

This two-logics theory has been tested empirically for forty-five autocratic regime episodes in East Asia since the end of World War II. Empirically, I rely on case study narratives. I argue that they have been necessary as the data – despite recent admirable efforts in systematically collecting data on autocratic regimes – is still sparse and fragmented (Lankina and Tertychnaya 2020). Moreover, the data largely concentrates on observable events (e.g., protests) and institutional structures (e.g., number of parties in parliament). However, what is difficult to observe is not necessarily unimportant; informal co-optation practices or legitimacy questions cannot be answered with indicators from these massive datasets. In this situation, case knowledge by country experts is indispensable.

The case narratives that I use in this book are an attempt to collect available information from these cases and condense this information along predefined criteria. As such, it is a *via media* between deep case studies with a high degree of internal validity and large-N cross-case work that has a particular strength in external validity. Because I have followed the methodological advice of Slater and Ziblatt (2013) to use generalizable variables and mechanisms to maximize control and to use representative variation to enhance external validity, I am confident that the portability of the empirical results is high and can travel to other spatial and temporal contexts. In general, QCA is a backward-looking method. In my case, this means that it finds minimally sufficient combinations in the forty-five cases that it analyzes. It does not aim to generalize beyond these cases. Yet, the empirical results of the different QCA analyses, as well as the systematic theory testing, provide strong empirical support that the theoretical expectation of the two logics has the potential to replace the older distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

The China puzzle remains. It fully fits neither the over-politicization nor the de-politicization path. China as of today is remarkable. While all other regimes face a trade-off between some of the partial functions, China has it all. All other autocratic regime episodes since 1945 in East

Asia have a deficit in ideational- or performance-related legitimation, in hard or soft repression, and/or in formal or informal co-optation. Only China has been able to control all the open flanks of an autocratic regime. Yet, it is open to speculation if this is the “new autocratic perfect,” constituting a sustainable third way, or if it is too resource intensive and China’s success recipe could run out of steam over the long run. What seems to be remarkable in the comparison of all Asian autocracies is the incompatibility of harshly repressing the people and legitimating political rule with socioeconomic performance. This runs not only counter to theoretical expectations, but it is also telling that in the empirical QCA analysis they never appear together simultaneously. This also holds true for the Chinese case. The QCA analyses demonstrate that either hard repression or performance legitimation is logically eliminated for explaining the Chinese cases. Coupled with the theoretical argument on the incommensurability between hard repression and performance legitimation, it gives a strong indication that China (and to a lesser extent, Vietnam) is currently in the midst of a path transformation from over-politicization to de-politicization. Yet, in order to remain stable over the long run, China will need to scale down its hard repression if it wants to maintain its current economic-growth strategy. Keeping both at high levels will likely backfire.

As I emphasized in the Introduction, this book is written in a Linzian spirit of macro theorizing. To a large extent, all researchers in the field of comparative authoritarianism today are indebted to his work. So is this book. When Linz delineated totalitarianism from authoritarian regimes, he established that ideology vs. mentality, monism vs. pluralism, and mobilization vs. no mobilization are the key analytical dimensions for characterizing different types of autocratic rule. This book has aimed in its theoretical explication to go beyond Linz in two important regards. First, it has an explicit explanatory aim. The two logics of autocratic rule that are developed here explain the stability of these regimes. This is the explanatory focus. Second, it builds on Linz, but goes beyond him in updating and modifying the most important features of autocratic rule in light of newer research developments. Instead of the three dimensions that Linz proposed in the 1970s, the book develops a comprehensive theory of autocratic rule that is based on forms of legitimation, repression, and co-optation. It argues that these three theory frames are the building blocks of a new theory of autocratic rule.

To sum up, the major contribution of this book has been to develop a macro theory that integrates insights of several decades of scholarship into one coherent theoretical framework. By applying it systematically to all East Asian autocratic regimes, the book shows the fruitfulness of

the theoretical approach and offers empirical support for the two-logics expectation. I propose that the distinction between over-politicization and de-politicization logics has the potential to replace the old (and increasingly asymmetric) distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes while doing justice to them as root ideas.

Avenues for Future Research

Based on the experience of this book, I would like to point to seven future avenues for research. First, the focus on functions has proven to be useful. It is to some extent unusual today, as the current study of authoritarian regimes is focused either on actors and their motivations or on the effects of political institutions. Also, leading typological attempts differ from this approach. The seminal contribution by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014; 2018) distinguishes autocracies along the locus of power into one-party, military, and personalist regimes. In this light, a return to functional thinking seems to be unorthodox. Yet, it can be justified by the overall goal of this book: to develop a macro theory that explains stability beyond the usual regime subtypes. In a sense, it is reminiscent of older theorizing and cuts across other typologies. As the empirical application to East Asia shows, the macro approach is particularly well equipped to capture functional equivalents. The military regime in Myanmar has been an illustrative case in point. The military organization, the *Tatmadaw*, displays here the effects that we usually ascribe to formal political parties. It is the major co-optation arena, used for settling of intra-elite conflicts, and absorbing of oppositional potential. The three pillars of stability can account for these functional equivalents, and future research might look more systematically at the functions of underlying institutions. These functions and institutions might be, particularly in the autocratic context, often more similar, despite their different appearances.

Second, future works on autocratic regimes should put particular emphasis on the multidimensionality of concepts. The concepts that I used here are all polysemic and essentially contested. Accounting for the complex architecture of concepts like legitimation or stability has proven to be fruitful. Yet, the book also showed the enormous empirical challenges that we face when we use these macro constructs in comparative authoritarianism. Legitimation might illustrate this best. There are several neighboring concepts to legitimacy. Support, for example, shares with legitimacy the emphasis on ordinary people. While support is a more encompassing concept as it unites behavioral and cognitive dimensions, legitimacy is ultimately a cognitive and

subjective evaluation that lies in the eye of the beholder. Easton has defined support as follows: “we can say that A supports B either when A acts on behalf of B or when he orients himself favorably towards B” (Easton 1965b, 159). As such, legitimacy refers only to the latter, the favorable orientation toward the ruler. With widespread “as-if-actions” (Wedeen 1999) and the strong incentives for preference falsification (Kuran 1991; 1997) in autocratic contexts, it is difficult to disentangle support from legitimacy (Gerschewski 2018). A second example stems from repression. Although it might be straightforward to assess hard and soft repression by the number of human rights violations per year, it should be kept in mind that repression has a hidden face as well. Repression can be structural and subtle. There can be a climate of fear that makes direct repression less necessary as people’s compliance is already secured. There are direct and indirect effects of a repressive measure. If a journalist is put in jail for political reportage, then the direct and immediate effect is clear. A critical voice has been put in prison. Yet, the longer lasting and indirect effect of this measure can be anticipatory obedience and self-censorship of a press that fears repression. This kind of unobservable effect can also be translated to the question of legitimacy belief and opportunistic support. Widespread and regular as-if-actions can reinforce a societal climate in which social conformity pressures make people believe that they believe. To account for these indirect and fine-grained effects, which are often difficult to detect, will be a future research challenge. Qualitative research, particularly ethnographic research, seems to be naturally better equipped (Reny 2016). Its societal seismographs are more finely calibrated. Yet, quantitative research should also go more in this direction and ask more evaluative questions to country experts that go beyond observable events. Instead, taking the opaque nature of autocracies seriously (Schedler 2013) and assessing the importance of concealed practices and structures will be important in future research.

Third, the book stresses the interplay of factors. Instead of isolating the significance and size of the effect of a single factor, it argues in terms of combinations of factors that jointly produce an effect. In other words, the book tries to go down a less-traveled road. Instead of physical causation that is still at the heart of most social science work, it makes a case for chemical causation. It is less interested in the *ceteris paribus* effect but rather sees the assemblage of factors that react with one another as decisive for producing an outcome.

While the *Oxford Handbook of Causation* lists dozens of theories of causation (Menzies, Hitchcock, and Beebe 2009), the arguably most important distinctions for the social sciences are along two axes

Table IV.1 *Explanatory routes in the social sciences*

	Physical Causation	Chemical Causation
Regularity Theory of Causation	Quantitative evidence based on isolating the effect of one explanatory factor	QCA analyses
Procedural Understanding of Causal Mechanisms	Qualitative case studies with a focus on one explanatory factor	Qualitative case studies with a focus on the interplay of explanatory factors

(see also Brady 2008).² From David Hume, we can learn that the regularity theory of causation should be distinguished from a more procedural understanding of causal mechanisms (Hume [1739] 1978, 169). While the former argues that we can be confident to observe a causal relationship between cause A and effect B if A precedes and is contiguous to B, instantiating a regularity between cause and effect, the latter argues that our causal confidence is strengthened if we know how A turns into B. And from John Stuart Mill, we can borrow the distinction between physical and chemical causation. While the former is interested in the isolated *ceteris paribus* effect, the latter looks at the combination of different factors that produces a new compound in a chemical reaction (Mill 1911, 213–14). It is safe to say that the idea of chemical causation is still a relatively unacquainted concept in the social sciences. Cross-tabulating these two axes, the regularity and mechanistic understanding of causation on the one hand and the distinction between a physical vs. a chemical understanding on the other hand, we arrive at Table IV.1.

In this book, I have made use of QCA analyses. This method's core competence lies in detecting the regularity of a chemical reaction. I have empirically shown that the over-politicization and de-politicization paths are the most frequent combination of factors that produce stable autocracies. The other cells have not been tackled within this book. It is important to me to explicitly highlight the explanatory scope and limits of this book. Future research might take up the methodological consequences that the three other cells bring with them. I suppose that we tend to

² I hasten to add that this is of course a very simplified picture of causation in the social sciences. It needs to be stated that in the excellent and almost authoritative contribution by Brady (2008) four major theories of causation are distinguished. Beyond the Humean and Neo-Humean approach and the mechanistic understanding, Brady considers the counterfactual and the manipulation approaches as well. It goes without saying that I do not intend to challenge the importance and relevance of the two latter approaches. Yet, I hope that the focus on regularity vs. mechanism and physical vs. chemical causation illustrates the merits and limits of this book's explanatory route.

know the least about the bottom-right cell, that is, the focus on the interplay of explanatory factors that jointly produce – in a kind of chemical reaction – stable autocratic rule. How the set of explanatory factors complement each other and how they jointly work to produce the outcome is still to be shown in deep case studies.

