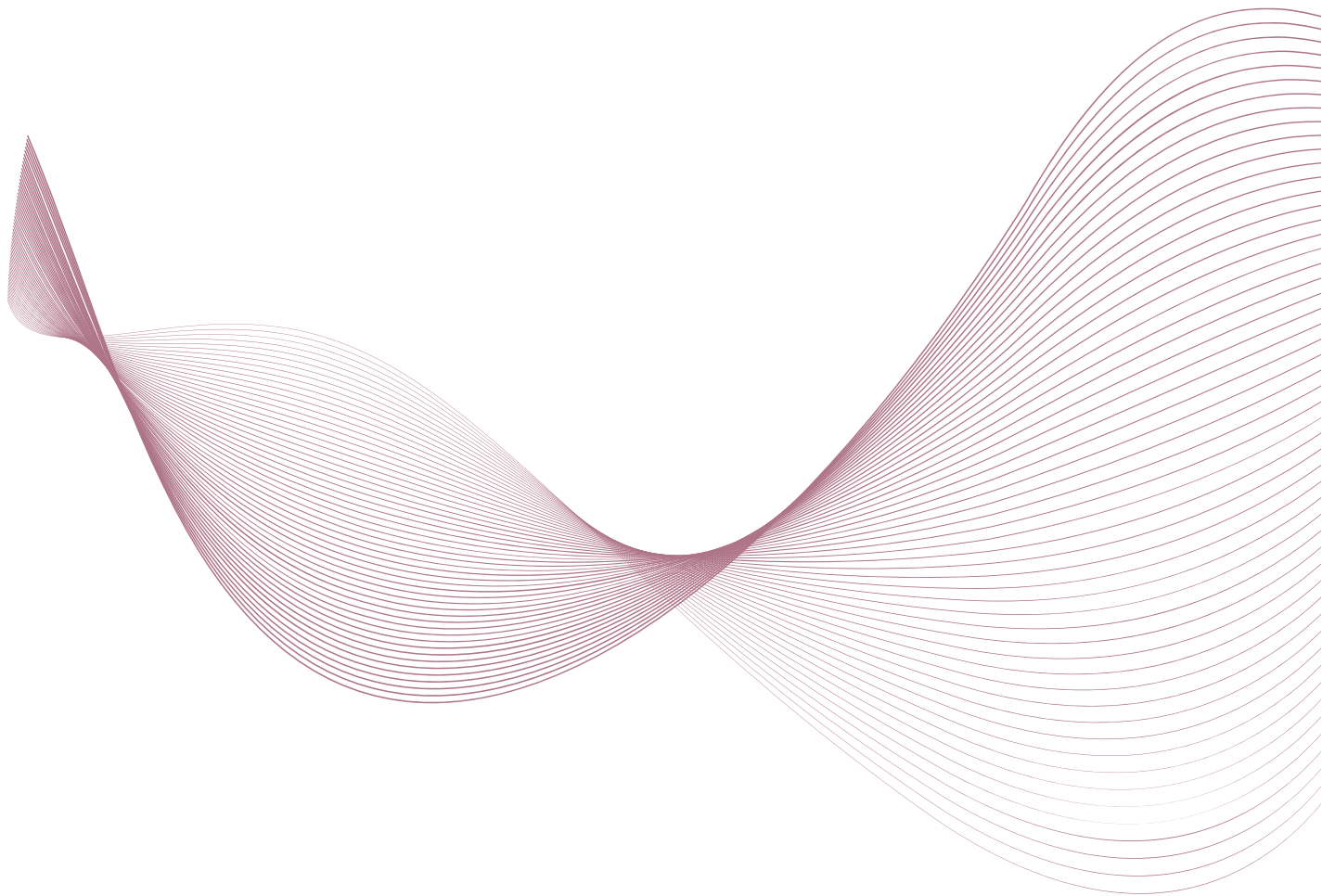

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“Lobbying the Autocrat”



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IN THIS ISSUE

Editor's Introduction...2

Sasha de Vogel, Guest Editor

Lobbying the Autocrat: A Theoretical Roadmap...4

Max Grömping and Jessica C. Teets

What Information do Autocratic Leaders Need from Interest Groups?...10

Marcel Hanegraaff and Iskander De Bruycker

Compliance and Push-back: Politicization of Turkey's Civil Society and Interest Groups under Autocratization...16

Bilge Yabanci

Political Embeddedness and NGO Policy Advocacy Strategies in Authoritarian China...23

Hui Li

Post-Soviet Policy Entrepreneurs? The Impact of Non-State Actors on Social Service Reform in Russia and Belarus...28

Eleanor Bindman and Tatsiana Chulitskaya

Author Exchange...34

Review of Manfred Elfstrom's *Workers and Change in China: Resistance, Repression, Responsiveness* by David Szakonyi...34

Response from Manfred Elfstrom...35

Review of David Szakonyi's *Politics for Profit: Business, Elections, and Policymaking in Russia* by Manfred Elfstrom...35

Response from David Szakonyi...36

Joint Commentary from Elfstrom and Szakonyi...37

Meet the Authors...38

Editorial Team...40

Section News...41

Editor's Introduction

Sasha de Vogel, Postdoctoral Fellow at New York University's Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia

The extent to which the subjects of authoritarian rule can influence policies is an enduring question in the study of autocracy. Although the manipulation or absence of elections insulates policy-making institutions like legislatures from popular influence, that exclusion does not eliminate the capacity of members of society to influence policy. Indeed, as Max Grömping and Jessica C. Teets underscore in their introductory essay, society is not simply the “passive terrain upon which autocrats act.” Rather, as the autocrat manipulates, coopts, or coerces (Gerschewski 2013), society advances its own demands and advocates for its interests within the constraints of the political system.

Avenues for expressing these demands vary. Protest is one option, though participants risk repression and concessions may only occur rarely (Tarrow 2011). To channel individuals away from troublesome protest and individualize challenges (Fu 2018), authoritarian regimes create alternative fora for consultation, such as coopted civil society organizations (Teets 2013) or online complaint processes (Chen, Pan, and Xu 2016). Yet little is understood about the extent to which these strategies yield enduring policy change, and to what extent the government's response is performative (Ding 2020). My own research on concessions to policy-oriented protest indicates that authoritarian officials often deliberately fail to implement the concessions they have promised. In analyzing protest against the municipal government of Moscow, Russia, I find that concessions are most likely to be implemented when they resolve a grievance that the government had struggled to gather information about prior to the outbreak of protest activity. In contrast, there were numerous cases where protest arose against policies that the city government pursued despite known opposition. While officials still promised concessions in these cases, renegeing ultimately undermined the majority of those promises. Moreover, the concessions that were implemented rarely included enduring legal or other formal commitments that would resolve policy grievances. My work demonstrates the limited ability of non-institutional tactics like protest to influence authoritarian policy, even in cases where grievances are not highly politicized.

Authoritarian subjects have a third, lesser-studied avenue to advocate for their interests: lobbying.

NGOs, non-profits, unions, and trade and professional associations are just some of the organizations that aim to influence policymaking in autocracies. While these lobbying groups are in some ways similar to their counterparts in democratic settings, operating in an authoritarian environment demands the careful navigation of constantly-evolving regime boundaries. The short essays in this newsletter are drawn from the forthcoming *Lobbying the Autocrat: The Dynamics of Policy Advocacy in Non-Democracies* (eds. Max Grömping and Jessica C. Teets), part of the WCED Book Series at University of Michigan Press, and bring together insights from a diverse set of autocracies as well as from various types of advocacy groups.

In the opening essay, Max Grömping and Jessica C. Teets provide a theoretical framework for understanding how authoritarian lobbying is done and what ends it can achieve. Building on theories from democratic settings, coupled with quantitative cross-national analysis and case studies, the authors argue that the conditions of access to policymaking, information demands, and social control structure influence production in autocracies. These constraints give rise to a unique type of autocratic lobbyist—the adaptive advocate—who must be particularly flexible and reactive to the evolving rules of the game.

The following contributions take up various elements of this theoretical roadmap. Marcel Hanegraaff and Iskander De Bruycker assess how demands for information vary across democratic and autocratic policymakers. The authors surveyed international negotiators at 7 diplomatic conferences from 2011-2017, and find that autocratic policymakers are less likely than their democratic counterparts to request political information—such as information about support for a given policy—from interest groups, although demand for technical expertise was similar across regime type. Their findings underscore how autocratic regimes are biased against groups that may convey opposing viewpoints, but rely on those whose technical expertise may legitimate policymaking.

Bilge Yabanci's contribution examines the role of interest groups during democratic backsliding. In such conditions, a democratic legacy has made civil society resilient, while the piecemeal nature of autocratization allows for groups to adapt in response to repressive measures. Yabanci argues that incumbents rely on the support of interest groups that are allied with them through ideological and financial ties, while repressing others. Examining women's organizations in Turkey, Yabanci identifies two distinct patterns. Some women's groups serve as an intermediary

between society and government, but only those that promote a conservative, heteropatriarchal, regime-aligned ideology. Those that do not are excluded from policy influence and repressed, yet in order to survive, have developed previously-unexpected alliances and innovated new strategies.

What strategies do NGOs use to advocate for their causes, and how do their ties to the regime affect these strategies? Hui Li addresses this question using survey and interview data from environmental NGOs operating in China. Li finds that independent environmental NGOs are less likely to engage in legislative advocacy and have little access to policymaking. Instead, they rely on tactics that raise public awareness of their concerns. However, NGOs closely linked to the regime—such as government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) or NGOs that are supervised by another government agency—have more access to policymaking influence.

The piece from Eleanor Bindman and Tatsiana Chulitskaya illuminates the role that NGOs play as policy entrepreneurs, if the expertise and skills they can provide are valued by the state. Building on interview evidence to examine welfare reforms, the authors show that in Russia, where implementing social policy is within the purview of local and regional bureaucrats, collaboration with socially-oriented NGOs is common, though they have limited ability to influence policy at the federal level. By contrast, in Belarus, welfare policies remain largely monopolized by the state, foreclosing many opportunities for NGOs to influence policy development or implementation.

The book exchange between David Szakonyi and Manfred Elfstrom examines two approaches to seeking policy influence beyond traditional lobbying. Szakonyi's *Politics for Profit: Business, Elections, and Policymaking in Russia* considers why businesspeople run for office, despite the fact that officeholding is a costly way to influence politics. Szakonyi argues that this strategy allows businesspeople to hold politicians accountable to promises secured through traditional lobbying, particularly in settings where parties are too weak to discipline their members. Holding office also provides businesspeople with the opportunity to advance a pro-business political agenda, as they are less inclined to attempt to improve overall government performance. In *Workers and Change in China: Resistance, Repression, Responsiveness*, Elfstrom provides a nuanced study of labor relations in China to demonstrate how different patterns of labor activism have spurred policy change, and illuminates how challenges from below can force more risk-taking political leaders to innovate. Together, these works provide insight into policy change from opposing vantage points.

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Lobbying the Autocrat: A Theoretical Roadmap

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Prevailing theories of authoritarian politics emphasize the power imbalance in state–society relations. Society is often theorized as the passive terrain upon which autocrats act—manipulating, coopting, or coercing to stabilize the regime (Gerschewski 2013). However, there are countless examples where society actively influences the authoritarian state. Far from being passive victims of autocratic repression and cooptation, unions, occupational groups, business associations, and NGOs successfully lobby autocrats on a wide variety of policy issues, from the seemingly innocuous such as child welfare (Bindman *et al.* 2018), healthcare (Collord 2021), or forestry (Ayana *et al.* 2018), to the highly contentious such as corruption (Yadav and Mukherjee 2016) or fiscal policy (Steinberg and Shih 2012). Such examples, although known by comparative authoritarian scholars, are often not accounted for in institutional theories until they take the form of mass protests.

In this introductory essay, we examine how and to what effect advocacy groups lobby autocratic governments to achieve favorable policy outcomes. Our broad definition of lobbying encompasses activities by formally organized non–profit and non–governmental advocacy groups aimed at affecting concrete policy outcomes. These can consist of direct interactions with policymakers (inside lobbying) and/or indirect mobilization of public opinion via media and public actions (outside lobbying). We report on the findings of a collaborative research project encompassing cross–national and case study analyses of lobbying under dictatorship, some of which are included in this newsletter. This project covers 8 countries and offers 3 large–N analyses using the Varieties of Democracy dataset, and ranges from the most authoritarian (China at .04 in the liberal democracy index) to the least authoritarian (Montenegro at .35), with the other cases falling in between. The lobbying activities are all recent cases with the exception of the analysis of land reform in the 1990s in Zimbabwe. Some of the cases exhibit authoritarian variation over time, like Turkey and Malaysia, while other cases remain consistently authoritarian, like China, Cambodia, and Belarus. Insights from these case studies are compared to findings from the established interest group literature, while the cross–national analyses also enable direct comparison between autocracies and democracies.