Fourth, the QCA analysis presented here is a snapshot analysis that comes with disadvantages that future research might also want to tackle. It takes snapshots at different moments in time, comparing them with each other, but falls short of providing a moving picture. It cannot account in the same way for dynamic processes as in-depth case studies are able to do. While the case narratives provided in the online appendix might partially remedy this shortcoming, they should not be understood as full-fledged case studies. Also, the analysis presented here zoomed out to the regime level and compared autocratic episodes, demarcated by the effective head of government. Future analyses might want to zoom more into the respective episodes and make a distinction between different phases, say three different phases of the Mao regime in China. Also, an intra-state comparison at a regional, federal, or local level as well as center-periphery comparisons might be a fruitful future endeavor. This expansion of the comparison might also allow for the co-existence of the two logics either across time or across space, for example, an over-politicization in the rural area and a de-politicization logic in the metropolitan area. However, I would be skeptical that the two logics can co-exist within the same area and at the same time, but this needs to be shown empirically.

Fifth, I would like to explicitly emphasize the role of ordinary citizens. In an illuminating book on the role of *Ordinary Citizens in Extraordinary Times*, Nancy Bermeo (2003, 3) has given an excellent definition. She says ordinary citizens are the simple citizens. Some might call them “the masses” or “the public,” but both terms have connotations of singularity that do a disservice to the heterogeneity of the group. The term “people” draws our attention to the individuality of the group’s membership and the adjective “ordinary” underscores the fact that they have no extraordinary powers vis-à-vis the states in which they live. They are neither politicians nor military officers. They spend most of their lives in personal endeavors – earning money, supporting families, and pursuing whatever leisure activities their social status allows.

Bermeo suggests taking a closer look at the role that these ordinary citizens play. In comparative authoritarianism, it seems that we have sometimes lost sight of the people. Instead, the scientific discourse in the past years has figured more prominently either on the role of the elites and how institutions affect intra-elite cohesion or on the role

of repressing dissenting opponents. The ordinary citizens have usually played a smaller role – and if they were mentioned, it was as Bermeo highlighted rather in the context of “the masses” or “the public” in the singular. Yet, it is the ordinary citizens who suffer directly from autocratic rule. It is also the ordinary citizens who are shaped by the specificities of autocratic rule in the long run (Bernhard and Karakoç 2007; Neundorff, Gerschewski, and Olar 2020; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2017). We still lack a clear understanding of how autocratic rule casts its shadow on ordinary citizens – even after it has ceased to exist. Autocracies leave a mark on the (political) values and attitudes of their citizens. With eventual democratization, the previous autocratic regimes do not stop influencing the hearts and minds of the people. Nostalgia might be an irrational response to the end of a dictatorship, but it is a widespread one. Authoritarian orientations are hard to overcome, on both the elite level and the citizen level. Authoritarian practices are often sticky. And the same holds true for authoritarian political thinking. A shift in scholarly focus away from elite-centrism to concentrate instead on the ordinary citizens would improve our understanding of the political culture in autocratic settings, and also in young and even in more mature democracies. Studying the ordinary citizens should constitute a major part in the agenda of future comparative authoritarianism.

Sixth, and relatedly, a lesson from this book that might inspire future research is the ideology question. As I have mentioned, I adopted a modern understanding of ideology that emancipated itself from the classic usage of the 1950s and 1960s. Ideologies are not understood as rigid thought skeletons that hamper the relationship with empirical reality; instead, a less formal stance was taken. An ideology here is a more or less coherent set of ideas that underlie political actions and motivations. It does not need to be doctrinaire, orthodox, purist, rigid, intellectual, and monolithic. Instead, an ideology can be broadly defined as a “cognitive structure with legitimizing functions” (Stråth 2006, 23). With such an understanding, the study of political ideology can be unhinged from its totalitarian undertones. It can be translated into a thriving and flourishing comparative study of political ideologies (Freeden 2013; Freedden, Sargent, and Stears 2013). It also paves the way for a genuine debate on comparative autocratic political thought. This is a field in its infancy, but it promises to enrich political theory and the history of political ideas, which currently suffers from a heavy democracy bias.

The seventh and last point has been prominent throughout the book. It seems essential to me to continue working on legitimacy in nondemocratic contexts. If we take seriously the dictum of Graf von Kielmansegg (1971, 389) that behind every political system is a “legitimacy idea,” then we are

in need of digging deeper. The research field in terms of how and to what extent autocracies legitimate their rule is still in its infancy (Tannenberg et al. 2020). Of course, this research agenda presupposes viewing autocracies as a form of political rule (*Herrschaft* in the Weberian sense) and not as a mere exercise of power (*Macht*). But there are good reasons to do so. With the exceptions of kleptocratic regimes, sheer tyrannies, and despotic rule, all other autocratic regimes say something about why they are entitled to rule. It is to be expected that with the spread of the global norm of democracy, the pressure to legitimate autocratic rule becomes even higher. Electoral autocracies constitute today a significant share of autocratic regime types. The demand side from citizens seems to be growing and the supply side of the autocrat needs to react to this.

While being long skeptical about arguments about popular beliefs in autocratic contexts, this new research direction has recently been emphasized more in the rational choice tradition as well. Headed by the path-breaking studies of Guriev and Treisman on “informational autocracies,” it is argued that increasingly autocrats survive because they can – rightly or wrongly – persuade the citizens about their competences (Guriev and Treisman 2019; 2020). The key to explaining autocratic survival lies here no longer in fear and mass repression, but in controlling information and manipulating public opinion. While this approach is still rather elite-driven, arguing with the toolkit that modern autocrats have on their disposal, it cannot be underestimated how important the shift in focus has been: the survival of autocracies hinges also on the autocrat’s popularity (Mauk 2020; Rosenfeld 2020b).

It will be interesting to see how legitimacy patterns are going to change in the coming decades. It seems to me that the time of the encompassing and orthodox ideologies has passed. While some communist regimes have survived the Cold War (Dimitrov 2013), their legitimacy patterns have changed. Even North Korea today faces increasing problems in maintaining its rigid Juche script (Dukalskis and Joo 2021). Signs of adaptation are recognizable. They might not go so far as we observe in China, where the nationalist discourse has won the upper hand over communist language, but the general trend is that we observe an increasing ideological amalgamation and eclecticism. Political legitimacy formulae are today more flexible, fluctuating, and mutable. The high level of abstractness that is mirrored in the various “-isms” is only the first analytical step. They give us an orientation, indicating in which box we can put autocratic political thought. But the way in which these elements are (repeatedly) put together on the ground might differ from our abstract -isms. As such, it will be crucial for future research to see the big ideologies as a guardrail that shows us the general direction, but

we will need to be receptive to the possibility of all kinds of ideological mixes and gradations. Yet, if there is currently one overarching ideology that works as a societal binding force in a lot of different contexts, it will be nationalism. Being a thin ideology itself, it is often thickened by other ingredients. Yet, nationalism might be *the* bracket that holds together assortments of various ideological fractions.

Legitimacy formulae change their appearances over time and come in regional variations. They are also not followed or believed throughout the country to the same extent. It will be fruitful to disaggregate legitimacy (and with it, the two other pillars) in future research. While the Weberian roots are state-centric, questions of autocratic legitimacy and legitimation should travel both beyond and below the nation-state (Dukalskis 2021; Glasius 2018a). Legitimacy does also not need to be restricted to the structural polity level of autocracies but can be fruitfully applied to a policy level that makes deliberative and consultative elements compatible with authoritarianism (He and Warren 2011; Stromseth, Malesky, and Gueorguiev 2017; Truex 2017). These are fascinating new directions that open up refreshing perspectives. They also chime with innovative ideas to think of authoritarian practices more thoroughly, instead of defining authoritarianism primarily on the regime level (Glasius 2018b).

For future research, I propose to systematize not only autocratic regime types, as admirable efforts have already done (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014; 2018; Wahman, Teorell, and Hadenius 2013) but also the autocratic political thought that underlies and motivates these regimes and practices. While this book had an explanatory purpose and used stability as its focal point, we still lack what we might call an autocratic theory. Of course, there is no *one* democratic theory, either. Instead, we have an abundant inventory of democratic thought. But this inventory is, with slight alterations, almost canonical. Such a canonization of democratic thinking has made it possible to distinguish different distinct understandings of democracy. When, for example, the group of scholars surrounding the V-Dem project distinguish electoral, liberal or pluralist, majoritarian, participatory, deliberative from egalitarian democracies (Coppedge et al. 2011), they argue on the basis of long traditions with identifiable authorities in the respective field. Without doubt, democracy is also an essential contested concept and disagreements about proper classifications are widespread. Yet, and this is important to note, there is a dialogue that tries to systematize democratic political thought. In political theory, we are aware of the family of liberal, republican, deliberative, pluralist, and radical thinkers, and we know (and teach) the works of their most prominent family members. Unfortunately, we still lack such

a systematization effort for the autocratic counterpart. The picture here is still messy and there seems to be no order in the different lines of autocratic political thinking. When, for example, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau are the forefathers of the idea of a (democratic) social contract, is there an autocratic counterpart? Or take a more modern example, when we can identify a minimalist political economy approach to democracy and link this to the works of Schumpeter or Downs, what would be the autocratic counterpart that draws adequate analogies from the market? Of course, we do have the first important works in this regard. Comparative authoritarianism scholars have used the contract as an utilitarian metaphor (Beblawi and Luciani 1987) or the idea of markets and prices as the most important datum (Wintrobe 1998); yet, what we still miss is a comprehensive compendium that systematizes these efforts. A project that brings order into the rich reservoir of autocratic political thought will be a promising future undertaking.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Operationalization, Measurement, and Aggregation

The Two Logics of Autocratic Rule advances a macro theory on autocratic regime stability. Empirically, the book applies the theory to all East Asian autocracies since 1945. The book engages in a data collection effort that is characterized by a dialogue between available quantitative indicators and qualitative evidence that is found in relevant secondary literature. As such, it can be perceived as a *via media*. It remains case sensitive enough by relying on case narratives that take the complexity of the case seriously, but aims at distilling case-specific knowledge into the six variables of ideational and performance legitimation, hard and soft repression, and formal and informal co-optation as well as for the different understandings of autocratic stability.

Please also refer to Table 6.3, which provides an overview of the sources used for the case study narratives and the AREA dataset.

In the following, I outline the measurement and aggregation rules for the main concepts that I use: (1) autocracy, (2) stability, (3) legitimation, (4) repression, and (5) co-optation.

1 Autocracy

Authoritarian or autocratic regimes are mostly defined *ex negativo*. This holds true for the working definition that I use here as well. For defining autocracy, I rely on three of the most widely used datasets: first, the one originally by Przeworski and colleagues (Alvarez et al. 1996), second, the one by Geddes and colleagues (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018), and third, the one by Boix and colleagues (Boix, Miller, and Rosato 2013).

I am only interested in autocratic regimes. To distinguish between democracies and autocracies empirically, I follow the pragmatic definition by Przeworski and colleagues: “We treat dictatorship as a residual category, perhaps better denominated as ‘not democracy’” (Alvarez et al. 1996, 7). Whatever regime does not qualify for democracy is coded as a nondemocracy. They employ a minimal definition of democracy

that only entails the existence of contestation.¹ Four operational rules are spelled out (Alvarez et al. 1996; Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2009, 2010):

1. the chief executive must be elected competitively
2. the legislative must be elected competitively
3. there must be more than one party involved
4. alternation rule (type II error), that is, an alternation in office has taken place by elections at least once.

A regime is classified as democratic if all four conditions are fulfilled. In turn, a regime is classified as authoritarian if at least one of these four necessary conditions is violated. Only in a second step do they differentiate between types of nondemocratic rule. They focus on the effective head of government and distinguish between a military dictatorship if the ruler comes from the military ranks; a royal dictatorship if the ruler reigns under a title such as king, emir, or sultan, and if followed by hereditary succession; and last a civilian dictatorship if the head is neither a military nor a monarch (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2009).

The dataset by Geddes and colleagues is different to the one by Przeworski and colleagues as well as Boix and colleagues (2013) who base their coding on a Dahlian understanding of democracy. Geddes et al. look exclusively at autocratic regimes and treat – as one of the very exceptional datasets – democracies as a residual category; they are nonautocracies. An autocratic regime starts when elections have been substantially distorted by party bans, electoral fraud, or electoral violence. This is in line with Przeworski's approach. More importantly, however, is the fact that regimes are also coded as being authoritarian if elections have been competitive, but the formal and informal rules have changed in a way that the pluralistic game between competing interests is infringed upon (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2013, 6–7).

Geddes has modified her initial dataset on different regime types that identified single-party regimes, military regimes, and personalist regimes.² She now includes data on the autocratic start and end events and provides a short narrative about these dates. Together with an

¹ Contestation is then a second step qualified by three features that must be fulfilled for a democracy: *ex ante* uncertainty, *ex post* irreversibility, and repeatability (Alvarez et al. 1996).

² An additional minor modification refers to her regime type distinction. She differentiates in the newer dataset between monarchies and personalist regimes and faces at least partially the critique by Hadenius and Teorell that personalism can be found throughout all regime subtypes to a varying extent and should not be treated as a distinct regime type (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2013; Hadenius and Teorell 2007).

extensive checklist of question, this makes the comparison to the previously discussed datasets easier. The three benchmark datasets will be employed here to define the autocratic regimes in East Asia. Please also refer to Chapter 6.

2 Stability

I distinguish between two measurements of stability: persistence and continuity.

Persistence

The persistence measure of stability is straightforward. I will use the number of years in office of the ruling coalition. The duration of the ruling coalition is taken from the Svolik dataset (Svolik 2012). He argues that instead of focusing only on the head of government, the ruling coalition should be the more appropriate unit of analysis. A ruling coalition is defined as the uninterrupted succession of leaders who are affiliated with the ruling regime.³ This can be the case when the successor is a pro-regime candidate who has explicitly stated their pro-government stance before assuming office, as either a civilian or a military officer. The same holds true for succeeding members of royal families who are coded as being within a ruling coalition if they have not openly taken an oppositional attitude toward the government. I follow this definition. The number of years in office is a continuous variable. I have used the method of direct calibration with thirty years of the ruling coalition being in power as the 0.5 threshold.

I have also run a QCA analysis on the subsample of autocratic regime periods that have ended between 1945 and 2008. The period that is covered by the book ends in 2008, and some of the ruling coalitions have lasted longer than the end date of my data. To account for the right-censored nature of the persistence measure, a separate analysis has been undertaken. The empirical results can be found in the online appendix.

Moreover, I have also used a different measure of the persistence understanding of stability. Instead of the length of the ruling coalition, I have used the time period that the respective effective head of government has been in power. Yet, I prefer the ruling coalition definition of stability. It is superior to the effective head of government as the change of the effective head does not need to indicate a substantial

³ In Svolik's dataset, this is the "pol_aff" variable. For more information, see the code book (Svolik 2012).

change in the regime. It can be a routinized and as in the Chinese case even an institutionalized turnover after two terms. Also, the effective head of government can die a natural death or can step down voluntarily, which gives us no information about the stability of their regime. A replacement of the effective head of government can take place within the same ruling coalition. Yet, the trade-off is the following: if I use the change of the effective head of government as the major casing dimension that identifies the cases and measure the outcome of stability on a higher level (ruling coalition), I can run into the mistake of attributing stabilizing conditions to a case that goes beyond its sheer existence. In other words, I can have, for example, case 1, case 2, and case 3 that fall under the same ruling coalition, but case 2 can differ from case 1 in its stability recipe, but both receive the same stability score. Against this backdrop, I have also used the tenure of the effective head of government as an additional check to be “on par” again and control for such a potential mistake. As the 0.5 cutoff point, I have used ten years of uninterrupted rule of the effective head of government. Please refer to the additional results section in the online appendix.

Continuity

While the persistence understanding of stability is measured in number of years in office, the continuity understanding of stability will be introduced as an ordinal variable. The crucial questions here are the following: How well is the regime prepared for power transitions? How well is the regime fitted to stay in power after the effective head of government is changed? In other words, how many concessions does the regime need to make in this delicate moment in time?

Four categories will be used. In decreasing order of stability, the regime

1. remains unchanged (value of 1)
2. changes in autocratic regime subtype (value of 0.66)
3. suffers partial democratization (value of 0.33)
4. suffers a full democratization and collapse of the autocratic regime (value of 0)

To measure the ordinal variable, I use the first three subindicators in the “Democracy and Dictatorship” dataset (on the executive, the legislative, and the party; I exclude the turnover criterion) (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010).

An autocratic regime turns democratic at the end of the autocratic episode if all subindicators on the executive, legislation, and party involvement have democratic values. A partial democratization is defined here

as the change of at least two of the three chosen subindicators. A change in the regime subtype is again taken from Cheibub and colleagues. The key question is if the autocratic episode ends with a change of the regime subtype, for example, from a one-party to a military regime. If there is no change, that is, if the autocratic regime subtype has not changed, and if no partial and full democratization can be observed, then the regime has proven to be the most stable with regard to a continuity understanding of stability. There was no need to compromise.

3 Legitimation

For the legitimation pillar, I distinguish between ideational and performance legitimation.

Measurement

For performance legitimation, three aspects are covered: (1) the economic performance of the regime, (2) the social welfare achievements, and (3) the domestic security dimension.

1. For economic growth, the usual macroeconomic indicators can be taken from the different databases. I have decided to take the GDP growth per capita, in power purchasing parity (PPP) at constant international USD that is provided by the Penn World Tables (Heston, Summers, and Aten 2012). One note of caution is in place here. The relative numbers should be preferred over the absolute ones. This has to do with two aspects. First, the growth rate better captures the idea of the convergence between the legitimacy claim and the belief. The rulers promise growth rather than wealth, and the ruled also evaluate the performance of the regime or the direct authorities in relative terms. If they are able to produce growth and progress, they gain legitimacy. Second, the modernization trap can be circumvented. Modernization theorists basically argue that the higher the GDP/capita is, the higher the chances are that an autocratic regime breaks down. The performance-driven legitimacy does not run counter to this but argues instead in terms of economic growth that raises the regime's legitimacy.

Three other macro-economic indicators are taken for assessing the economic performance. The inflation rate and the energy consumption per capita should account for the extent to which the regime has delivered economically. They are taken from the comprehensive Quality of Government (QoG) dataset that has been compiled at the University

of Gothenburg (Teorell et al. 2013). Last, the GINI household gross income is used to indicate to what extent the distribution of households' disposable income is equal (Solt 2009). Assuming a general relative inequality aversion, the more equal the growth is, the higher the performance legitimacy is assumed to be.

2. Social welfare achievements are the second dimension of performance legitimacy. Here, the two most important issues for the population are education and health. They are measured along the mean years of schooling. Barro and Lee have provided this indicator from UNESCO and data can be retrieved from the QoG dataset. The Gothenburg dataset will also be used for the life expectancy at birth (Teorell et al. 2013). It is a proxy for the working of the regime's health system. If the regime is able to create a solid health and education system, it should gain support in the eyes of the ruled.
3. A third dimension refers directly to the regime's capacity to govern. The International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) proposes an indicator that encompasses the level of corruption, law and order, and the quality of bureaucracy. On the one hand, it covers the security from bureaucratic arbitrariness. On the other hand, it approximates the regime's efforts for the implementation of domestic law and order and the absence/presence of crime. The rationale behind the inclusion of this indicator is to argue that the more the regime is able to install domestic security and law and order, the higher the performance legitimacy might be that it enjoys.

To be sure, these proxy indicators do not measure performance legitimacy directly. This would only be possible by using valid and reliable micro data of citizens' views. Yet, this comparable data is simply not available. Instead, the proposed route argues that the chances that a regime or an authority is viewed in the eyes of the subordinated as legitimate due to its performance increases when the precondition is met that the regime or the authority delivers economically, socially, and in terms of physical security.