We argue that, despite some marked differences such as increased repression, lobbying under dictatorship is often similar to that under democracies. Using opportunities provided by fragmented governance, adaptive advocates carve out niches in the autocratic policy process. Adaptive advocates navigate the state's management strategies, which are designed to reap the informational and legitimacy benefits of permitting lobbying without risking gradual pluralization. Our aim is thus to identify the building blocks of a theory of lobbying under non-democratic conditions.

In pursuing this research agenda, we lean on a neo-pluralist analytical framework of influence production in democracies (Lowery and Brasher 2004, 18). This helps us identify four focal stages of lobbying that can be subjected to comparative analysis: (i) Mobilizing latent societal interests into sustainable organizations; (ii) competing and cooperating with other groups in an ecology of organized interests; (iii) calibrating advocacy strategies to balance political opportunities, maximization of influence, and organizational maintenance; and finally (iv) achieving access to relevant policy arenas and favorable policy outcomes.

“We argue that, despite some marked differences such as increased repression, lobbying under dictatorship is often similar to that under democracies.”

Clearly, this framework cannot simply be transplanted wholesale from the context of liberal democracy to authoritarian regimes. Most obviously, repression remains an ever-present threat to advocacy groups' mobilization, survival, and access, even in the most competitive non-democracies (Guriev and Treisman 2019). In addition, important societal influences on authoritarian policymaking also come from beyond the associational sphere, such as informal distributional coalitions (Pepinsky 2009).

Still, there is immense value in trying to apply frameworks developed in one context to others. For example, using approaches from the study of democratic legislatures uncovered how these institutions serve distinctly authoritarian ends under dictatorship (Gandhi *et al.* 2020). This is precisely why borrowing conceptual tools from neo-pluralist theories is a core feature of our project. We do not assume that influence production functions the same in autocracies as it does in democracies. Rather, having something to

compare against accentuates which parts of lobbying are similar across regime type and which are not.

In the following, we first identify these commonalities and differences based on the findings of our project. We then propose three conditions that impact all stages of influence production: *access to policymaking*, *information demands*, and *social control*. These conditions constitute the building blocks of a theoretical framework of *lobbying the autocrat*, catalyzing a new comparative research agenda on policy advocacy under authoritarianism.

Findings

Stage One: Mobilization

Advocacy groups must overcome collective action problems first to mobilize and then to enhance their chances of survival by attracting and maintaining members and funding. Due to strict entry controls and repression under dictatorship, latent interests need stronger incentives to gain members, resulting in fewer and smaller groups and more informal mobilization. Indeed, the case studies in our project find this first stage to be the primary bottleneck for lobbying under autocracy, as most of the state's management efforts aim to regulate group entry and to channel group formation away from issues that may precipitate larger social mobilization. However, we find that demand for technical information is equally high as in democracies (see Hanegraaff and de Bruycker, this issue), which favors groups with expertise and a good reputation. Consequently, formal mobilization is skewed towards the provision of policy expertise instead of making representative claims. Just as in democratic states, we should expect biases towards more resourceful groups and political insiders to occur under autocracy.

Stage Two: Interest Community Ecology

Once formed, groups enter into a space where all groups compete and/or collaborate to secure funding, public attention, and policy access. Given limited funding and agenda space, certain conditions determine when groups choose to collaborate or compete, and the tactics they use with either strategy. The density and diversity of this ecology in democracies shape patterns of competition and cooperation (Lowery *et al.* 2015). Our project also finds that repression and scarcer resources (policymaker access, members, funding) generally foster more competition among groups than cooperation. However, unlike in democracies, authoritarian interest communities are divided first by loyalty to the regime, and then within each sphere, by

different policy stances (see Yabanci, this issue). Since groups seldom compete for key resources across this regime cleavage, two distinct spheres emerge, each with its own ecology in terms of funding and access; thus, interest communities may be as dense as in democracies.

In this bifurcated ecology, regime-aligned groups are subsidized by preferential access, relaxed licensing, and discursive support via state media, but must guard against cooptation. Conversely, autonomous groups often suffer repression, and respond by informalizing their structure or seeking alliances with transnational advocacy networks. Despite these differences, we also find other similarities between authoritarian and democratic regimes, such as strategic niche-seeking in less sensitive issue areas, limited cooperation among similar autonomous or pro-government groups, and the use of social media and virtual organizing to adapt to hybrid media systems.

Stage Three: Strategies

How do advocacy groups calibrate lobbying strategies under non-democratic conditions? We find that groups select tactics according to perceived political opportunities or constraints, and according to group maintenance needs and resources. In other words, established theories of strategic choice travel quite well across regime types.

Surprisingly, the expectation that groups in non-democracies would use more “inside” versus “outside” lobbying, given the weakened functioning of elections and—at best—partially free media, received little support. Instead, cross-national analysis and case evidence detected the frequent use of high risk/high reward outside strategies, such as collective action and appealing to publics via the media to pressure policymakers (see Li, this issue).

Having said that, political resources, namely government embeddedness or opposition alignment, drive groups’ strategy choice. Groups without regime support have a more limited repertoire, exhibiting preferences for local access-seeking and informal networking. Thus, despite significant differences between authoritarian and democratic regimes, group strategies appear similarly sensitive to how opportunities shift over time, by topic, and even by policymaker targets.

Stage Four: Outcomes

When and why do groups achieve concrete policy influence? Our prior expectations were that groups exerted the most influence on issues aligned with regime legitimation claims, in issue areas that are less sensitive, and in those areas where the regime lacks policy-relevant information.

These expectations were largely confirmed. This suggests that interest groups’ degree of policy influence should vary depending on the discursive strategies autocrats deploy in order to legitimate their rule, with the performance-based and democratic-procedural legitimation appeals used by “informational autocrats” (Guriev and Treisman 2019) being associated with more access. As in democracies, significant elite disagreement or uncertainty in policy areas creates opportunities for groups to provide “expert” information. Although advocates generally work on a narrower set of issues in autocracies, we also find that increasing prevalence of public-private partnerships and government contracting have created sites of policy influence. Authoritarian lobbying does add additional voices to the policymaking process; however, these groups might simply mirror the cleavages found within the ruling elite. Consequently, although advocacy may increase *responsiveness* to real-world problems and improve the efficacy of policy solutions, this does not necessarily translate into the *representation* of interests in a pluralist sense.

Theory Building: Adaptive Lobbying under Dismal Conditions

We propose several conditions that shape lobbying under autocracy across all stages of influence production: *access to policymaking*, *information demands*, and *social control*. As such, we envision our theory-building effort as similar to Milan Svolik’s (2012) theory that identified two “dismal” conditions influencing elite politics in authoritarian regimes, but shifting the focus from elites to society. The three proposed conditions originate from the structure of policymaking in authoritarian regimes, although they are not necessarily unique to such settings. Information demands, for instance, are recognized as crucial for explaining mobilization and outcomes under democracy as well (Berkhout 2013).

The conditions do, however, constrain autocratic lobbying systems much more than under democracy. At the same time, they also give rise to three unique exchange relationships surrounding access, information, and repression, which provide opportunities for the adaptive lobbyist to nevertheless achieve favorable policy outcomes.

Access to Policymaking

Authoritarian regimes concentrate and centralize power. Under the “institutional turn” (Pepinsky 2014), scholars have credited authoritarian durability to institutions that credibly share some of this power among elites, but also generally find that once autocrats gain enough power, they stop sharing (Brownlee 2007; Svobik 2012). In regimes with more concentrated power, fewer elites have policymaking authority, and policymakers are clustered inside the executive bureaucracy rather than dispersed in other bodies like legislatures and courts, thus reducing the scope of potential lobbying targets.

Limited access creates challenges at all stages of influence production. Within interest communities, for instance, the constrained agenda space means that groups are more competitive and less collaborative. Limited access also influences advocacy strategy such that groups are pushed to informal channels like personal connections with policymakers, advocacy at the local level, or appeals via the media. Most obviously, limited points of access give less opportunity to provide relevant elites with policy-relevant information, which, as discussed below, is an important currency in the generation of influence.

For example, a dictator’s personal control over the ruling party, personnel appointments, and other key decisions likely limits access to policymaking. The most personalist dictatorships even lack mechanisms for consultation within the regime leadership, let alone with society (Geddes *et al.* 2018). Conversely, competitive autocracies have built-in mechanisms for information acquisition that create potential access points for advocacy groups. Elections, for instance, provide space for issue-based campaigning, legislatures afford hearings and submissions, and political parties serve as potential carriers for advocacy groups’ issue agendas.

Limits on access create an exchange relationship between advocacy groups and policymakers. Groups may leverage their societal connections to gain access to the policymaking agenda. Elites partnering with interest groups in such a way can then funnel social grievances or deploy social elites (e.g., religious or kinship group leaders) in factional conflicts to expand their authority and shift policies in desired directions. Regimes with less elite cohesion thus create more opportunities for groups to access the policymaking process. While groups align with particular elite factions through such exchanges, these relationships are often more fluid than the cooptation described as social corporatism (Schmitter 1974).

Our proposed theoretical framework thus suggests two variables for analysis: 1) **size of the policymaking elite**: how many policymakers are there and where are they located throughout the system? and 2) **sources of elite policy competition**: how many consequential elite factions exist and what are their policy preferences? Conceptualizing and measuring access in this way may enable researchers to develop and test hypotheses about group competition vs. collaboration, inside vs. outside lobbying strategies, and the amount of influence groups exert in different policy areas over time.

Information Demands

Effective governance requires the collection and processing of vast amounts of information on policy problems, potential solutions, and their political acceptability. These are universal problems. However, authoritarian regimes, due to their curtailment of the electoral, associational, and media spheres, struggle more than democracies in this regard, potentially leading to governance failures and blind spots. This very dilemma creates space for lobbying groups as an additional avenue for information acquisition. When compared to other options—such as allowing authoritarian elections (Brownlee 2007), opposition political parties (Bellinger 2020), or semi-free media (Lorentzen 2014)—sourcing information via a managed advocacy system may incur a lower risk of an accidental loss of power.

Thus, a second exchange relationship develops between groups and policymakers around information: policymakers need information for governance, and groups need information on policy priorities and policymakers’ preferences for advocacy. These opportunities are greatest in policy areas with less available information and higher needs for that information. Rentier states, for instance, will have lower information needs than complex and knowledge-intensive economies. Nevertheless, regimes with more sources of information, like elections or partially-free media, will have less need for collaboration with groups except in policy areas requiring technical information, or that overlap with regime legitimization claims such as public goods provision (Cassani 2017).

In sum, our proposed theoretical framework expects advocacy to be structured by prevailing information demands, which are variable and can be analyzed along two dimensions: 1) **availability of policy-relevant information**: Do elites competing in elections share regional or issue-specific information? Are there other effective mechanisms for information acquisition? and 2) **information needs**: Is social unrest creating

an urgent need for specific information? Do policy priorities, complex economies, or competitive elections require technical or political knowledge lacking in the government? Understanding what information is required by the regime and what information is available allows researchers to develop and test hypotheses about, for instance, when groups form, which policy areas they form in, the pattern underlying the variation in policy access, and how groups devise strategic framing for policy advocacy.

Social Control

The ever-present threat and intermittent use of repression affect all four stages of influence production. Repression arises from autocrats' need for social control, to prevent popular mobilizations or the emergence of viable opposition figures (Gerschewski 2013). The diverse management strategies in the regime's toolbox (e.g. registration requirements, prohibition of foreign funding, surveillance, harassment, outright violence) stifle mobilization, cooperation, and the repertoire of strategies, closing off most points of access for "outsiders" or independent groups. However, "insiders" like government-organized NGOs or coopted groups have more space to form and safely access policymakers.

The key to influence production under non-democratic conditions is, then, to understand the formal and informal red lines informing this menu of repression. Adaptive lobbyists have to shape their organizational forms, coalitions, strategies, and frames to (a) fit *exactly* within permissible bounds, knowing that these bounds are constantly moving, and in addition, (b) leverage the autocrat's needs for legitimacy and information.

This creates a third exchange relationship that trades less repression for more "social management," in which groups voluntarily remain within the acceptable boundaries. Certain policy areas may be a "no go," such as human rights, defense, or internal security (Truex 2016). However, groups are not passive recipients of prescribed policy areas, but rather deploy strategic framing to cast issues in new ways, and, while accommodating the regime's master frame, promote a particular problem definition or treatment recommendation. In addition, autonomous groups may overcome their disadvantaged position in this exchange by working with "inside" groups or directly with government departments through consultation or service contracting (Teets 2018); however, cooperation over time risks cooptation and a loss of meaningful influence.

Our proposed theoretical framework thus expects autocrats' need for social control to condition the lobbying that takes place, and suggests two variables for analysis: 1) **group repression**: How restrictive are social management practices? Are they targeted or sweeping? and 2) **policy red lines**: How many "no go" policy areas exist? Are there ways to frame issues that accord with regime legitimation narratives? Understanding the menu of repression shaping the group ecology allows researchers to develop and test hypotheses about the density and diversity of group ecologies, the emergence of policy networks between groups and bureaucracies, and opportunities for strategic framing.

Implications and Future Research Agenda

Our three proposed "dismal conditions" breed a unique type of lobbyist: the adaptive advocate. To be sure, while advocacy under any conditions needs to be adaptive and flexible, the degree of adaptability required of lobbyists in dictatorships is higher. For one, there is less access to policymaking and less demand for information than even in the most constrained democratic interest system. What is more, there is less certainty over the rules of the game, as things may change at a moment's notice.

Moreover, the constant suspicion of breeding anti-regime sentiments or actions, and the associated threat of persecution, raise the stakes. The kind of lobbyist thriving in these conditions adopts just the right amount of give, simultaneously espousing a resilience and perseverance foreign to their democratic counterparts. In fact, in order to survive in a resource-strapped and closely surveilled environment, the adaptive lobbyist herself creates the space for pluralist practices by engaging the regime in social exchanges that leverage the conditions that constrain her to her advantage. An adaptive lobbyist might trade their access to elusive communities and their information about constituent interests for access to the policymaking process and information about elite priorities. The result may often be acquiescence to policy red lines in exchange for reduced repression.

Consequently, authoritarian advocacy systems are at the same time acutely constrained and surprisingly efficacious, given these constraints. They may not precipitate the same level of responsiveness and representation as democratic systems. However, within the bounds of the three theorized conditions, adaptive lobbying may still facilitate responsiveness and representation that is *localized* in a geographic, thematic, or temporal sense. This is far from trivial,

as it relates to improved governance and potentially improved living conditions for citizens.

Some promising areas of research that may productively engage with our theoretical framework include further conceptualizing, operationalizing, and measuring the three conditions and six variables hypothesized to influence lobbying under authoritarianism, and testing whether they indeed explain variation at different stages of influence production. To this end, scholars may leverage existing cross-national databases of authoritarian regimes, such as the Varieties of Democracy, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, or the Authoritarian Regimes Dataset. Scholars may also adopt methods from similar efforts in Western democratic contexts such as by the Comparative Interest Group Survey project, or the Comparative Policy Agendas Project, to systematically map advocacy group populations in non-democratic countries, and groups' prominence in different political arenas, such as the media or legislative speechmaking.

Additionally, single or multi-country case studies tracing advocacy groups through all four stages of influence production may highlight new features and either support or challenge the ones outlined in this essay. All this makes for an exciting future research agenda on policy advocacy under authoritarianism.

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What Information do Autocratic Leaders Need from Interest Groups?

Marcel Hanegraaff, University of Amsterdam and Iskander De Bruycker, Maastricht University

Introduction

What type of information do policymakers seek from interest groups? Current studies looking to answer this question predominantly focus on established democracies. Some research has examined the exchanges between policymakers and interest groups¹ in non-democratic settings, but these tend to be case studies in single countries not intended to generate general theories of lobbying in autocratic states (e.g., Teets 2013). This article seeks to address this lacuna by asking the following: what are the information demands of policymakers *across* autocratic and democratic countries? In answering this question we contribute to a better understanding of the demand side (i.e., government related) sources of interest group mobilization and maintenance. That is, organizations can only survive in a political system if the information they have to offer is valuable to policymakers. If not, groups will remain outsiders in political decision-making procedures and likely not survive in the long run (Lowery 2007).

To answer the question whether lobbying demands differ across regime types, we compare the nature of information exchanges between policymakers across a wide range of countries. This is possible because we asked a set of 300 policymakers the same set of questions about their relations with interest groups. In this sample, gathered at global climate change and trade negotiations, there are policymakers from over 100 countries, including many from countries with low democratic standards. This allows us to see whether some types of information sources are valued more by autocratic or democratic leaders.

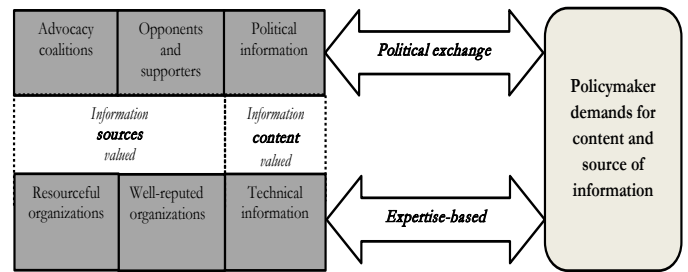
¹ We rely on a broad and functional definition of interest groups, i.e., organizations that seek political influence but have no intention to hold office (Beyers *et al.* 2008). This definition can include organizations such as business associations, NGOs, labor unions, and firms.

What Type of Demands? Political and Expertise-Based Exchanges

What type of information *may* political leaders seek from interest groups? The literature thus far has mostly classified policymakers' demands towards interest groups in two main categories: (1) expertise-based and (2) political-based. Expertise-based exchanges involve the supply of technical or scientific expertise from interest organizations to policymakers. Technical information refers to substantive expert-information about the scientific aspects, feasibility, or effectiveness of a certain policy (Mahoney 2008; De Bruycker 2016). This expertise-based mode of information exchange is characterized by the exchange of highly technical and scientific expertise which is more likely to be offered by highly specialized and resourceful interest organizations (Flöthe 2019). In expertise-based exchanges, policymakers value information from *reputed* and *resourceful* sources that are able to effectively and reliably collect technical and scientific expertise and directly convey this to policymakers through discrete and consensus-oriented negotiations (Dür 2008; Bernhagen 2013, 22).

In contrast, policymakers are also often involved in political-based exchanges in which *political* information serves as the main currency. Political information refers to the level of political and societal support for a policy and is tied less to the substance of a policy and more to how the policy is supported by relevant stakeholders (e.g., Dür and De Bièvre 2007). By supplying political information, an interest organization signals the level of support and opposition that policies enjoy, for instance, from the broader public or from a specific constituency. When policymakers seek political information, they are likely to value whether the interest group delivering it is a single interest organization or an advocacy *coalition*. Coalitions rely on a broader range of constituencies and can convey more credible and encompassing political information compared to interest organizations that lobby alone (Klüver 2013). Moreover, the *position* of an interest group is paramount in political exchanges. Although policymakers are more likely to reach out and value the position of groups with whom they share political views (Hall and Deardorff 2006), policymakers still value information from opponents to estimate the political leverage or negotiation leeway that they have when striking deals. Figure 1 gives an overview of the two modes of information-exchange and the corresponding information content and sources that policymakers value.

Figure 1. Information Demands in Political and Expertise-Based Exchanges



Most importantly, we expect that the type of exchanges that policymakers value varies between leaders of autocratic and democratic states. In terms of *political exchanges*, we expect a higher demand for political information by policymakers from political systems that are more accountable to the public (Lucas *et al.* 2019). Policymakers stemming from such polities can be presumed to more actively gather and process demands and grievances on a constant basis because this allows them to be responsive to public demands and manage the opposition that might emerge. That said, autocratic states may still rely on political input to inform their legitimization strategies. Modern autocratic states often justify their authority by means of installing (seemingly) democratic elections or by being responsive to pervasive public demands (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). Moreover, previous studies have shown that autocracies eagerly monitor the preferences of societal interests as a means to detect potential protest and social uprisings (Dimitrov 2013). While autocratic regimes often allow for some political opposition and critical media coverage for the sake of a legitimate image, this political opposition and critique is less vocal and potent compared to that in democratic regimes, as they are much more constrained and orchestrated (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017, 257). As a result, policymakers from authoritarian regimes face a relatively less persistent demand for political information when compared to policymakers from democratic regimes.

We mentioned that political exchanges involve meaningful engagement with both opposing and supportive interests. Democracy implies a certain receptiveness to alternative or even opposing opinions (Moravcsik 2004; Inglehart and Welzel 2010). Political information from opponents is invaluable for estimating the political leeway that negotiators have and informs them about whether they should take stock of potential protest or opposition and whether and how electoral retribution can be circumvented. In non-democratic polities, advocates with opposing opinions are less valued or even suppressed and are seen as less or even

unworthy exchange partners (Carothers 2006; Mahoney 2016). As documented by Dukalskis and Gerschewski (2017, 256) autocratic leaders seek to foster a passive attitude among their subjects, and most notably their political opponents, by suppressing them or by selectively satisfying their needs. While autocratic regimes may thus show some strategic interest in political opponents' positions, the culture of pluralism, dialogue, and openness inherent to all democracies will make policymakers from democratic states more receptive to exchange with political opponents.

Whether interest groups mobilize in a coalition can also make them more valuable partners in political exchanges (Hojnacki 1997; Hula 1999; Klüver 2013). While studies on advocacy coalitions in authoritarian regimes are scarce, networks and coalitions of civil society organizations have been reported to be comparable to those active in democracies (Teets 2018; Zhang and Tang 2013). Due to obvious formal and institutional constraints, coalitions are arguably less potent in authoritarian regimes. Namely, coalitions are more easily established in a competitive environment, when policy issues are highly salient and conflictual (Beyers and De Bruycker 2017; Holyoke 2009). Moreover, policymakers are more susceptible to diverse coalitions under politicized circumstances and when embedded in a confrontational and publicly-spirited lobbying campaign (De Bruycker and Beyers 2019; Junk 2019). Because policymakers from autocratic countries are less inclined to be exposed to such circumstances and less dependent on political exchanges for staying in office, they are also relatively less likely to value whether groups lobby in a coalition. All of this leads us to formulate the following hypothesis regarding democracy and political exchanges:

H1: Policymakers in autocratic countries have less demand for political exchanges with interest groups (as embodied by the exchange of political information with opposing groups and coalitions) than policymakers in democratic countries.

“While studies on advocacy coalitions in authoritarian regimes are scarce, networks and coalitions of civil society organizations have been reported to be comparable to those active in democracies.”

For *expertise-based* exchanges, however, we do not expect a meaningful difference between regime types. Almost all studies on the information exchange between interest groups and policymakers in the Western hemisphere reveal that technical information is the most important currency in these exchanges (Chalmers 2013; Klüver 2012; Mahoney 2008). But, this type of information is likely also important for leaders in autocratic regimes. Namely, autocratic regimes often legitimize their power by signaling the potency and performance of the state (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017, 257). Autocratic leaders grant access to prominent wealth-maximizing corporations, as these can offer the technical expertise necessary for making policy decisions that secure economic performance (Steinberg and Shih 2012, 1410).

We maintained that to secure the information necessary for making appropriate decisions, democratic leaders will prioritize engaging with resourceful and reputed organizations (Bernhagen 2013; Flöthe 2019; Stevens and De Bruycker 2020). Policymakers from both autocratic and democratic regimes seek to establish an image of competence and performance (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). Autocrats seek to please their “selectorate,” which consists of elites who can remove them from office. The elites that constitute the selectorate, in turn, pursue the prosperity of their own region and industry (Steinberg and Shih 2012, 1413). The relevant economic players responsible for growth and economic performance will likely be reputed and resourceful, while other less wealthy and reputed players are considered less relevant for appeasing the selectorate. Hence, we expect that all leaders, irrespective of their democratic ideals, value technical expertise from reputed and resourceful interest organizations. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: Policymakers in autocratic countries have equal demand for expertise-based exchanges (as embodied by exchanges of technical information with reputed and resourceful organizations) with interest groups as policymakers in democratic countries.

Research Design

To test our hypotheses, we rely on a novel dataset regarding the information demands of 297 policymakers active in the fields of trade and climate change (see Hanegraaff *et al.* 2015). The data were collected at seven global diplomatic conferences between 2011 and 2017: the 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2017 sessions of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COPs) in South-Africa, Qatar, Paris, and Germany, and the 2012,

2016, and 2017 sessions of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (MCs) in Switzerland, Kenya, and Argentina. At these diplomatic meetings, a small team of 3 to 4 research assistants randomly asked international negotiators to participate in an interview of 15 to 30 minutes. The respondents were asked to mention one specific issue that they were working on and to report on their positions regarding this issue and the type of interactions that they had with interest groups, both at home and at the conference. In total, we interviewed 297 international negotiators from 107 different countries (for more information, see Hanegraaff and De Bruycker 2020).