Ideational legitimation was even more difficult to measure. I have proceeded in two steps. In a first step, I created a profile of the official legitimacy claim by the autocracy. The legitimacy matrix distinguishes among three objects and two modi of support. In a second step, I checked to what extent these claims have met empirical reality. To check this congruence, I wrote case narratives for all autocratic episodes and assessed them against the backdrop of four criteria: (1) validity, (2) justifiability, (3) expression of consent, and (4) uncontestedness. I relied on linguistic qualifiers in relevant secondary literature for an assessment. All four criteria have been assessed using a four-point scale (1, 0.66, 0.33, and 0).

Aggregation Rule

Finally, the internal structure of the concept is to be analyzed. Aggregation rules need to be specified that set the standards for how the different parts of the concepts are to be combined to arrive at a multidimensional concept. In general, I follow the aggregation rules of Gerardo Munck (2009), who has provided a helpful orientation. He uses two criteria for an assessment on how to aggregate dimensions: (1) Do the components interact? (2) Can the components substitute for each other? Based on these two criteria, he puts forward Table A.1.

For ideational legitimation, Beetham identifies the three conditions of validity, justifiability, and transfer as three necessary conditions that jointly form a sufficient condition for legitimacy (Beetham 1991). The mathematical operator between the three conditions is a logical AND, the minimum in fuzzy logic, or the intersection in set theory.

The additional criterion on the success of ideologies to crowd out alternative meanings of essentially contested concepts can only be partially compensated by the three necessary conditions of validity, justifiability, and transfer. To provide stable and justifiable legitimating norms that are transferred cannot fully substitute the battle of ideologies for providing exclusive meaning. The two conditions are, however, interactive. Their effects cannot be separated. To provide such legitimating norms has an effect on the task of freeze-framing the meaning of contested concepts and vice versa. In this sense, the geometric mean is suggested for interactive and partially compensatory relationships between the conceptual attributes.

As for performance legitimation, the relationship between economic performance, social welfare, and physical security can be seen as partially substitutable and as noninteractive. There is no clear theoretical link that would argue that the three secondary dimensions interact with each other. Yet, to a certain extent they can partially substitute each other. The effects of a regime that builds its legitimacy base on guaranteeing physical security or on economic success or social welfare can be partially complementary. An arithmetic mean is therefore suggested.

Last, the relationship between ideational and performance legitimation needs to be theorized. Arguing with Easton (1965), a lack of specific support can be compensated by diffuse support as a “reservoir of good will.” In the long run, deficient specific support can have a lasting negative impact on the ideational basis of a political order. In other words, while shorter periods of hardship can be overcome by reliance on diffuse support, chronic shortcomings in delivering performance have detrimental consequences. In this sense, the relationship between

Table A.1 *Aggregation rules*

Relationship between Components	Aggregation Rule
Noninteractive and nonsubstitutable	<i>Minimum</i>
Noninteractive and partially substitutable	<i>Arithmetic Mean</i>
Noninteractive and substitutable	<i>Maximum</i>
Interactive and nonsubstitutable	<i>Multiplication</i>
Interactive and partially substitutable	<i>Geometric Mean</i>

Source: Munck 2009, 50.

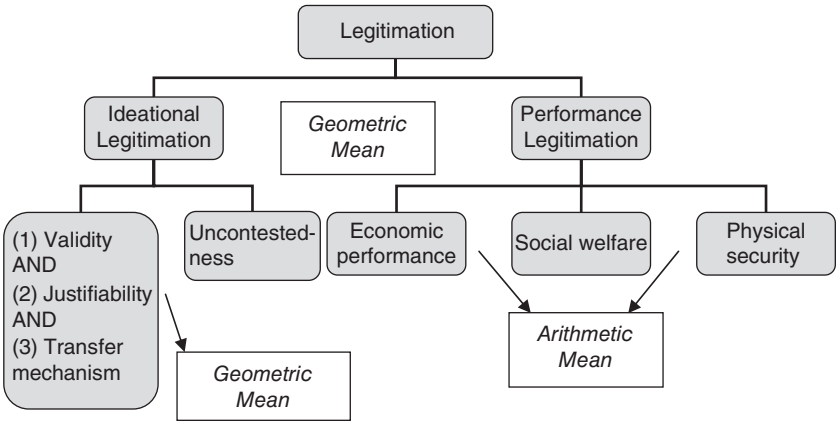


Figure A.1 Concept tree of legitimization with aggregation rules

ideational and performance legitimization is best described as interactive and partially compensatory. This suggests the usage of the geometric mean as rule of aggregation.⁴ Figure A.1 provides a summary.

4 Repression

I distinguish between two types of repression: (1) hard repression that targets the physical integrity of the person and (2) soft repression that curtails civil liberties.

⁴ The geometric mean is only valid for nonnegative numbers. As soon as one factor is 0, the whole product is 0. Therefore, I code the lowest category not with 0, but with 0.05.

Measurement

Several databases on the use of repression already exist. For hard repression, I use the Political Terror Scale (PTS) and the Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project (Cingranelli and Richards 2010; Gibney and Dalton 1996; Wood and Gibney 2010). Both base their coding on two annual publications: the *US Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *Amnesty International Annual Report*. Both cover almost the same time period, starting either in 1976 (PTS) or in 1981 (CIRI) for almost all countries worldwide. They also share their commitment to measure the same violations of personal integrity rights by state agents. The quartet of violations against personal integrity rights that is assessed consists of:

1. torture;
2. extrajudicial killing;
3. disappearances;
4. imprisonment for political reasons.

Despite the similarities and the high correlation between the two databases,⁵ there are some remarkable differences that should be kept in mind. First, PTS is a standards-based dataset while CIRI is an event-based dataset. The former evaluates the overall level of hard repression,⁶ while the latter counts the frequency of incidents of violations against personal integrity rights. The advantage of the standard-based approach is that it “allows for a greater degree of political knowledge to be used” (Poe and Tate 1994, 868), while the event count is more accurate. Second, PTS factors in the size of the country, whereas CIRI explicitly states, “CIRI coders are instructed to ignore the population of a country in question” (Cingranelli and Richards 2010, 420). CIRI is only interested in the frequency of the rights violations, which has been criticized by PTS as it does make a difference if, for example, 3,000 people were imprisoned in China or in Cuba whose population is many times smaller. Third, CIRI provides disaggregated data, while PTS offers an overall evaluation ranging from level 1 (“people are

⁵ The rank correlation coefficient Kendall’s Tau b is 0.73 for the US State Department–derived coding and 0.65 for the Amnesty International–derived coding (Wood and Gibney 2010, 375).

⁶ Moreover, PTS only codes the actual level of repression. This means that if a country has used extensive repression in the previous years and does therefore not need to rely on the same level of repression in the current year, it receives a lower score for using less repression.

not imprisoned for their views, and torture is rare or exceptional. ... Political murders are extremely rare”) to level 5 in which violations are not just common but “have been extended to the whole population” (Wood and Gibney 2010, 373). The PTS argues that its coders have three conceptual dimensions in mind: scope, intensity, and range. They assess what type of violation against personal integrity is employed with what frequency and what portion of the population is targeted for abuse. In a qualitative and subjective coding of the US State Department and the Amnesty International annual reports, an overall assessment is made (Wood and Gibney 2010, 373–75).

For the measurement of hard repression within this study, both databases are employed. However, being aware of the similarities of the sources as well as the differences in the coding procedures is crucial for processing the information contained in the scores. The datasets start in the 1970s, but the scope of this empirical study reaches further back. The missing data will be coded qualitatively by the author using the same linguistic qualifiers as the standard-based approach by the Political Terror Scale. I rely on linguistic qualifiers about the scope, intensity, and range with which the violations against physical integrity and against political rights have taken place: What parts of the population have been targeted how often by what kind of repression measure? As neither the annual reports by Amnesty International nor of the US State Department reach back to 1945, I consult secondary sources about the East Asian countries and lay open my qualitative assessments as well as the secondary literature that I use.

Soft repression will also be measured by two sources. Cingranelli and Richards do not just account for hard repression but also for the violations of civil liberties. As discussed, the disaggregated subscores are an important improvement as they allow a more fine-grained analysis. CIRI offers a second index, the “Empowerment Rights Index” that consists of freedom of movement, freedom of speech, workers’ rights, political participation, and freedom of religion (Cingranelli and Richards 2008). Workers’ rights and political participation rights, however, have been excluded by definition so that a new “CIRI Soft Repression Index” will be constructed. The freedom of assembly and association that CIRI reports as a classic civil liberty will also be added. This has the positive side effect that it makes the new index consistent with the second source, the Civil Liberties Dataset (CLD) by Svend-Erik Skaaning and Jørgen Møller (Møller and Skaaning 2013). Symmetric to the measurement of hard repression, soft repression consists of violations against the four civil liberties of:

1. freedom of expression;
2. freedom of assembly and association;
3. freedom of movement;
4. freedom of religion.

The CLD bases the measurement of the civil liberties quartet only on the annual country reports of the US State Department and leaves out the perspective of Amnesty International. Like the CIRI, the CLD also offers disaggregated data. It includes more countries, but its main added value can be seen in a slightly more fine-grained measurement. It introduces a four-point scale. The correlation between the CIRI, which uses only a three-point scale, and the CLD is fairly high.⁷ Combining both sources is in this light suggestive. Missing data is complemented – analogous to hard repression – by consulting secondary sources and using linguistic qualifiers about scope, intensity, and range.