Table 1. Overview of Variables Used in Paper

Variable	Operationalization	Min	Max
Political Information	Did interest groups provide political information? 1=yes (n=111); 0=no (n=181)	0	1
Technical Information	Did interest groups provide technical information? 1=yes (n=188); 0=no (n=104)	0	1
Coalition	Did interest groups represent a broader coalition? 1=yes (n=85); 0=no (n=207)	0	1
Support	Did interest groups agree with your position? 1=yes (n=80); 0=no (n=212)	0	1
Resources	Did interest groups have resources to make things happen? 1=yes (n=57); 0=no (n=235)	0	1
Reputation	Did interest groups provide reliable information before? 1=yes (n=70); 0=no (n=220)	0	1
Democracy	Varieties of Democracy: 1=democracies (n=225); 0=autocracies (n=67)	0	1
Level of Development	GDP/capita (World Bank)	1	4
Saliency	Self-reported attention for issues in country: 1=high (n=123); 2=medium (n=135); 3=low (n=39)	1	3
Function of Policymaker	1=Politician (n=23); 2=Diplomat (n=53); 3=Civil servant (n=183); 4=Other (n=34)	1	4
Size of Country	GDP in trillion dollars (World Bank)	0.01	18.62
Economic Globalization	Foreign direct investment in country (World Bank)	-0.79	12.66

We used this data to perform a statistical analysis (see Table 1). We relied on a set of questions for our *dependent variables* which allowed us to gauge with whom policymakers prefer to talk and what type of information they value. We asked what type of information or organizational characteristic policymakers valued the most when interacting with interest groups at the conferences. The respondents could mark boxes for the following set of attributes: 1) Did they (i.e., interest groups) provide technical information? 2) Did they provide political information? 3) Did they represent a broader coalition of [lobbying organizations]? 4) Did they agree with your policy stand? 5) Had they ever provided you reliable information before? and 6) Did they have the resources to make things happen on the issue of concern? This means we have six dependent variables divided in the type and sources of information.

The *independent variable* is the dichotomous indicator of regime type. For this we rely on the Variety of Democracy Indicator (Coppedge *et al.* 2020). This index makes a distinction between four regime types: liberal democracies, electoral democracies, electoral autocracies, and closed autocracies. To match our data, we rely on the categorization of countries in 2016. Due to the low number of closed autocratic countries in our sample (14), in the statistical model we distinguish between democratic countries (both liberal and electoral democracies) (n=225) and autocracies (both electoral and closed autocracies) (n=67). While some countries enter the dataset twice, there is quite some variation. We have 34 different autocratic countries in our dataset, of which 7 are closed autocracies.² This means our results can be generalized to a broader set of autocratic countries. We test whether the content and source of information exchanges differ between democratic and autocratic regimes. *Control variables* are listed in Table 1.

Results

Our question is: what explains variation in autocrats' demand for expertise or political exchanges as provided by interest groups? To answer this question, we ran regressions for each of the six attributes (three related to expertise-based exchanges and three for political exchanges). All of our dependent variables are measured on a dichotomous scale based on whether the respondents mentioned an attribute as important when interacting with interest groups. To handle the nature of these dichotomous variables, we rely on binary logit regressions. Furthermore, all of the regression analyses

² China, Morocco, Myanmar, Sudan, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yemen.

Table 2. Demand for Politically-Driven Exchanges (models 1-3) and Expertise-Driven Exchanges (models 4-6) by Level of Democratic Accountability

	1. Political information		2. Representing coalition		3. Political support		4. Technical information		5. Resources capacity		6. Reputation in information supply	
	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S. E.
Democracy	0.763**	(0.309)	1.001***	(0.452)	0.770**	(0.322)	0.482	(0.401)	-0.763	(0.440)	0.463	(0.343)
Saliency												
High	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Medium	-0.171	(0.662)	-0.016	(0.234)	0.154	(0.283)	0.422	(0.365)	-0.145	(0.319)	0.302	(0.315)
Low	-0.665*	(0.368)	-0.266**	(0.121)	-0.704**	(0.295)	-0.557	(0.668)	-0.671	(0.538)	1.086**	(0.417)
Function												
Politician	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Diplomat	-0.684	(0.672)	0.464	(0.619)	-0.217	(0.544)	1.150	(0.818)	-0.432	(0.651)	-0.376	(0.566)
Civil servant	-0.274	(0.565)	0.125	(0.555)	-0.106	(0.491)	0.653	(0.781)	0.135	(0.546)	-0.353	(0.497)
Other	-0.763	(0.754)	0.118	(0.712)	-0.204	(0.611)	0.618	(0.893)	0.337	(0.677)	-0.033	(0.607)
GDP per capita	0.074	(0.103)	0.022	(0.111)	0.022	(0.090)	-0.124**	(0.036)	-0.040*	(0.021)	-0.116	(0.135)
Foreign direct investment	-0.097	(0.076)	0.205***	(0.062)	-0.055	(0.050)	-0.006	(0.061)	-0.074	(0.066)	-0.125**	(0.063)
Diagnostics												
Constant	-1.304	(0.624)	-1.618***	(0.630)	-0.693***	(0.521)	-2.747	(0.823)	-0.980*	(0.552)	-0.842***	(0.549)
Country level intercept	0.000	(0.000)	0.444	(0.415)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
Log-likelihood	-110.566		-162.98		-165.73		-114.50		-139.56		-153.61	
N	292		292		292		292		292		292	
Countries	102		102		102		102		102		102	

Note: *P<0.1; **P<0.05; ***P<0.01; Coefficients are presented standard errors in parentheses.

include random intercepts for each country to control for potential clustered effects related to countries.

We start with explaining the *political-based* exchanges between negotiators and interest groups (see columns 1-3 in Table 2). First and most importantly, we see that regime type has a positive and significant effect on the decision to seek out political information. Ignoring political information does not seem to be an option in democratic countries (Model 1). Indeed, not complying with or ignoring political information is not an option in democratic countries because it may lead to a loss of constituency support and, potentially, electoral damage. Delegates who hail from autocratic countries are comparatively less likely to seek out political information, confirming our hypothesis that—in comparison to democratic nations—autocratic leaders

are less concerned about the political consequences of international negotiations. Our results indicate that policymakers from autocratic counties value political information relatively less.

Going further with the two other indicators of political exchanges, we find a positive relationship between policymakers' demand to exchange with broad coalitions and regime type, meaning that in democratic countries there is a higher demand for such exchanges than in autocratic countries (Model 2). Interest groups that lobby in a coalition represent a broader and more encompassing constituency, which gives credence and leverage to the political information that they convey (Klüver 2013). As such, it explains why policymakers from democratic countries prefer to interact with these types of actors. Moreover, we find that policymakers

from autocratic states are relatively more prone to value information exchanges with political allies when compared with policymakers who hail from democratic polities (Model 3). The political information from opponents is invaluable in democratic systems because it informs policymakers about whether and how electoral retribution can be circumvented. In autocratic systems, the fear of electoral retribution is less salient, and hence the need to be informed by opposing interest groups becomes less important. We consider our first hypothesis confirmed.

In the second part of the empirical analysis, we seek to explain *expertise-based* exchanges between policymakers and interest groups. The results for expertise-based exchanges, as seen in columns 4–6 in Table 2, indicate no statistically significant relationship between the level of democracy in a country and the demand for technical expertise (Model 4). This means that policymakers in autocracies interact with interest groups to acquire technical information to a similar extent as those in democratic states when active at global negotiation forums. The same can be said about the sources of information. Both the resources that groups have at their disposal (Model 5) and the reputation of groups (Model 6) do not affect who policymakers reach out to across countries with varying levels of democracy. Autocratic leaders value technical and financial resources as well as trustworthy lobbyists just as much as in democratic states, confirming Hypothesis 2.

Conclusion

Our findings highlight that policy delegates from democratic countries value political information and the strength of coalitions relatively more than delegates from autocratic countries. Moreover, policy delegates from democratic states are more open to alternative or even opposing views from interest groups than policymakers from autocratic countries. This has important implications for the mobilization and survival prospects of organizations which seek to function as intermediaries between citizens and policymakers in less democratic states. In such systems, these organizations will have faced much higher obstacles for collective action and will likely be outcompeted by groups which seek to support the status quo. As such, the inclusion of civil society in political decision-making procedures may not lead to more democracy in such countries, but serves to help autocratic leaders foster an image of legitimate rule-making.

Second, our findings highlight how technical information exchanges are much more universal. Leaders in autocratic states also need interest groups to provide them the necessary expertise to run their country and make policy decisions. An important consequence of this finding is that the interest group system in autocratic states is likely characterized by similar biases towards groups better able to provide technical information. This includes groups with more resources (such as business groups), but also political insiders with a good reputation and track record. As such, elitist and “status-quo” biases seem to be universal traits, applicable to democratic and autocratic systems alike.

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Compliance and Push-back: Politicization of Turkey's Civil Society and Interest Groups under Autocratization

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The role of civil society and interest groups in undemocratic settings remains unclear. On the one hand, grassroots mobilizations during the third-wave of democratization have created high expectations (Feinberg, Waisman, and Zamosc 2006; Silliman and Noble 1998; Toepler and Salamon 2003). Democratization scholarship suggests that civil society generates democratic demands, breeds social capital, and organizes scattered dissent into a sound opposition to autocrats (Diamond 1999; Clarke 1998). In the 1990s and 2000s, civil society has become associated with democratic transition because of its assumed participatory and representative nature.

On the other hand, critics argue that it is unrealistic to attribute these virtues to civil society. They note that civil society can scarcely remain independent of the autocratic state's influence and kindle sustained democratic demands, social cohesion, and deliberation under repression. Indeed, there is evidence that civil society mirrors oppressive political environments and often reproduces power inequalities in undemocratic contexts (Jamal 2007; Chandhoke 2001; Encarnación 2006). Interest groups can become yet another instrument for resilient autocrats, helping the regime to coopt, silence, or manipulate dissent and opposition (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Riley and Fernández 2014).

Debates on the relationship between civil society and political regimes are rooted in empirical insights from consolidated autocracies, where legacies of democratic governance and civic participation are limited or non-existent. Where are we in this debate with regards to the "third wave of autocratization?" (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019). The unfolding third wave is dominated by the decline of electoral and liberal democracies by power-abusing elected incumbents, labelled as democratic erosion or backsliding (Lührmann *et al.* 2021; Lührmann and Lindberg 2019; Bermeo 2016). The result is the slow breakdown of democracy and emergence of the different shades of hybrid regimes.

The intensity and reach of autocratization have been substantial over the last decade. Still, the third wave of autocratization and democratic decline literatures are dominated by structural and incumbent-focused analyses. There has been little in-depth research on institutions and actors outside the political arena (e.g., Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Haggard and Kaufman 2021; Levitsky and Way 2010). This short article centers on the transformation of civil society and interest groups under the gradual and piecemeal process of democratic erosion. What happens to a formerly pluralistic civil society under steady democratic decline? How do interest groups respond under political repression? How do they adapt to remain relevant?

I address these questions through the case of Turkey, where gradual democratic erosion has resulted in regime change from electoral democracy to electoral autocracy (V-Dem 2021; Öktem and Akkoyunlu 2017). Turkey is a representative case to illustrate civil society transformation under contemporary democratic erosion for two reasons. First is one of the most cited examples of third-wave autocratization—the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) (2002–present). Since 2010, democracy has been gradually waning, leading to democratic breakdown in the aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt and 2017 constitutional amendments (V-Dem 2021; Brownlee 2016; Esen and Gumuscu 2020; Somer 2019). Second, the roots of Turkey’s electoral democracy date back to the 1950s when its pluralistic and participatory features were weakly conceived. Hence, the country’s historical and contingent institutions and actors diverge from resilient autocracies mentioned earlier. During the 1960–70s, a strong civil society and trade union mobilization kept civic participation and grassroots mobilization alive. After the abrupt breakdown of democracy with the 1980 coup, rights-based civil society has flourished following the return to multi-party democracy from 1983 through the 1990s and 2000s (Toprak 1995).