For the data after 1976, I used each dataset separately. As the datasets have three-, four-, and five-point scales, I used Ragin's method of direct calibration for each of the datasets. For the direct method of calibration, three points are of heightened importance. One needs to define the maximum, the minimum, and the 0.5 threshold that marks the point of maximal ambiguity. In his set-theoretic thinking, the 0.5 threshold would constitute the value in which the case is neither in nor outside the set (Ragin 2008). For hard repression, the modified CIRI index adds four individual measures, ranging between 0 and 2. I have taken the 0.5-threshold at a value of four of the aggregated index. The PTS codes the quartet of hard repression that is used here from 1 to 5. I have used 3 as the point of maximal ambiguity that marks the 0.5 cutoff point. The mean of the calibrated four dimensions of the two separate datasets is used as the indicator for hard repression. For softer forms of repression, I coded the CIRI dataset as reported. The CLD dataset codes the four violations of civil liberties from 1 to 4. I have raised the 0.5 threshold slightly higher and have used a 3 as a meaningful 0.5 threshold. The arithmetic mean of 2.5 has been rejected. Instead, I argue that a score of 3 in all four violations of civil liberties is the dividing line between such regimes that rely on soft repression while some others do shy away from using soft repression. Here again, I take the mean of the calibrated data from the two datasets as the indicator for soft repression.

⁷ Kendall's Tau-b range according to Møller and Skaaning is between 0.54 and 0.73 (Møller and Skaaning 2013, 7).

Aggregation Rule

It is theoretically assumed here that the two forms of repression are distinct. They constitute different forms of repression; they either violate concrete integrity rights of a person or more abstract societal civil liberties. With this in mind, they cannot fully compensate their effect between each other. Instead, they partially substitute for each other. Both perform the function of curtailing wants and demands but do so in different ways. That leads to the second question of interaction. If the distinctiveness of the two forms of repression is taken seriously, it is only a small step to argue that they do not interact. They do not strengthen or weaken each other, but it can be theoretically assumed that the violations of civil liberties do not need to go automatically hand in hand with hard repression. Although empirically the correlation between soft and hard repression might be high, the one does not need to affect the other. Admittedly, a regime that does exert hard repression might also use softer instruments. However, if we turn the tables, a regime that only exerts soft repression can shy away from imposing violations against personal integrity rights. Both forms do not need to interact. Hard and soft repressions are partially substitutable but noninteractive, which suggests using the arithmetic mean as an aggregation rule.

Moving one step down the concept tree, the relationship between the four violations of personal integrity rights and the four civil liberties need to be theorized. The same reasoning as above is used here, that is, a partially compensatory and noninteractive relationship that suggests the arithmetic mean. Torture, disappearances, killings, and imprisonment due to political beliefs are distinct from one another and can only partially substitute their effect on the stability of autocracies. In the same vein, violations against the freedom of expression, of assembly and association, of movement, and of religion can only make up one another's effect to some extent, but not fully. The four indicators for both soft and hard repression are moreover noninteractive. They might reinforce one another empirically, but this does not need to be the case. In doubt, noninteraction is preferred to interaction. The indicator level will therefore be aggregated to the secondary dimension of hard and soft repression by using the arithmetic mean.

This leaves us with the concept tree for repression shown in Figure A.2. The sources for the indicators of hard repression are found in the CIRI and PTS datasets, whereas the sources for the indicators of soft repression are found in the CIRI and the CLD. Measures for soft and hard repression are complemented by qualitative assessments based on linguistic qualifiers for the time period that is not covered by the datasets.

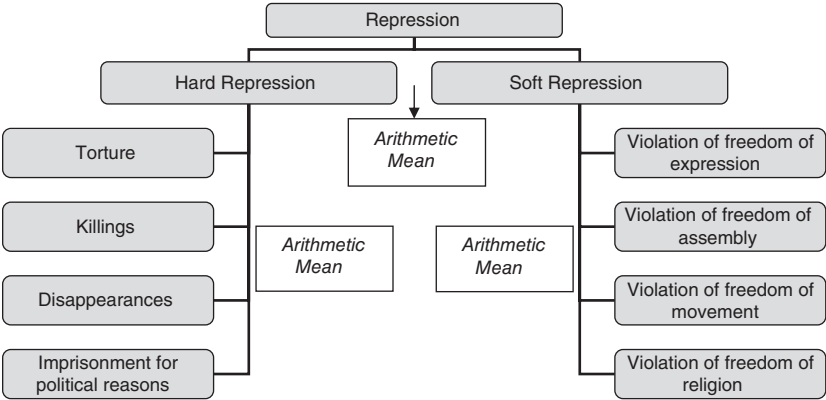


Figure A.2 Concept tree for repression with aggregation rules

5 Co-optation

I distinguish between formal and informal co-optation. Both are measured according to qualitative assessments that I found in the relevant secondary literature. Please also refer to the online appendix with the detailed case narratives.

I use two criteria to assess to what extent formal co-optation, mainly via parties and parliaments, has been successful: (1) policy responsiveness and (2) personal representation. For the informal co-optation, mainly via patron-client networks, I use four criteria: (1) duration of bonds, (2) scope of the exchange, (3) network’s density, and (4) resource basis of the network. These criteria will be approached with a four-point scale as well (1, 0.66, 0.33, and 0).

When it comes to the aggregation rule between the two types of co-optation on the secondary level, a logical OR is used. The forms of co-optation are distinct from each other and do not necessarily influence each other. A formalized channel can co-exist with a highly personalized patron-client relationship based on material spoils. They do not overlap in their effect but are independent. In this sense, they are noninteractive. They are also substitutable. Both share the same aim – to reach elite-level unity and cohesion by both widening and deepening loyalties. Formal and informal co-optation constitute two multi-final paths to reach this aim. Additionally, both ways are equally capable of reaching and maintaining intra-elite steering capacities. In this sense, a logical OR for two-value logics – or the respective maximum-rule for fuzzy sets – will be employed here.

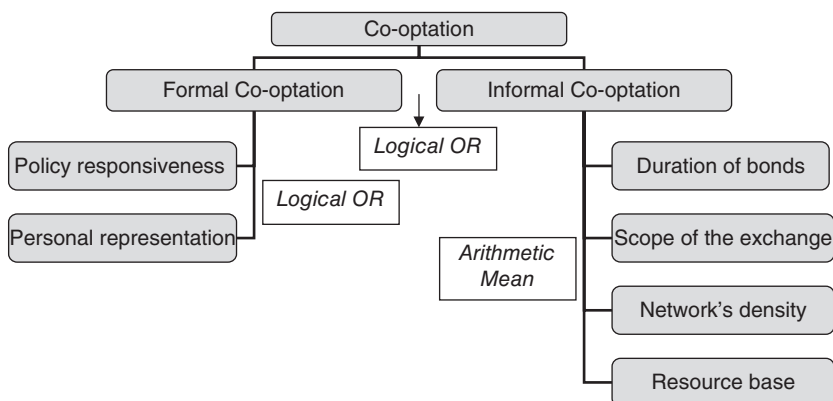


Figure A.3 Concept tree of co-optation with aggregation rules

The aggregation rule on the indicator level will be as follows: the two formal channels of co-optation via policy concessions and personal representation will be connected with a logical OR. They are distinct from each other, and there is no theoretically persuasive argument that they need to interact. To increase the cabinet size or to include oppositional parties in parliament does not necessarily mean being responsive to partial interests of military and business elites. They often go hand in hand but do not need to do so. An autocratic regime can be responsive without representing elites personally and can include formally key persons without respecting their interests. Each is a distinct form of formal co-optation.

The quality of the informal patron-client relationship will be accessed via the four components of duration, scope, density, and resource base. It is theoretically assumed that they are equally important and of equal weight. They are seen as noninteractive, but partially substitutable, suggesting the usage of an arithmetic mean.

These theoretical considerations and choices are summarized in Figure A.3.

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Appendix 2: Overview of Coding

In the following, I give an overview of the coding. I first provide the coding of the three pillars and then the two stability measures of persistence and continuity. I start with the respective legitimacy profile of the regime and then provide an overview of the coding for the ideational and performance legitimization, for hard and soft repression, as well as for formal and informal co-optation, and end with the stability measures.

More detailed information about the procedure and the respective justifications can be found in the case narratives in the online appendix. Also, the disaggregated data for each of the pillars is detailed there.

1 Overview of Legitimacy Profiles in the AREA Dataset

Objects of Support			Authority
Autocratic Episode	Political Community	Regime	
1953–65 Sihanouk (Cambodia)	- Nationalism - Tradition - Religion Radicalized nationalism	Buddhist Socialism	Charismatic leader
1975–78 Pol Pot (Cambodia)		- Extreme Marxist-Leninism - Racism and classism	
1993–99 Hun Sen and Ranariddh (Cambodia)	- Nationalism - Tradition (to a lesser extent than under Sihanouk) - Religion - Nationalism - Attempts to borrow traditional legitimacy	Moderate socialism-cum-developmentalism	
1997–2008 Hun Sen (Cambodia)	Nationalism	- Marxism-Leninism - Mao Zedong Thought (Mass line and agrarian socialism) - Deng Xiaoping Theory (Pragmatism and theory of primitive socialism) - Developmentalism (socialism-cum-capitalism) - Legal equality - Developmentalism and pragmatism - Socialism-cum-capitalism - Technocratic rationality - Three Represents	Charismatic leader
1949–75 Mao Zedong (China)			
1978–96 Deng Xiaoping (China)	Nationalism		Charismatic leader
1997–2001 Jiang Zemin (China)	Nationalism (to a lesser extent)		

(continued)

(cont.)