I focus on civil society and interest group mobilization in the area of gender politics, particularly women’s organizations focusing on the last decade when democratic erosion undoubtedly escalated at an increasing rate. The reason for choosing gender politics is two-fold. First, the current government has sponsored a conservative-nationalist gender agenda that promoted women’s ‘true emancipation’ through family and domestic care. Second, in recent years, women’s organizations have become one of the most persistent and well-organized civic opposition groups that have demanded equality, participation, and justice, and mobilized the grassroots against autocratic policy-making.

I argue that civil society can abet both democratic and undemocratic forces. To expand and complement their political hegemony, incumbents turn to civil society to create a government-oriented sector. This distinct sector is populated by interest groups linked to the incumbents by ideological and financial ties. Moreover, selective repression and legislative power also allow the incumbents to tame civil society’s autonomous and pluralistic nature (Yabancı 2019). These complex variables create an interest group ecology that is dynamic and densely populated, but highly politicized and polarized between government-oriented and oppositional interest groups under the impact of democratic erosion.

Two interlinked features separate “third wave” cases from persistent autocracies in terms of civil society and regime relations. First, democratic institutions and civic culture have a longer legacy in Turkey and similar countries. “Democratic legacy” refers to the *institutionalized* presence of democratic rules of competition among rival political actors and a culture of political and civic participation. Political elites and the electorate accept democratic procedures as a routine mechanism of power change and power-sharing. It is more difficult—or takes more time—for anti-democratic incumbents to remove elections and democratic procedures amidst a sustained democratic legacy (Cornell, Møller, and Skaaning 2020).

Importantly, a longer democratic legacy makes it hard to erode an organized civic and social opposition, and pluralism within civil society. Not only do many rights-based social movements and interest groups exist, but they are also grounded institutionally and socially. When political institutions are monopolized, civil society offers an alternative venue to organize opposition and build an extensive action repertoire to contest the incumbents’ attack on rights, freedoms, and democratic institutions. Civil society with its institutional memory, social capital, and organizational skills can sustain democratic demands and mobilization, despite ongoing autocratization at the formal institutional level.

Second, democratic erosion unfolds through piecemeal and legal steps (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019). In other words, incumbents avoid abrupt and blatantly illegal measures but find legal loopholes to undermine democracy gradually (Waldner and Lust 2018). This means that although political violence exists, its intensity and spread are much lower compared to persistent autocracies where indiscriminate political violence nips in the bud any potential civic space.

Together with a democratic legacy, the lower levels of political violence earn dissenting groups time to build adaptive skills that might foster alternative participation and organized opposition.

Civil Society and Interest Groups during AKP Rule

Despite the AKP's repressive legal and judicial practices targeting civil society, the number of registered associations and foundations in Turkey has increased during the gradual breakdown of democracy (Fig 1) (CIVICUS 2021).

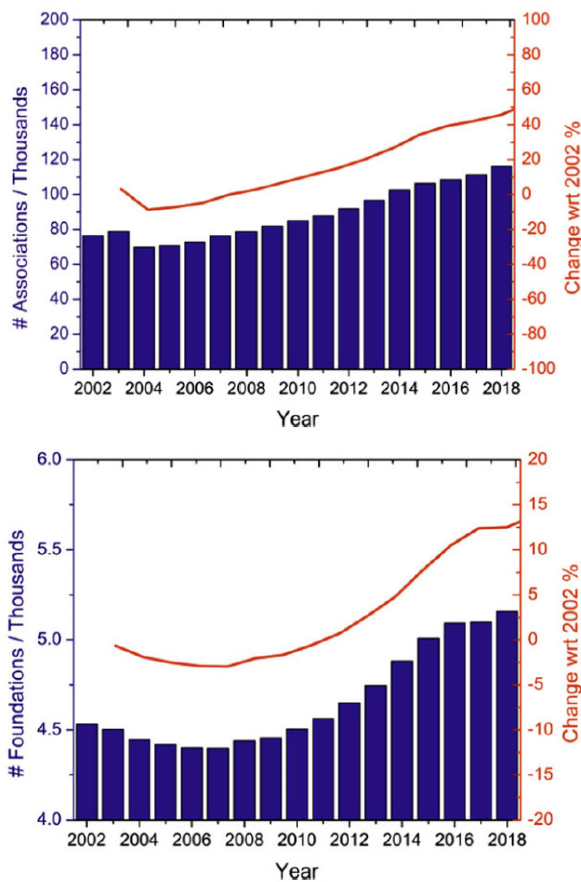


Figure 1. The Numbers of Associations and Foundations during AKP Rule (2002–2019). Source: (Yabancı 2019)

This increase is partially due to the ruling party's strategy to foster government-oriented civil society (Yabancı 2016; 2021a; 2021b). In particular, women's organizations with ideological and organic links to the AKP have assumed a central role in its attempts to control and coopt civil society. The AKP has long sought to promote a socially conservative political agenda and to reconceive women's rights and gender relations

through a family and domestic care perspective. Women have been encouraged to prioritize parenting roles for the sake of new generations loyal to the nationalist-conservative ideology that the AKP embodies (Güneş-Ayata and Doğangün 2017; Yabancı 2021c).

Towards this end, government-oriented women's organizations have become resourceful actors. They target multiple action areas through their activities. Through lobbying, they aim to influence the government's policies and budget on issues related to women and family. However, their lobbying does not meet the normative expectations of such activity in a democracy, whereby interest groups are included in policymaking. Consultations with the government usually take place behind closed doors. Therefore, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact nature of their lobbying power and the leeway these organizations have in terms of initiating new policies or pressuring the government. Still, when the government proposes a controversial policy, women's organizations with organic ties to the AKP appear well-informed about the details in advance. For instance, when the AKP decided to limit the scope of alimony in 2020 or to license religious authorities to conduct civil marriage in 2017, government-oriented women's organizations were aware of the upcoming drafts. They started well-planned advocacy campaigns to prepare the public in advance.

Meanwhile, autonomous women's organizations that I interviewed in 2018 and 2019 complained about being shut off from policy consultations since 2011. Instead, the government prefers only a few women's organizations for pre-legislative meetings with interest groups. Civil society's inclusion in lobbying and policy-making takes place in an asymmetric environment contrived by the government.

Government-oriented women's organizations also work to assuage negative public opinion of the incumbents. Recent legislation concerning sexual assault is a case in point. In 2020, the AKP proposed a change that would acquit perpetrators of sexual assault upon marriage to underage victims. Public opinion appeared adamantly unified against the proposal. Hence, government-oriented women's organizations were hesitant to directly support it. Nonetheless, they also avoided criticizing the government's insistence that underage women marry their assaulters, fearful of enflaming public opinion further. Instead, they sought to justify the proposed law by distorting the facts. They argued that such marriages had taken place consensually in the past and that the government merely intended to maintain strong families in line with "Turkish traditions." Within Turkey's climate of negative partisanship, such campaigns whitewash controversial

policies. They also prevent the potential formation of a unified cross-partisan public opinion on salient issues, thereby preventing defections from the AKP's support base.

Their success in shaping public opinion emerges as a key reason for the AKP's promotion of such organizations. These groups have orchestrated an anti-gender equality campaign in line with religious principles and a conservative political-legal agenda (Yabancı 2016; Diner 2018). To date, they have become successful in rallying a considerable part of society against gender equality and mainstreaming principles, and specifically against the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention (on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence) as well as LGBTQ+ rights.

In doing so, these organizations follow a template similar to other conservative and populist movements across the world by promoting femonationalist and heteropatriarchal values (Mulholland *et al.* 2018; Farris 2012; Verloo and Paternotte 2018). Accordingly, feminism and gender equality are alien to "the authentic traditions of the nation" and "the true nature" of women who are allegedly the guardians of family values. Towards this aim, they have adopted several strategies. An "academic journal" and expert reports have laid out an alternative conception of "gender justice"—an allegedly superior substitute for gender equality. The concept of gender justice is built on a haphazard blend of Islamic principles with cherry-picked features of post-colonial feminist theory for justification beyond Turkey, especially in non-Western contexts. Annual international conferences and participation in projects and networking in Europe have also helped these organizations establish alliances across borders with like-minded organizations, thinkers, and academics.

Thanks to their organizational reach and financial resources provided by state ministries and AKP-run municipalities, government-oriented women's organizations carry out national projects on diverse issues, including vocational training for unskilled women, support for drug-addicted children, integration programs for women refugees, and aid to the poor. These projects demonstrate their ability to reach out to disadvantaged or precarious women and to establish local links with their target groups. Most importantly, these grassroots ties turn them into transmission belts that report societal demands and discontents to the government. Overall, the intermediary role they assume between their target group, public opinion, and the government make them valuable assets for the AKP's societal reach and legitimacy.

Tactful Adaptation of Autonomous Civil Society

Democratic decline has raised serious challenges for autonomous civil society organizations and movements. The AKP has been targeting interest groups and activists with skills to mobilize public opinion regarding politically salient issues since 2013's nationwide protests (Yabancı 2019). Pre-emptive detention, terrorism charges, and securitization of human rights activism have become normalized following the 2016 botched coup. What is truly cumbersome is not the repressive capacity of the incumbents per se, but the unpredictability of political repression of interest groups. Issues or events once considered permissible might turn out to be lightning rods in a few years. Red lines are redrawn quite quickly.

Nevertheless, repression has also given rise to an intensified regrouping and change of strategies within civil society. Democratic breakdown has had two consequences for autonomous interest groups in Turkey. First, they have gone through an organizational transformation, turning to horizontal networks and grassroots mobilization. Again, the emergence of new women's networks and organizations is notable here. Spearheaded by educated and urban women in their mid-20s and 30s, new women's organizations have quickly superseded professionalized NGOs. They established nationwide visibility and secured the participation of women from diverse backgrounds of age, education, class, and region.

Second, autonomous and oppositional interest groups have developed an impressive capacity to adapt to the quick shift in repressive measures by 1) developing new structural relationships based on cross-cutting alliances, and 2) drawing upon multiple means of action across the country, including protests, democratic innovations, litigation, and indirect lobbying through public awareness campaigns.

"Nevertheless, repression has also given rise to an intensified regrouping and change of strategies within civil society."

Regarding alliances, autonomous women's groups reach out to women of diverse backgrounds to bridge secular-religious, Turkish-Kurdish, and left-right cleavages by emphasizing gender equality and defending women's rights. As a result, they have focused on the intersectionality of discrimination and gendered power

structures. Secular and Muslim feminists have joined efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality and more specifically to defend the right to make decisions regarding their bodies, outfits, and social roles against government interference.

In doing so, women's organizations utilize different discourses. For example, Muslim feminists refer to religious texts to contest centuries-old masculine interpretations that justify discrimination and violence targeting women, while secular women's networks emphasize more directly a conception of gender equality inclusive of LGBTQ+. However, this diversity does not stem from a fundamental fragmentation but a strategic choice to reach out to diverse audiences across the religious-secular cleavage. This alliance has raised mutual awareness, leading to a more embracing attitude among secular women towards Muslim women's agency, and the willingness among Muslim women to open up on taboo issues like abortion, LGBTQ+, or divorce. Overall, new alliances have revealed that, whether Muslim or secular, being a woman in Turkey means facing similar hardships due to the gender roles imposed by an increasingly nationalist-conservative and authoritarian regime.

Autonomous women's organizations have invented a wide repertoire to mobilize the grassroots. For instance, women's assemblies are a remarkable success for civic participation. Women's assemblies are deliberative forums established in 25 cities as well as at several district and university levels in densely populated urban areas. They encourage more women to experiment with democratic innovations by directly voicing their demands regardless of their partisan or ideological affiliation. Through assembly meetings, participants become informed about their legal rights and discuss long-term solutions for inequality and violence. I was told that during local assembly meetings, topics for discussion range from early and forced marriages, to violence and equal pay. Such meetings do not only aim to create solidarity but also to seek solutions for specific discrimination, by pooling women's experience, knowledge, personal networks, and legal expertise.

Women's organizations continuously organize peaceful demonstrations, mostly in urban areas, despite police violence and bans on the freedom of assembly following the 2016 coup attempt. Social media has become a major platform for organizing and expanding participation in these protests. While protests do not always prevent the government from imposing new legislation undermining women's rights, according to the activists I interviewed, sustained protest keeps the public informed where the traditional media is controlled

by the incumbents, and supports the solidarity and cooperation among women's organizations. It also has profound symbolic importance: the streets are venues to contest the undemocratic turn. To refuse to surrender the streets to the government is to defy the attempts to deepen autocratization. Digitally-savvy mobilization has become more crucial than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. Immediate mass protests were quickly organized via social media platforms following the government's abrupt decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention. Women's assemblies took place online during the lockdown to ensure that women continued to have a voice on equal platforms.