Objects of Support		
Autocratic Episode	Political Community	Regime
2002-8 Hu Jintao (China)	Nationalism	- Socialism-cum-capitalism - Technocratic rationality - Scientific Outlook and Harmonious Society (Sustainable growth and social equality) - Communism (Guided Democracy)
1949-65 Sukarno (Indonesia)	<i>Nasakom</i> : Nationalism (based on anticolonialism) and Islam as religion	Charismatic leader
1966-97 Suharto (Indonesia)	<i>Pancasila</i> : Blend of nationalism, humanitarianism, democracy, welfare, monotheism	Charismatic leader
1975-91 Kaysone Phomvihane (Laos)		Charismatic leader
1992-2005 Khamtai Siphandon (Laos)	Attempted revival of nationalism and Buddhism	- Organicism and integralism - Corporatism and developmentalism (New Order) - Strong sense of anticommunism and anti-Islamism - Marxism-Leninism - Since 1986 New Economic Mechanism
2006-8 Choummaly Sayasone (Laos)	Attempted revival of nationalism and Buddhism	New Economic Mechanism
1957-69 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra (Malaya/Malaysia)	- Islam - Traditional Elements (Melaka sultanate) - Relaxed attitude toward ethnicity	New Economic Mechanism

1970–75 Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein (Malaysia)	- <i>Rukunegara</i> as a blend of royal, traditional, religious, and democratic elements (impact questionable) - Growing importance of ethnicity - Nationalism - Ethnicity	- Developmentalism via NEP (state patronage) - Pro-Malayan policies - Anticommunism
1976–80 Hussein bin Onn (Malaysia)		- Developmentalism via NEP (state patronage) - Pro-Malayan policies
1981–2002 Mahathir bin Mohammed (Malaysia)		Developmentalism (liberalism and market efficiency)
2003–8 Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Malaysia)		Developmentalism (liberalism and market efficiency)
1948–55 U Nu (Burma/Myanmar)	Postcolonialism and nationalism	- Moderate socialism and Buddhism - Anticommunism
1962–87 Ne Win (Burma/Myanmar)	National unity and political order	Burmese Way to Socialism (radical blend of Buddhism, socialism, and humanism)
1988–91 Saw Maung (Myanmar)	National unity and political order	Vague set of main causes
1992–2008 Than Shwe (Myanmar)	National unity and political order	- Vague set of main causes - Claim to development
1948–93 Kim Il Sung (North Korea)	- Nationalism (unification) - Anticolonialism - Confucian elements	Juche ideology
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il (North Korea)	Nationalism and anticolonialism	- Juche ideology - Songun (Military-First) policy/ideology
1965–85 Marcos (Philippines)		New Society
1948–59 Syngman Rhee (South Korea)	Resistance Nationalism	- Political conservatism - Anti-Japanism - Anticommunism

(continued)

(cont.)

Objects of Support			
Autocratic Episode	Political Community	Regime	Authority
1961–79 Park Chung-hee (South Korea)	Resistance Nationalism	- Administrative Democracy - Pro-Japanism - Anticommunism - Developmentalism	Charismatic leader
1980–87 Chun Doo-hwan (South Korea)	Resistance Nationalism	- Pro-Japanism - Anticommunism - Developmentalism	
1965–89 Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore)	Survival imperative	- Developmentalism (pragmatism, elitism, meritocracy, and multiracialism) - Anticommunism - Developmentalism - Five Shared Values - Asian Values Developmentalism	Charismatic leader
1990–2003 Goh Chok Tong (Singapore)			
2004–8 Lee Hsien Loong (Singapore)			Charismatic leader
1949–74 Chiang Kai-shek (Taiwan)	- Three Principles of the People (Sun Yat-sen), particularly (Chinese) nationalism - Unification - (Chinese) nationalism - Unification (Chinese) nationalism	- Anticommunism - Social welfare Developmentalism	
1975–77 Yen Chia-kan (Taiwan)			Charismatic leader
1978–87 Chiang Ching-kuo (Taiwan)			

1988–95 Lee Teng-hui (Taiwan)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentalism - Taiwanization of politics - Further democratization as a future promise 	Charismatic appeal to native islanders
1947–56 Luang Phibunsongkhram (Thailand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nationalism - Buddhism 		
1958–62 Sarit Thanarat (Thailand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nationalism - Buddhism - Monarchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentalism - Democracy Thai style 	Charismatic leader
1963–72 Thanom Kitikachorn (Thailand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nationalism - Buddhism (- Monarchical principle)	Developmentalism	
1977–79 Kriangsak Chomanan (Thailand)		Infant political liberalism	
1954–65 Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional peasant culture - Anticolonialism and patriotism - Traces of Confucianism 	Marxism-Leninism	Charismatic leader
1975–85 Le Duan (Vietnam)		Marxism-Leninism	
1986–90 Nguyen Van Linh (Vietnam)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Doi moi</i> (renewal) - Ho Chi Minh Thought (pragmatism) 	
1991–96 Do Muoi (Vietnam)		Market socialism	
1997–2000 Le Kha Phieu (Vietnam)		Market socialism	
2001–8 Nong Duc Manh (Vietnam)		Market socialism	

2 Overview of the Coding for the Legitimation Pillar

Autocratic Episode	Ideational Legitimation	Performance Legitimation	Aggregated Legitimation
1953–65 Sihanouk, CAM	1	0.218	0.467
1975–78 Pol Pot, CAM	0.812	0.292	0.487
1993–96 Ranariddh and Hun Sen, CAM	0.33	0.391	0.354
1997–2008 Hun Sen, CAM	0.467	0.398	0.418
1949–75 Mao Zedong, CHN	0.812	0.316	0.506
1978–96 Deng Xiaoping, CHN	0.66	0.513	0.572
1997–2001 Jiang Zemin, CHN	0.66	0.52	0.573
2002–8 Hu Jintao, CHN	0.66	0.548	0.589
1949–65 Sukarno, IND	0.66	0.327	0.431
1966–97 Suharto, IND	0.812	0.356	0.532
1975–91 Kaysone Phomvihane, LAO	1	0.388	0.622
1992–2005 Khamtai Siphandon, LAO	0.66	0.486	0.565
2006–8 Choummaly Sayasone, LAO	0.66	0.506	0.574
1957–69 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, MAL	0.812	0.492	0.599
1970–75 Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein, MAL	0.66	0.378	0.48
1976–80 Hussein bin Onn, MAL	0.467	0.386	0.398
1981–2002 Mahathir bin Mohammed, MAL	0.467	0.564	0.5
2003–8 Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, MAL	0.467	0.625	0.532
1948–55 U Nu, MYA	0.05	0.05	0.05
1962–87 Ne Win, MYA	0.182	0.214	0.118
1988–91 Saw Maung, MYA	0.05	0.23	0.065
1992–2008 Than Shwe, MYA	0.05	0.281	0.078
1948–93 Kim Il Sung, DPRK	1	0.499	0.644
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il, DPRK	0.812	0.444	0.522
1965–85 Marcos, PHIL	0.05	0.317	0.114
1948–59 Syngman Rhee, ROK	0.33	0.05	0.128
1961–79 Park Chung-hee, ROK	0.66	0.424	0.407
1980–87 Chun Doo-hwan, ROK	0.33	0.493	0.387
1965–89 Lee Kuan Yew, SING	0.812	0.585	0.67
1990–2003 Goh Chok Tong, SING	0.574	0.683	0.618
2004–8 Lee Hsien Loong, SING	0.574	0.707	0.619
1949–74 Chiang Kai-shek, TW	1	0.485	0.692
1975–77 Yen Chia-kan, TW	0.66	0.537	0.591
1978–87 Chiang Ching-kuo, TW	0.66	0.643	0.649
1988–95 Lee Teng-hui, TW	0.467	0.686	0.564
1947–56 Luang Phibunsongkhram, THAI	0.812	0.202	0.405
1958–62 Sarit Tharat, THAI	0.812	0.36	0.54

Autocratic Episode	Ideational Legitimation	Performance Legitimation	Aggregated Legitimation
1963–72 Thanom Kittikachorn, THAI	0.128	0.359	0.207
1977–79 Kriangsak Chomanan, THAI	0.05	0.365	0.128
1954–65 Ho Chi Minh, VIET	1	0.44	0.645
1975–85 Le Duan, VIET	0.128	0.331	0.152
1986–90 Nguyen Van Linh, VIET	0.66	0.39	0.483
1991–96 Do Muoi, VIET	0.66	0.464	0.542
1997–2000 Le Kha Phieu, VIET	0.66	0.498	0.561
2001–8 Nong Duc Manh, VIET	0.66	0.494	0.558

3 Overview of the Coding for the Repression Pillar

Autocratic Episode	Hard Repression	Soft Repression	Aggregated Repression
1953–65 Sihanouk, CAM	0.33	0.66	0.495
1975–78 Pol Pot, CAM	0.8	0.95	0.875
1993–96 Ranariddh and Hun Sen, CAM	0.795	0.28	0.538
1997–2008 Hun Sen, CAM	0.56	0.29	0.425
1949–75 Mao Zedong, CHN	1	1	1
1978–96 Deng Xiaoping, CHN	0.619	0.895	0.757
1997–2001 Jiang Zemin, CHN	0.822	0.925	0.874
2002–8 Hu Jintao, CHN	0.854	0.925	0.89
1949–65 Sukarno, IND	0.33	0.33	0.33
1966–97 Suharto, IND	0.708	0.544	0.626
1975–91 Kaysone Phomvihane, LAO	0.579	0.874	0.727
1992–2005 Khamtai Siphandon, LAO	0.333	0.759	0.546
2006–8 Choummaly Sayasone, LAO	0.403	0.798	0.601
1957–69 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, MAL	0.66	0.66	0.66
1970–75 Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein, MAL	0.66	0.66	0.66
1976–80 Hussein bin Onn, MAL	0.364	0.236	0.3
1981–2002 Mahathir bin Mohammed, MAL	0.259	0.52	0.39
2003–8 Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, MAL	0.368	0.635	0.502
1948–55 U Nu, MYA	0	0	0
1962–87 Ne Win, MYA	0.53	0.674	0.602
1988–91 Saw Maung, MYA	0.869	0.865	0.867
1992–2008 Than Shwe, MYA	0.866	0.887	0.877
1948–93 Kim Il Sung, DPRK	0.861	0.948	0.905
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il, DPRK	0.898	0.95	0.924
1965–85 Marcos, PHIL	0.759	0.232	0.496
1948–59 Syngman Rhee, ROK	0.33	0.33	0.33
1961–79 Park Chung-hee, ROK	0.44	0.273	0.357
1980–87 Chun Doo-hwan, ROK	0.472	0.422	0.447