The action repertoire of women's organizations also extends into litigation. An organization of activist-lawyers called "We Will Stop Femicides" takes up legal proceedings to support victims of domestic violence (or their families in cases when the victim is deceased). The platform publicizes upcoming court hearings on every case. According to the activists, when the organization is involved in court proceedings, security forces, prosecutors, and judges are less able to be lenient on the perpetrators of these crimes. The platform also utilizes open digital sources to create a nationwide database of femicides. This documentation has lately become the only reliable source of skyrocketing femicide cases. These efforts are essential for legal redress, but they also create collective memory for the women's movement, raise public awareness, and pressure the government to tackle gender-based crimes.

Overall, despite increasing restrictions under institutional erosion of democracy, women's groups have invented a myriad of ways to continue mobilization for democratic demands and favored alternative channels of participation and claims-making.

Conclusion

De-democratization scholarship has focused on institutional change to explain the causes and consequences of democratic erosion. Non-political institutions, such as civil society and interest groups, have received meager attention. Women's organizations in Turkey reveal several lessons about the transformation of civil society and interest group mobilization under democratic erosion and eventual democratic breakdown.

First, civil society under democratic erosion is densely populated and dynamic. On the one hand, there are resourceful government-oriented groups. They assist incumbents in search of extending their hegemony

to civic and social arenas. These groups promote the government's controversial policies, and prevent coalition formation and interest aggregation across partisan cleavages. On the other hand, civil society has the capacity to mobilize new grassroots demands for participation, justice, and pluralism. As a result, civil society can become deeply politicized, reflecting the partisan polarization of politics.

Second, the actions and agenda of interest groups depend on how they position themselves in this polarized environment. Government-oriented groups have access to guaranteed resources and bureaucratic facilitation. They have become highly professionalized organizations with nationwide reach and lobbying. Autonomous and oppositional actors within civil society face repression and are locked out of lobbying. As a result, they often turn to grassroots mobilization and alliances, and expanding and changing the mediums of contention.

Third, while civil society is split along pro- and anti-incumbent poles, unexpected cooperation and alliances can also appear under repression. Previous ethnic or religious cleavages can become secondary or be bridged through novel alliances. These groups are active in multiple issue areas and have more options than cooptation or atomized scattered contention. They also resort to protest, ensuring that the street remains a "natural habitat" for oppositional groups.

Democratic legacy and the historical and institutional rootedness of civil society are crucial factors that allow civil society to capitalize on contesting against the incumbents. Civil society and its transformation in Turkey reveal that democratic erosion is not the only process at play. While autocratization is deepening at the political and institutional levels, re-democratization might be simultaneously unfolding at civic and societal levels.

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Political Embeddedness and NGO Policy Advocacy Strategies in Authoritarian China

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Globally, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been deeply engaged in the policy process, advocating issues of direct interest to themselves, their clients, and the broader community. Policy advocacy is broadly defined as NGOs' attempts to influence government decisions through direct and indirect means, including contacting government, participating in the formulation and implementation of bureaucratic rules, and mobilizing at the grassroots level. NGOs' advocacy and civic engagement efforts often face various pressures, such as resource scarcity and political antagonism. While much of the extant literature has focused on NGO policy advocacy in Western democracies, scholars are increasingly paying attention to the phenomenon in authoritarian regimes.

Why do authoritarian governments like China, which typically do not tolerate civil society groups, allow NGOs to advocate? Some studies show that NGOs can provide information and expertise to the government. For example, Teets (2013) proposes "consultative authoritarianism" to explain how NGOs use their expertise and services to collaborate with local governments in exchange for policy access. Similarly, Farid and Li (2020) use "reciprocal engagement" to conceptualize the interdependent relationship between NGOs and the local state. Other scholars argue that NGOs can take advantage of the changing political opportunity structure or the fragmentation of the authoritarian regime to influence the government. For example, in the environmental field, the conflicts between different levels of government and between different administrative divisions have created meaningful opportunities for NGO advocacy (Zhan and Tang 2011).

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Compared to the West, NGOs have deeply embedded ties with the state, and their policy advocacy in authoritarian China is fragmented, local, and non-confrontational. Hsu and Jiang (2015), for example, posit that NGO founders' government work experience directly relates to their use of state-allied versus state-avoidant strategies. Li, Lo, and Tang (2017) show that environmental NGOs navigate resource dependencies and political uncertainties when deciding on their advocacy strategies, and that confrontational approaches are often out of the question.

To systematically understand NGO policy advocacy in China and shed light on NGO-state relations in other authoritarian regimes, one should answer two basic questions: What advocacy strategies do NGOs use? How does political embeddedness affect NGOs' use of different advocacy strategies? In our project, we collected two sources of data: a nationwide survey of 267 Chinese environmental NGOs (ENGOS) in 2014–2015 and 39 in-depth interviews with ENGO leaders and government officials in five major cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Chongqing, and Guangzhou before and after the survey. We focus on ENGOS because they are viewed as "politically less harmful" by the government and have become an important part of China's environmental governance (Kostka & Mol 2013). The rich data enable us to triangulate and corroborate data sources, reduce bias, and illuminate new perspectives.

ENGOS' Policy Advocacy Strategies

To take stock of ENGOS' advocacy strategies, we drew on existing measures (e.g., Mosley 2011) and asked ENGO leaders to report the extent to which they had used nine different advocacy activities over the past three years, based on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means rarely used and 5 means very frequently used. We also asked them to describe the extent to which they had contacted officials at the People's Congress—the major legislative organ in China—and the Political Consultative Conference—the advisory body for the legislative organ—at the national or local levels over the past three years. This is measured on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = rarely in contact, 2 = yearly, 3 = quarterly, 4 = monthly, and 5 = weekly.

We coded each activity dichotomously and calculated the percentage of ENGOS that had used the strategy fairly often and very often. As Table 1 shows, while less than 5% of ENGOS had made contact with the legislative bodies at the state level, 20% had contacted local legislatures at least once a year. Besides legislative advocacy, other popular strategies include submitting

policy/research reports to the media (39%), followed by providing legal expertise in environmental protection (34%).

Table 1. ENGOs' Engagement in Different Advocacy Tactics, Percentages

% of ENGOs interacting with officials at least once a year	
Contact the Local People's Congress	16%
Contact the Local Political Consultative Conference	18%
Contact the National People's Congress	5%
Contact the National Political Consultative Conference	4%
% of ENGOs often engaging in advocacy activities	
Submit policy/research reports to the media	39%
Provide legal expertise in environmental protection	34%
Collaborate with other organizations to influence public policy	31%
Announce research and policy reports to the public	31%
Participate in public interest litigation to represent pollution victims	31%
Organize collective activities such as co-signing or letter writing	30%
Communicate policy ideas with government officials privately	28%
Serve on government-organized guidance committees	27%
Participate in the formulation and revision of bureaucratic rules	26%

Following existing conceptualizations (e.g., Binderkrantz 2005), we categorized the thirteen activities into five advocacy strategies based on their institutional target:

- **Legislative advocacy**, including contacting the People's Congress and the Political Consultative Conference at national and local levels.
- **Legal advocacy**, including providing legal expertise in environmental protection, and participating in public interest litigation to represent pollution victims.
- **Administrative advocacy**, including communicating policy ideas with government officials privately, serving on government-organized guidance committees, and participating in the formulation and revision of bureaucratic rules.

- **Media advocacy**, including submitting policy/research reports to the media and announcing research and policy reports to the public.
- **Mobilization**, including organizing collective activities such as co-signing or writing letters and collaborating with other organizations to influence public policy.

Legislative advocacy is the least prevalent among ENGOs, probably due to their lack of access to law-making processes. Only one ENGO in the interview was able to submit policy proposals through representatives, but once the founder passed away, such advocacy diminished quickly. In contrast, media advocacy via policy/research reports is the most prevalent strategy, suggesting that ENGO leaders may contribute by educating the public and raising citizens' environmental awareness. It also reflects their strong connections with the media since many have previously worked in journalism or related fields. ENGOs also mobilize frequently, which often involves building local networks with other environmental groups. Many ENGO leaders believe that environmental objectives can be achieved through greater awareness, knowledge, and cooperation. ENGOs tend to consider public campaign pressures as effective practices that can lead to government responsiveness. However, while operating in a restricted political environment, Chinese ENGO leaders must assess the political risks associated with mobilization to ensure their organizations' survival.

ENGOs' Political Embeddedness

To examine ENGOs' political embeddedness, we focus on five aspects: 1) registration status, 2) supervisory agency, 3) government affiliation, 4) government work experience, and 5) receipt of government funding. Legal registration constitutes a mechanism through which the state defines the notion of an NGO, its legitimate scope of activity, and degree of autonomy. Before the new Charity Law in 2016, NGOs had to have a supervisory agency within the government and had to ensure that no other NGOs focusing on similar issues existed within the same administrative jurisdiction. Through these rules, the government limited NGOs' capacity building, keeping alliances and mission creep to a minimum. Although the new Charity Law lifted both quantity restrictions and supervisory agency requirements, registration remains difficult for certain NGOs, especially those working in sensitive areas (for example, labor rights, HIV/AIDS, and religion). Unsurprisingly, registration rates among NGOs remain uneven. Obtaining legal status allows NGOs to open a bank account, reduce operating risk, and fundraise openly from the state and civil society. Thus, it also

matters for policy advocacy. Approximately 77% of ENGOs in our data were able to register with the government.

Beyond registration with a Civil Affairs Bureau, NGOs must secure a professional supervisory agency (62% out of all ENGOs had a supervisory agency¹) to supervise their management, activities, contacts with foreign entities, and capital flows. The arrangement creates a mechanism for sharing authority and risk. Supervisory agencies are hence incentivized to control and restrain NGOs' advocacy. Nonetheless, well-connected supervisory agency officials can bring relevant policymakers and NGOs together to promote policy change, providing NGOs with an access point to the policy process (Teets 2018). The information and expertise that NGOs provide can improve local governance, which serves as the performance credit to advancing officials' career goals (Newland 2018).

Two distinct types of NGOs coexist: civic NGOs initiated by private citizens and government-organized NGOs (GONGOs)² that are either spin-offs of government-affiliated service organizations or direct creations of government agencies. 56% of our sample of ENGOs could be classified as GONGOs. Most GONGOs were initially established to absorb international capital and retired bureaucrats from the administrative reform in the 1990s. As semi-governmental organizations, GONGOs have enjoyed various benefits, including financial support and special personnel arrangements. In contrast, civic NGOs have been institutionally discriminated against in many ways, such as through bureaucratic obstacles and government grant approval. Due to these differences in institutional privileges, GONGOs and civil NGOs may adopt vastly different advocacy strategies.

Some NGO leaders in China are also former or current government officials. Leaders who have worked within the government usually know the particulars of the policy process and have access to various government agencies (Li, Tang, and Lo 2018). When they need help, they can quickly build contacts and communicate with relevant authorities. Such communication allows the government to familiarize itself with NGOs' work,

¹ Since 2013, four types of NGOs, including industry associations, science and technology organizations, charities, and community service organizations, were exempted from having a sponsoring agency.

² An NGO is a GONGO if it meets any of the following criteria: a) the founding institution is a government or quasi-government agency, b) the initial funding is provided by a government agency, and c) the administrative operation of the NGO is partially funded by the government.

thus giving NGOs better survival chances while simultaneously influencing their advocacy strategies. Our data show that 18% of NGOs had leaders with government work experience. These organizations may adopt different advocacy strategies than those without such leaders.

Lastly, how NGOs influence policy may be contingent on whether they receive government funding. Since 2013, ENGOs have been designated by the government as eligible entities for purchasing social services, and ENGO-government collaboration has become more common in environmental projects. Accordingly, government funding has become an important source of revenue for many ENGOs (79% received government funding). Tighter financial integration can then lead to more frequent interactions with officials and create new channels for policy influence. It may also discourage ENGOs' use of certain advocacy strategies as they are reluctant to "bite the hand that feeds them."

Political Embeddedness and ENGO Advocacy Strategies

We performed Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis to examine how ENGOs' multiple dimensions of political embeddedness are associated with their policy advocacy strategies (see Table 2). The coefficient for registration status is statistically insignificant, indicating that registered ENGOs are indistinguishable from unregistered ones in their advocacy strategies. This finding contrasts with previous studies that consider legal registration a precondition for policy influence, but echoes Hildebrandt (2012), who shows that legal registration entails a complex relationship between the state and society. Also, unregistered NGOs can engage in various policy advocacy venues or collaborate informally with registered ones to attempt to influence policy directly through information provision and support.

The findings also show that ENGOs with a supervisory agency engage more in legislative and administrative advocacy. This finding is consistent with Teets (2018), who argues that in a closed policy process without meaningful channels for interest articulation, NGOs develop policy networks by serving as technical and policy experts and communicating with relevant policymakers through their "hinge"—officials in their supervisory agencies. Accordingly, ENGOs with a supervisory agency favor legislative and administrative advocacy since both require insider access. In addition, the results indicate that supervisory agencies discourage ENGOs from engaging in politically risky activities, such as legal, media, and mobilization

Table 2. Regression of Factors Associated with Various Advocacy Strategies

	Legislative Strategy	Legal Strategy	Administrative Strategy	Media Strategy	Mobilization Strategy
Registration status	0.02 (0.03)	-0.13 (0.16)	0.01 (0.13)	0.02 (0.15)	0.14 (0.15)
Supervisory agency	0.07* (0.03)	-0.39** (0.14)	0.24* (0.11)	-0.29* (0.13)	-0.31* (0.13)
GONGO	-0.07** (0.03)	0.25* (0.12)	0.00 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.12)	-0.13 (0.12)
Government work experience	0.03 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.15)	0.17 (0.12)	0.14 (0.14)	0.03 (0.15)
Government funding	0.04 (0.03)	0.79*** (0.15)	0.87*** (0.12)	0.55*** (0.14)	0.79*** (0.15)
Organization age	0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Organization size	0.00 (0.01)	0.16** ³ (0.06)	0.08 (0.05)	0.11* (0.06)	0.10* (0.06)
R-squared	0.06	0.2524	0.2448	0.1188	0.1583
F statistic	2.51	12.49	11.99	4.99	6.96
Note: N=267; * p<0.10; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01; *** p<0.001					

³ The finding shows that larger ENGOS engage more in legal advocacy. This is not surprising given that the Environmental Protection Law (2014) specifies that NGOs with over five years of registration are eligible to engage in public interest litigation. So, the relationship here is not causal, but is written into the law.

strategies, despite officials’ potential career gains from successful programs.

Compared to civic NGOs, GONGOs are further shown to engage less in legislative and more in legal advocacy. This is theoretically counterintuitive, as due to their institutional privileges, we would expect GONGOs to have more access to legislative officials. Our interviews confirmed this. Such discrepancy can be explained both by measurement errors of legislative advocacy and the limited variance of the dependent variable since only a few NGOs engage in legislative advocacy, signifying the closed law-making process. The results also show that GONGOs engage more in legal advocacy than civic ENGOS do. This is likely because legal advocacy often involves significant social research, community organizing, and prolonged litigation processes, many of which civic ENGOS cannot afford. Given that under the Environmental Protection Law (2014), only ENGOS registered for more than five years can partake in public interest litigation, more established GONGOs are favored. As administrative, media, and mobilization strategies are equally accessible to both types, we find no significant difference between GONGOs and civic NGOs.

Contrary to previous research and interview findings, ENGO leaders’ prior government work experience is not directly related to their advocacy strategies. While

party-state experience may be *prima facie* conducive to their alliance and bridge-building capacity, this finding can be explained by recent anti-corruption campaigns under Xi Jinping that may have made officials extremely cautious about using former personal ties to the government. Nonetheless, future research is required to substantiate this unexpected empirical result.

Lastly, consistent with Western NGOs, government funding is positively related to Chinese ENGOS’ advocacy activities. This is expected since more funding creates new channels for policy advocacy through better information provision, official interactions, and increased financial stability. However, as several NGO leaders commented during the interviews, grassroots NGOs have not been meaningfully involved in the process of government purchase of social services. Government funding favors larger organizations (especially GONGOs) over grassroots NGOs, and advocacy capacity is still unevenly distributed.

Conclusion

We examined ENGOS’ political embeddedness and policy advocacy strategies in authoritarian China. The analysis shows that when advocating, ENGOS use various strategies, including legislative, legal, administrative, media, and mobilization, with media and legislative advocacy being the most and least prevalent,

respectively. This finding has two implications. First, ENGOs believe strongly in educating the public and raising citizens' environmental awareness. It is widely known that social media in authoritarian China is unevenly censored; it allows government criticism but silences collective action. Such media censorship may shape ENGO media advocacy toward a softer approach, encouraging ENGOs to use social media for educating the public or criticizing government misbehavior, but simultaneously dampening their collective action. Second, while ENGOs could influence the government in various ways, they can hardly access the law-making process—a closed system without channels for meaningful interest articulation.

In addition, we operationalized ENGOs' political embeddedness based on legal registration, supervisory agency, leaders' government work experience, government affiliation, and government funding. The analysis shows that political embeddedness shapes ENGOs' advocacy strategies as follows.

- Legal registration does not matter much for policy influence, whereas the supervisory agency serves as an access point for ENGOs' legislative and administrative advocacy. Although the law-making process is closed, supervisory agencies can open a door and allow ENGOs to participate in the policy process. With the new Charity Law from 2016, some NGOs can register directly with the *Civil Affairs Bureaus* without supervisory agencies. Given supervisory agencies' facilitating role in creating policy networks, such policy may decrease ENGOs' ability to advocate.

- GONGOs participate disproportionately in legal advocacy, while ENGO leaders with government experience can act as boundary-spanners to the policy process and media. However, considering new regulations banning high-level officials from leadership positions in NGOs, this channel may become increasingly inaccessible.

- Like the situation in western democracies, government provision of social services may have produced some unintended political consequences—increased channels for NGOs to advocate for policy change. However, government funding favors well-established, regime-supporting NGOs, creating an uneven space for NGO development and advocacy.

Taken together, these findings enrich our understanding of NGO policy advocacy in an authoritarian setting. As exemplified by the case of China, many authoritarian regimes in the contemporary world have adopted a softer approach: they allow for

limited development of civil society but use various means to strictly control it. To advocate, NGOs in these regimes must navigate a government-dominated institutional environment, and obtaining political resources of some sort can help them carve out meaningful political space to engage in policy advocacy.

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Post-Soviet Policy Entrepreneurs? The Impact of Non-State Actors on Social Service Reform in Russia and Belarus

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Introduction

Since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, post-Soviet countries have been following different paths of development. While some conducted radical political and economic reforms, others made only partial changes to their political and economic structures. In Russia since 2000, the welfare system has moved from the Soviet model of heavy subsidies and broad state social provision to a more mixed model based on means-testing, privatization, and the increasing involvement of non-state actors such as NGOs in the provision of social services to vulnerable groups. In Belarus, the state has remained largely responsible for the delivery of social services as it was during the Soviet period, but quality is often poor, eligibility has been tightened since 2007, and there have been nascent attempts recently to involve NGOs in the delivery of social services.

At the same time, social policy and the provision of public welfare continue to be of vital importance in maintaining the legitimacy of the electoral authoritarian regimes that dominate both countries, and non-state actors working in this area may have some capacity to have input into the development of social policy and to influence it. We argue that despite the significant constraints NGOs face in trying to operate in the social policy sphere in Russia and Belarus, there are nevertheless some opportunities for them to influence

the development and implementation of policies. This argument is based on a series of interviews conducted by the authors with representatives of NGOs in various locations in Russia and Belarus during 2015–2018. Our findings have implications for the study of how civil society operates in post-Soviet authoritarian regimes and our understanding of the policymaking process in these contexts.

NGOs as ‘Policy Entrepreneurs’ in an Authoritarian Regime

NGOs and other non-state actors such as think-tanks or interest group lobbies have long acted as “partners” of the state in democracies and have had input into the process of designing government policy, particularly where social policy is concerned (Bode and Brandsen 2014; Rhodes 1996). Kingdon (2014) argues that there are three components to the process of setting the agenda for action in a particular policy area: problems, policies, and politics.

Within the problem stream, various problems capture the attention of policymakers and other key figures at a particular point in time. This could be the result of systematic indicators gathered by governmental or nongovernmental sources, or a sudden focusing event such as a crisis or disaster (Kingdon, pp. 90, 94). In the policy stream, specialists, bureaucrats, and interest group representatives generate and discuss proposals within a “policy primeval soup,” with some of these proposals being taken up and others simply discarded (Ibid, 116). The politics stream consists of various events, both predictable and unpredictable, such as changes in national mood and public opinion, election results, and changes of administration. These streams generally function independently, and a policy issue will only get on the agenda when “a problem is recognized, a solution is developed and available in the policy community, a political change makes it the right time for policy change, and potential constraints are not severe” (Ibid, 165).

At this point, policy entrepreneurs emerge from the policy stream to take advantage of this window of opportunity. These are persistent, well-connected members of a particular policy community—operating inside or outside governmental structures—who have expertise relevant to that policy area (Kingdon 2014; Mucciaroni 1992). In order to ensure that their particular policy proposal rises to the top of the agenda, they often spend years “softening up” other members of their policy community and the general public (Kingdon 2014, 143). According to Cairney (2018, 200), effective policy entrepreneurs combine three key

strategies in order to be successful in what is a highly complex and unpredictable policymaking environment: “telling a good story to grab the audience’s interest; producing feasible solutions in anticipation of attention to problems; [and] adapting their strategy to the specific nature of each ‘window.’” Furthermore, they are skilled when it comes to strategic thinking, building teams and coalitions, collecting evidence, and negotiating and networking (Mintrom 2019).

While Kingdon’s work focused on the context of policymaking within the United States, the multiple-streams framework has since been applied to a number of different political systems and units of analysis (Herweg *et al.* 2015). What is less clear is whether there are opportunities for potential policy entrepreneurs to have input into the policymaking process in electoral/competitive authoritarian regimes such as Russia and Belarus (Levitsky and Way 2010; Bedford 2017). Under the centralized, semi-authoritarian system which has developed in Russia during President Vladimir Putin’s tenure since 2000, the state operates largely autonomously from society at large, and elites are insulated from the public (Greene 2014). In Belarus, Bedford (2017) argues that the regime makes use of a “menu of manipulation” involving selective repression, controlled openness, and the targeting of electoral rules, actors, and issues in order to eliminate alternatives to the political status quo. Russia and Belarus may thus at first glance seem to be unlikely settings for NGOs to have much input into policy design or implementation at either the national or local level. Yet, as Duckett and Wang (2017) point out, policymaking in any authoritarian state involves other actors aside from the top leader and their supporting elite.

In Russia, responsibility for setting the general principles and national standards for social policy falls to the federal government, particularly the federal Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. The president in particular plays the key role in determining the direction of policy, particularly in areas that have major budgetary implications, such as social policy (Khmelnitskaya 2017). In terms of implementation, however, it is regional governments that must pass the corresponding legislation and that have their own regional ministries for social protection, and municipal governments are responsible for the practical delivery of social services (Kulmala 2016). In addition, regional budgets are largely responsible for financing Russia’s extensive system of social services and benefits (Remington *et al.* 2013).

These factors ensure that when it comes to the implementation of social policy in Russia, it is

the regional level which matters most and where NGOs have the greatest opportunities to operate as policy entrepreneurs and build relationships with policymakers in regional legislatures and regional and municipal administrations.

In Belarus, a much smaller and less complex polity than Russia, this domain is much more heavily centralized and dominated by the state, which acts as the main agent of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. The president and his administration play major roles in policy design and decision-making. In terms of implementation, the leading role belongs to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and the corresponding departments in the local administrations at different levels. The whole system is hierarchical, subordinated, and standardized. As a result for Belarusian NGOs, the focus for their advocacy and lobbying efforts is the presidential administration and the national-level ministry.

The windows of opportunity in the welfare sphere which policy entrepreneurs can take advantage of, therefore, occur at somewhat different points in the two case study countries. In Russia, these can occur at the federal level in terms of policy being developed and determined, and at the regional level in terms of policy being implemented and often adapted to local considerations. In Belarus, they are likely to happen at the national level both in terms of policy development and implementation. This means that outcomes in Russia are likely to be more widespread and diffuse given the greater number of national and regional ministries, committees, and policymakers involved, whereas in Belarus they are likely to be more limited in both scope and number due to the fact that a smaller number of national-level ministries and policymakers dominate the process.