Autocratic Episode	Hard Repression	Soft Repression	Aggregated Repression
1965–89 Lee Kuan Yew, SING	0.247	0.405	0.326
1990–2003 Goh Chok Tong, SING	0.14	0.531	0.336
2004–8 Lee Hsien Loong, SING	0.141	0.528	0.335
1949–74 Chiang Kai-shek, TW	1	1	1
1975–77 Yen Chia-kan, TW	0.45 ⁸	0.68	0.59
1978–87 Chiang Ching-kuo, TW	0.269	0.635	0.452
1988–95 Lee Teng-hui, TW	0.117	0.267	0.192
1947–56 Luang Phibunsongkhram, THAI	0.33	0.33	0.33
1958–62 Sarit Tharat, THAI	1	1	1
1963–72 Thanom Kittikachorn, THAI	0.66	0.66	0.66
1977–79 Kriangsak Chomanan, THAI	0.45 ⁹	0.227	0.364
1954–65 Ho Chi Minh, VIET	1	1	1
1975–85 Le Duan, VIET	0.721	0.95	0.836
1986–90 Nguyen Van Linh, VIET	0.65	0.919	0.785
1991–96 Do Muoi, VIET	0.33	0.878	0.604
1997–2000 Le Kha Phieu, VIET	0.353	0.889	0.621
2001–8 Nong Duc Manh, VIET	0.506	0.879	0.693

4 Overview of the Coding for the Co-optation Pillar

Autocratic Episode	Formal Co-optation	Informal Co-optation	Aggregated Co-optation
1953–65 Sihanouk, CAM	0.66	0.748	0.748
1975–78 Pol Pot, CAM	0.33	0.415	0.415
1993–96 Ranariddh and Hun Sen, CAM	0.66	0.663	0.663
1997–2008 Hun Sen, CAM	0.66	0.833	0.833
1949–75 Mao Zedong, CHN	0.66	0.915	0.915
1978–96 Deng Xiaoping, CHN	1	1	1
1997–2001 Jiang Zemin, CHN	1	0.915	1
2002–8 Hu Jintao, CHN	1	0.915	1
1949–65 Sukarno, IND	0.33	0.578	0.578
1966–97 Suharto, IND	1	1	1
1975–91 Kaysone Phomvihane, LAO	1	0.75	1

⁸ Arithmetically, the score is 0.5; yet, as such scores pose difficulties for QCA analyses, as they are neither in nor out, I have decided, based on qualitative evidence from the case study narratives, to code hard repression here as 0.45 (please consult the online appendix for further details).

⁹ Arithmetically, the score is 0.5; yet, as such scores pose difficulties for QCA analyses, as they are neither in nor out, I have decided, based on qualitative evidence from the case study narratives (please consult the online appendix for further details), to code hard repression here as 0.45.

Autocratic Episode	Formal Co-optation	Informal Co-optation	Aggregated Co-optation
1992–2005 Khamtai Siphandon, LAO	1	0.75	1
2006–8 Choummaly Sayasone, LAO	1	0.833	1
1957–69 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, MAL	1	0.915	1
1970–75 Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein, MAL	0.66	1	1
1976–80 Hussein bin Onn, MAL	0.66	1	1
1981–2002 Mahathir bin Mohammed, MAL	0.66	0.745	0.745
2003–8 Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, MAL	0.66	0.745	0.745
1948–55 U Nu, MYA	0	0.165	0.165
1962–87 Ne Win, MYA	0.66	0.58	0.66
1988–91 Saw Maung, MYA	0.66	0.495	0.66
1992–2008 Than Shwe, MYA	0.66	0.578	0.66
1948–93 Kim Il Sung, DPRK	0.66	1	1
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il, DPRK	0.66	0.915	0.915
1965–85 Marcos, PHIL	0	0.415	0.415
1948–59 Syngman Rhee, ROK	0	0.33	0.33
1961–79 Park Chung-hee, ROK	1	0.915	1
1980–87 Chun Doo-hwan, ROK	1	0.915	1
1965–89 Lee Kuan Yew, SING	1	0.33	1
1990–2003 Goh Chok Tong, SING	1	0	1
2004–8 Lee Hsien Loong, SING	1	0	1
1949–74 Chiang Kai-shek, TW	1	1	1
1975–77 Yen Chia-kan, TW	0.66	0.83	0.83
1978–87 Chiang Ching-kuo, TW	0.66	0.83	0.83
1988–95 Lee Teng-hui, TW	0.66	0.665	0.665
1947–56 Luang Phibunsongkhram, THAI	0.33	0.498	0.498
1958–62 Sarit Tharat, THAI	0.33	0.495	0.495
1963–72 Thanom Kittikachorn, THAI	0.33	0.33	0.33
1977–79 Kriangsak Chomanan, THAI	0.33	0.165	0.33
1954–65 Ho Chi Minh, VIET	1	0.915	1
1975–85 Le Duan, VIET	1	0.66	1
1986–90 Nguyen Van Linh, VIET	1	0.66	1
1991–96 Do Muoi, VIET	1	0.66	1
1997–2000 Le Kha Phieu, VIET	0.66	0.413	0.66
2001–8 Nong Duc Manh, VIET	0.66	0.413	0.66

5 Overview of the Coding for the Stability of Autocratic Regimes

Autocratic Episode	Persistence Measure of Stability	Continuity Measure of Stability
1953–65 Sihanouk, CAM	0.15	0.66
1975–78 Pol Pot, CAM	0.06	1
1993–96 Ranariddh and Hun Sen, CAM	0.19	0.33
1997–2008 Hun Sen, CAM	0.19	0.33
1949–75 Mao Zedong, CHN	0.95	1
1978–96 Deng Xiaoping, CHN	0.95	1
1997–2001 Jiang Zemin, CHN	0.95	1
2002–8 Hu Jintao, CHN	0.95	1
1949–65 Sukarno, IND	0.21	0.66
1966–97 Suharto, IND	0.55	0
1975–91 Kaysone Phomvihane, LAO	0.6	1
1992–2005 Khamtai Siphandon, LAO	0.6	1
2006–8 Choummaly Sayasone, LAO	0.6	1
1957–69 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, MAL	0.89	0.33
1970–75 Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein, MAL	0.89	1
1976–80 Hussein bin Onn, MAL	0.89	1
1981–2002 Mahathir bin Mohammed, MAL	0.89	1
2003–8 Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, MAL	0.89	1
1948–55 U Nu, MYA	0.09	1
1962–87 Ne Win, MYA	0.84	0.66
1988–91 Saw Maung, MYA	0.84	0.66
1992–2008 Than Shwe, MYA	0.84	1
1948–93 Kim Il Sung, DPRK	0.95	1
1994–2008 Kim Jong Il, DPRK	0.95	1
1965–85 Marcos, PHIL	0.52	0
1948–59 Syngman Rhee, ROK	0.13	0.33
1961–79 Park Chung-hee, ROK	0.24	0.33
1980–87 Chun Doo-hwan, ROK	0.09	0
1965–89 Lee Kuan Yew, SING	0.79	0.33
1990–2003 Goh Chok Tong, SING	0.79	0.33
2004–8 Lee Hsien Loong, SING	0.79	0.33
1949–74 Chiang Kai-shek, TW	0.84	0.33
1975–77 Yen Chia-kan, TW	0.84	0.33
1978–87 Chiang Ching-kuo, TW	0.84	0.33
1988–95 Lee Teng-hui, TW	0.84	0
1947–56 Luang Phibunsongkhram, THAI	0.4	1
1958–62 Sarit Tharat, THAI	0.4	1
1963–72 Thanom Kittikachorn, THAI	0.4	0.66
1977–79 Kriangsak Chomanan, THAI	0.06	0

Autocratic Episode	Persistence Measure of Stability	Continuity Measure of Stability
1954–65 Ho Chi Minh, VIET	0.92	1
1975–85 Le Duan, VIET	0.92	1
1986–90 Nguyen Van Linh, VIET	0.92	1
1991–96 Do Muoi, VIET	0.92	1
1997–2000 Le Kha Phieu, VIET	0.92	1
2001–8 Nong Duc Manh, VIET	0.92	1

Appendix 3: Detailed Empirical Results of QCA Analysis

In the following, the full empirical results of the fsQCA analysis will be presented. The analysis consists of persistence of the ruling coalition as the outcome and the forms of legitimation, repression, and co-optation as the set of explanatory conditions. I first present the analysis of necessity, before the results for sufficiency will be reported. Lastly, I show the results for the theory evaluation. Please refer to the online appendix for additional empirical results.

1 Analysis of Necessity (Persistence Measure of Stability)

1.1 Single Necessary Conditions

	Consistency	Coverage	Relevance of Necessity
Ideational Legitimacy	0.702	0.797	0.784
Performance Legitimacy	0.586	0.909	0.938
Hard Repression	0.682	0.807	0.808
Soft Repression	0.849	0.852	0.784
Formal Co-optation	0.852	0.787	0.659
Informal Co-optation	0.830	0.803	0.709
	Consistency	Coverage	Relevance of Necessity
Not Ideational Legitimacy	0.474	0.729	0.834
Not Performance Legitimacy	0.658	0.742	0.738
Not Hard Repression	0.529	0.772	0.844
Not Soft Repression	0.352	0.659	0.845
Not Formal Co-optation	0.269	0.601	0.859
Not Informal Co-optation	0.361	0.726	0.883

1.2 SuperSubset

		Inclusion	Relevance of Necessity	Coverage
1	idealeg+INFORMCOOPT	0.900	0.512	0.746
2	hardrep+SOFTREP	0.929	0.591	0.790
3	HARDREP+FORMCOOPT	0.916	0.506	0.751
4	hardrep+INFORMCOOPT	0.904	0.565	0.769
5	SOFTREP+FORMCOOPT	0.928	0.515	0.760
6	SOFTREP+INFORMCOOPT	0.938	0.557	0.781
7	FORMCOOPT+INFORMCOOPT	0.939	0.532	0.772
8	idealeg+PERFLEG+SOFTREP	0.911	0.557	0.768
9	IDEALEG+perfleg+SOFTREP	0.911	0.504	0.747
10	IDEALEG+PERFLEG+SOFTREP	0.911	0.630	0.799
11	IDEALEG+perfleg+FORMCOOPT	0.915	0.380	0.705
12	IDEALEG+perfleg+INFORMCOOPT	0.912	0.450	0.728
13	IDEALEG+HARDREP+SOFTREP	0.900	0.592	0.778
14	idealeg+hardrep+FORMCOOPT	0.911	0.414	0.715
15	IDEALEG+hardrep+FORMCOOPT	0.905	0.427	0.716
16	IDEALEG+HARDREP+INFORMCOOPT	0.914	0.508	0.751
17	idealeg+softrep+FORMCOOPT	0.906	0.417	0.713
18	IDEALEG+softrep+FORMCOOPT	0.909	0.393	0.707
19	IDEALEG+SOFTREP+formcoopt	0.902	0.512	0.746
20	idealeg+SOFTREP+informcoopt	0.916	0.524	0.758
21	IDEALEG+SOFTREP+informcoopt	0.916	0.519	0.756
22	idealeg+FORMCOOPT+informcoopt	0.902	0.431	0.716
23	IDEALEG+FORMCOOPT+informcoopt	0.905	0.405	0.708
24	perfleg+hardrep+FORMCOOPT	0.907	0.413	0.712
25	PERFLEG+HARDREP+INFORMCOOPT	0.916	0.558	0.771
26	perfleg+softrep+FORMCOOPT	0.902	0.402	0.706
27	PERFLEG+SOFTREP+formcoopt	0.903	0.572	0.771
28	perfleg+softrep+INFORMCOOPT	0.900	0.489	0.736
29	perfleg+SOFTREP+informcoopt	0.911	0.507	0.749
30	PERFLEG+SOFTREP+informcoopt	0.913	0.607	0.790
31	HARDREP+softrep+INFORMCOOPT	0.903	0.471	0.731

Note: Uppercase indicates presence of condition, lowercase indicates absence of condition.

“idealeg” = ideational legitimacy; “perfleg” = performance legitimacy

“hardrep” = hard repression; “softrep” = soft repression

“formcoopt” = formal co-optation; “informcoopt” = informal co-optation

2 Analysis of Sufficiency (Persistence Measure of Stability)

2.1 Truth Table

[illegible]

[illegible]

2.2 *Conservative and Intermediate Solution*

n OUT = 1/0/C: 26/19/0

Total : 45

Number of multiple-covered cases: 0

M1: *idealeg***perfleg***HARDREP***SOFTREP***FORMCOOPT* +
*IDEALEG***PERFLEG***hardrep***FORMCOOPT***informcoopt* +
*IDEALEG***HARDREP***SOFTREP***FORMCOOPT***INFORMCOOPT* +
*PERFLEG***hardrep***SOFTREP***FORMCOOPT***INFORMCOOPT* => *PERSISTR*

Theoretical Direction: Soft Repression → Stability; No Easy Counterfactuals.

Combination	Incl.	PRI	CovS	CovU
1 <i>idealeg</i> * <i>perfleg</i> * <i>HARDREP</i> * <i>SOFTREP</i> * <i>FORMCOOPT</i>	0.915	0.844	0.356	0.060
2 <i>IDEALEG</i> * <i>PERFLEG</i> * <i>hardrep</i> * <i>FORMCOOPT</i> * <i>informcoopt</i>	0.954	0.892	0.239	0.041
3 <i>IDEALEG</i> * <i>HARDREP</i> * <i>SOFTREP</i> * <i>FORMCOOPT</i> * <i>INFORMCOOPT</i>	0.926	0.884	0.511	0.196
4 <i>PERFLEG</i> * <i>hardrep</i> * <i>SOFTREP</i> * <i>FORMCOOPT</i> * <i>INFORMCOOPT</i>	0.922	0.852	0.365	0.051
M1	0.934	0.904	0.699	

Note: Uppercase indicates presence of condition, lower case indicates absence of condition.

“*idealeg*” = ideational legitimacy; “*perfleg*” = performance legitimacy

“*hardrep*” = hard repression; “*softrep*” = soft repression

“*formcoopt*” = formal co-optation; “*informcoopt*” = informal co-optation

“*persistr*” = persistence of ruling coalition

Cases

Combination	Cases (abbreviated)
1	mya8891; viet7585; mya9208; mya6287
2	sin6589; sin0408; sin9003
3	viet8690; mal7075; viet0108; viet5465; mal5769; nk9408; lao7591; tw4974; chi4975; ind6697; nk4893; chi9701; chi0208; chi7896
4	mal0308; mal8102; lao0608; tw7577; tw7887

2.3 Parsimonious Solution

n OUT = 1/0/C: 26/19/0

Total : 45

Number of multiple-covered cases: 8

- M01: IDEALEG*PERFLEG + PERFLEG*SOFTREP +
HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT => PERSISTRC
- M02: IDEALEG*PERFLEG + idealeg*hardrep*SOFTREP +
HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT => PERSISTRC
- M03: IDEALEG*PERFLEG + idealeg*SOFTREP*FORM
COOPT + IDEALEG*HARDREP*FORMCOOPT =>
PERSISTRC
- M04: IDEALEG*PERFLEG + idealeg*SOFTREP*FORM
COOPT + IDEALEG*HARDREP*INFORMCOOPT =>
PERSISTRC
- M05: IDEALEG*PERFLEG + idealeg*SOFTREP*FORM
COOPT + HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT =>
PERSISTRC
- M06: IDEALEG*PERFLEG + idealeg*SOFTREP*FORM
COOPT + HARDREP*SOFTREP*INFORMCOOPT =>
PERSISTRC
- M07: IDEALEG*PERFLEG + idealeg*SOFTREP*INFORM
COOPT + HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT =>
PERSISTRC
- M08: PERFLEG*SOFTREP + PERFLEG*informcoopt +
HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT => PERSISTRC
- M09: PERFLEG*SOFTREP + FORMCOOPT*informcoopt +
HARDREP*SOFTREP*FORMCOOPT => PERSISTRC
- M10: PERFLEG*SOFTREP + FORMCOOPT*informcoopt +
HARDREP*SOFTREP*INFORMCOOPT => PERSISTRC

[illegible]

M5	0.922	0.888	0.735
M6	0.914	0.877	0.769
M7	0.914	0.875	0.736
M8	0.926	0.892	0.737
M9	0.912	0.873	0.742
M10	0.902	0.861	0.759

Note: Uppercase indicates presence of condition, lowercase indicates absence of condition.
 “idealeg” = ideational legitimacy; “perfleg” = performance legitimacy
 “hardrep” = hard repression; “softrep” = soft repression
 “formcoopt” = formal co-optation; “informcoopt” = informal co-optation
 “persistre” = persistence of ruling coalition

Cases:

Combination	Cases (abbreviated)
1	sin6589; sin9003; sin0408; lao0608; tw7577; tw7887; chi7896; chi9701; chi0208
2	mal8102; mal0308; sin9003; sin0408; lao0608; tw7577; tw7887; chi7896; chi9701; chi0208
3	sin6589; sin9003; sin0408
4	mya8891; sin6589; sin9003; sin0408
5	mal8102; mal0308
6	mya8891; mya6287; mya9208; viet7585; mal8102; mal0308
7	mya6287; mya9208; viet7585; mal8102; mal0308
8	chi4975; ind6697; lao7591; mal5769; mal7075; nk4893; nk9408; tw4974; viet5465; viet8690; viet0108; chi7896; chi9701; chi0208
9	chi4975; ind6697; lao7591; mal5769; mal7075; nk4893; nk9408; tw4974; viet5465; viet8690; viet0108; chi7896; chi9701; chi0208
10	mya8891; mya6287; mya9208; viet7585; chi4975; ind6697; lao7591; mal5769; mal7075; nk4893; nk9408; tw4974; viet5465; viet8690; viet010; chi7896; chi9701; chi0208
11	mya6287; mya9208; viet7585; chi4975; ind6697; lao7591; mal5769; mal7075; nk4893; nk9408; tw4974; viet5465; viet8690; viet0108; chi7896; chi9701; chi0208

3 Theory Evaluation

Theoretical expectation: Either Over-politicizing or De-politicizing Logic:

IDEALEG*HARDREP*SOFTRREP*FORMCOOPT +

PERFLEG*SOFTRREP*(FORMCOOPT+ INFORMCOOPT)

With Outcome Y > 0.5

		Empirical Finding (intermediate solution)	
Two-Logics Theory Predicts	Stable	Covered by empirical finding (E)	Not covered by empirical finding (e)
	Autocracy (T)	Covered Most Likely Cases: 25 China under Mao; China under Deng; China under Jiang; China under Hu; Indonesia under Suharto; Laos under Kaysone; Laos under Choummaly; Malaysia under Tunku; Malaysia under Tun Razak; Malaysia under Mahathir; Malaysia under Abdullah; Myanmar under Ne Win; Myanmar under Than Shwe; North Korea under Kim Il Sung; North Korea under Kim Jong Il; Singapore under Lee Kuan Yew; Singapore under Goh; Singapore under Lee Hsien Loong; Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek; Taiwan under Yen; Taiwan under Chiang Ching-kuo; Vietnam under Ho; Vietnam under Le Duan; Vietnam under Nguyen	Uncovered Most Likely Cases: 4 Laos under Khamtay; Taiwan under Lee Teng-hui; Vietnam under Do Muoi; Vietnam under Le Kha Phieu
	Nonstable	Covered Least Likely Cases: 1	Uncovered Least Likely: 2
	Autocracy (t)	Myanmar under Saw Maung	Malaysia under Hussein; Philippines under Marcos

With Outcome Y < 0.5

Empirical Finding (intermediate solution)			
Two-Logics Theory Predicts		Stable Autocracies (E)	Nonstable Autocracies (e)
	Stable Autocracy (T)	Inconsistent Most Likely: 0	Consistent Most Likely: 1 Cambodia under Sihanouk
	Nonstable Autocracy (t)	Inconsistent Least Likely: 0	Consistent Least Likely: 12 Cambodia under Pol Pot; Cambodia under Ranariddh and Hun Sen; Cambodia under Hun Sen; Indonesia under Sukarno; Myanmar under U Nu; South Korea under Syngman Rhee; South Korea under Park Chung-hee; South Korea under Chun Doo-hwan; Thailand under Luang Phibunsongkhram; Thailand under Sarit Tharat; Thailand under Thanon Kittakichorn; Thailand under Kriangsak Chomanan

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