Welfare Reform in Russia and Belarus: the Policy Context

Russia’s welfare state encompasses a public/private mix of healthcare services, a residual system of unemployment protection, a basic safety net of social assistance for the poorest in society, and private markets in education and housing (Cerami 2009). Recent welfare reforms have seen the increased use of performance-related pay in the public sector, and the economic crisis of 2014–16 has led to a decline in household incomes and subsequent cuts to social spending on education, healthcare, and communal housing services (Khmelnitskaya 2017). The policy of using socially-oriented NGOs (SONGOs) as service

providers has been taken up with enthusiasm by the authorities, with major legislation being passed in 2010 and 2015, and the Ministry for Economic Development spearheading a program of funding SONGOs at both the federal and regional levels since 2011 (Krasnopolskaya *et al.* 2015). This has involved distributing direct federal and regional grants amongst this category of NGO, and improving the legal framework for them to participate in tenders for government and municipal service contracts. A further innovation is the use of competitive tenders for service delivery to which registered commercial and non-commercial organizations can apply. This policy has been determined at the very top of the political system, as is customary in Russia where the president is the most powerful actor in the policymaking process (Kalachikhina, Orlov, Flyakhov 2015; Khmel'nitskaya 2017).

In contrast to Russia, Belarus is a state that has experienced relatively little reform in the political, economic, and social spheres since 1991 (Pranevičiūtė–Neliupšienė *et al.* 2014; Wilson 2016). Due to favorable gas and oil prices together with easily accessible credits from the country's main economic and political partner, Russia, the Belarusian president Aleksandr Lukashenka has been able to postpone unpopular reforms and conduct a rather generous and populist social policy. The regime's legitimacy among the population was based on the idea that the government would provide stability, a low level of social inequality, and a high level of employment, with the idea of the so-called "socially oriented" state acting as a cornerstone of the president's legitimacy. Until the mid-2000s, the state guaranteed the universal provision of social services and benefits, subsidies for utility costs, and control of consumer prices (Chulitskaya and Matonyte 2018).

However, due to economic pressures and a deteriorating demographic situation, from the mid-2000s onwards Belarusian welfare policy drifted away from its paternalistic state-centered approach. One of the first changes was the abolition of universal social provisions and the introduction of a targeted social assistance approach in 2007 (Chubrik *et al.* 2009). Recent policy measures have included the redistribution of some social welfare responsibilities to non-state actors such as NGOs serving narrower social groups, and the increased use of some neoliberal instruments. Yet these changes remain shrouded in the discourse of a powerful paternalistic state providing generous social support to the population (Chulitskaya and Matonyte 2018).

In 2011, the idea of public-private partnership as a model of cooperation between the state and business was introduced in order to realize important social

projects. NGOs came to be regarded as entities useful for assisting specific socially vulnerable groups, such as children, large families on low incomes, and the disabled (Matonyte and Chulitskaya 2013, 2018). In 2013, changes to the Law on Social Provision established the mechanism of the so-called "social procurement order" or "social contracting." According to this mechanism, "legal entities" (including NGOs) and individual entrepreneurs can apply for public funding from local authorities for the provision of social services or the realization of social projects. Social contracting is, however, currently applicable in just two spheres: social service provision and HIV prevention (Zurakovski and Mancurova 2018).

In contrast to Russia, the impacts of the introduction of social contracting in Belarus are as yet rather limited. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, in January 2019 there were just 82 social contracting agreements in Belarus (with an even smaller number of projects in previous years). The amount of funding provided for social contracting by local authorities in 2018 was around 300,000 Euros (Belta 2019). One government-NGO (GONGO), the Belarusian Red Cross, gets most of its funding through this mechanism. Other organizations which participate in social contracting either represent people with disabilities and were created in the Soviet period, or are more recently-established grassroots NGOs for people with disabilities (Belta 2019).

NGOs as Social Policy Entrepreneurs: Russia and Belarus Compared

The fact that the implementation of social policies in Russia, including the outsourcing of social services to NGOs and commercial enterprises, takes place at the regional and municipal level in effect gives "street-level bureaucrats" considerable influence over the extent to which a policy is realized in practice (Gelman and Starodubtsev 2016). As a result, the "success" of the outsourcing policy depends greatly on the willingness of regional and municipal bureaucrats operating in the social sphere to work with NGOs and commercial enterprises and to award them service contracts. Despite the bureaucratic obstacles they face, NGOs operating in the social policy sphere in Russia and working with vulnerable groups such as children, the disabled, the elderly, and the homeless occupy a more privileged position than NGOs focusing explicitly on more political or human rights-based issues which have been the target of punitive legislation over the course of the past decade (Daucé 2014).

In addition to involving socially-oriented NGOs directly in social service provision through the awarding of grants and tenders at the federal and regional levels, the Putin administration has been active in developing various cross-sectoral bodies that bring together non-state actors and policymakers. Currently more than 60 of the country's regions have a regional-level Public Chamber, which plays an important part in social life, mediating between conflicting groups, acting as platforms for discussions on social issues, coordinating local NGOs, and guaranteeing interaction between the executive and legislative authorities and the wider public (Richter 2009a; Richter 2009b; Stuvøy 2014; Olisova 2015). As an institution, it has been heavily criticized for its lack of accountability and what is perceived to be an overly close relationship with the authorities (Richter 2009a). However, for NGOs, the regional public chambers and their assorted committees and specialized working groups can offer an important forum for developing contacts with local policymakers and putting forward policy recommendations, which can sometimes lead to concrete results at the local level (Bogdanova and Bindman 2016). This leads to a window of opportunity emerging at the regional level in Russia where NGOs can help define how a policy is implemented, even if they cannot influence the development and adoption of the initial policy at the federal level. By establishing networks involving policymakers and working on issues of social service delivery which are perceived as less sensitive and politicized, NGOs in authoritarian systems can still reshape policymakers' understanding of a particular problem and the range of solutions available to address it (Teets 2017).

“This leads to a window of opportunity emerging at the regional level in Russia where NGOs can help define how a policy is implemented, even if they cannot influence the development and adoption of the initial policy at the federal level.”

Another way in which NGOs can gain access to policymakers is through participation in public councils attached to federal and regional ministries (Owen and Bindman 2017). In 2014, new laws prescribed the establishment of “instruments of public oversight,” or expert councils, in all regions, at all levels of executive power, in regional legislative bodies, and with the obligatory inclusion of NGOs as members of these councils. The stated motivation behind the new legislation was that civic participation should be

enacted through public consultative bodies (Dmitrieva and Strenin 2014, 63; Owen 2016). The legislation also decreed the establishment of special public councils to independently evaluate the quality of social services at the federal, regional executive/legislative, and municipal levels (Olisova 2015, 10).

A further window of opportunity has therefore opened through changes in legislation surrounding the creation of instruments of public oversight and increasing governmental interest in involving NGOs in the provision of social services to specific vulnerable groups. Socially oriented NGOs in Russia have been able to involve themselves directly in meetings and discussions with policymakers to put the issues they wish to highlight and their proposed solutions on the agenda for policymakers at the municipal and regional levels of government, where the actual detail of social policy is often worked out. A further reason for NGOs' effectiveness in doing this is that they are respected for the knowledge and expertise they can bring to the discussion of complex issues relating to social policy and social service delivery, areas which are of crucial importance to the legitimacy of Russia's regime (Khmelnitskaya 2017). In this sense, they conform to Kingdon (2014) and Cairney's (2018) concept of policy entrepreneurs as persistent, well-connected members of a particular policy community with specialist knowledge of their policy area capable of using certain strategies to advance their policy solutions.

In Belarus, the windows of opportunity are in some respects similar to those in Russia with some crucial differences. In addition to being a much smaller country with a far smaller number of active NGOs, another key difference is that the welfare sphere and social policy are still largely monopolized by the state. The outcome of this monopoly is an absence of alternative actors, in particular commercial enterprises, in this sphere. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that, even though new legislation has tried to promote public-private partnerships in the social sphere, the financial conditions proposed by the state for contracting out social services are evaluated by municipal officials themselves as not sufficient to attract the interest of entrepreneurs.

In contrast to the now well-established interactions between Russian SONGOs and municipal and regional authorities through advisory councils and regional public chambers, virtually the only existing opportunity for Belarusian alternative actors to participate in welfare provision is through the relatively new system of social contracting. However, the evaluation of the quality of NGO-state relations in this context was quite

different from the Russian case. In contrast to the views of the Russian NGOs we interviewed, several of our Belarusian respondents were quite negative about the capacity of Belarusian NGOs to actually provide social services of sufficient quality, arguing that they did not have sufficient skills or experience and could not deal with public funding, management, and accountability. As a result, the overwhelming majority of alternative actors could not be involved in social contracting.

Our research indicates that, in contrast to the Russian case, relations between SONGOs and the authorities in Belarus are at a much more preliminary phase of development and lack the mechanisms and opportunities for discussion and cooperation with policymakers at the regional and local level that Russian SONGOs can make use of. Nevertheless, the system of social contracting does seem to offer some Belarusian NGOs the possibility of cooperating with the state.

Conclusion

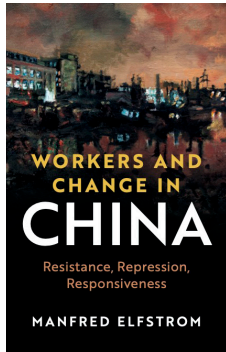
Post-Soviet authoritarianism offers certain opportunities for non-state actors operating at the national and regional levels in Russia and Belarus to influence policy development in privileged domains of social policy seen as highly important in terms of regime credibility and legitimacy. SONGOs in both countries occupy a middle ground, where they are not acting in opposition to the authorities but also have not been fully coopted. Their status as experts offers them input into the system, as the state needs what they have to offer in an area of policy that significantly impacts the daily lives and wellbeing of the population. This enables them to act as policy entrepreneurs and take advantage of windows of opportunity which open in the social policy sphere to advance their ideas and proposals through the formation of networks involving policymakers. This phenomenon is currently more pronounced in Russia than in the more centralized and authoritarian system in Belarus; but even there, NGOs point to changes in this direction of social policy, although they remain gradual and limited for now.

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Author Exchange



Workers and Change in China: Resistance, Repression, Responsiveness. By Manfred Elfstrom. Cambridge University Press. 2021. 232p. Hardcover and eBook.

Review by David Szakonyi,
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University

In *Workers and Change in China*, Professor Manfred Elfstrom makes a very compelling case that the Chinese model of governance is one of evolution rather than stasis. Pervasive labor unrest has spurred the Chinese state to continually build both greater repressive capacity while also improving its policy responsiveness to the working class. This impressive study of labor relations illuminates not only what drives workers to strike, but just as critically how different patterns of protest trigger policy change and innovation among the governments that are targeted. To support its arguments, the book offers a master class in how to combine original quantitative data (e.g., strikes in China) with a paired case comparison: Jiangsu and Guangdong, two systemically important provinces with parallel economic trajectories. But the real jewels in the book are Elfstrom's wide-ranging conversations with 197 migrant workers, factory managers, labor activists, taxi drivers, and government officials (among many others) that breathe vibrant life into the narrative. We learn about oppressive harassment and repression firsthand from labor activists as well as about the acute working conditions that spark strikes directly from the laborers that participate in them. These descriptions make the book hard to put down.

I'd like to highlight two of the many contributions the book makes to our understanding of both labor relations in non-democracies and the capacity of these regimes to survive myriad threats from below. First, the book provides a persuasive answer to one of the most puzzling questions in studies of autocracy: why do some leaders take risks, while others prefer more conservative approaches to governance? Although the Chinese system provides upward incentives for bureaucrats to manage social instability, there is great variation in how leaders actually try to resolve troubled labor relations.

By deftly typologizing the explosion of worker unrest into theoretically meaningful categories (contained, transgressive, or boundary-spanning), Elfstrom first demonstrates that scholars are wrong to bracket off all kinds of resistance as interchangeable. Different patterns of protest, and the demands that are levelled, are critical to explaining why political leaders in his paired case studies adopt orthodox versus more risk-taking models of control. More transgressive resistance generates more transgression by authorities; bolder protests spark bolder evolution. Societal challenges, and not necessarily ideology, political culture, or state structure, shape the evolving decisions of provincial leaders.

This last point underlies Elfstrom's seminal contribution to the literature in demonstrating that we must move past static explanations of autocratic stability. Too often scholars, myself included, fail to recognize when and how autocrats are learning from their time in power. This book helps correct that omission, showing the lengths to which the Chinese government is going to develop new tools for dealing with societal resistance. Taking this perhaps one step too far, I might argue that some challenges from below actually strengthen rather than dilute autocratic power, so long as regimes adapt in response. But the book also correctly does not stray too far into the transition studies paradigm. Indeed, we may have many studies of actors trying to solve collective action problems and too few of how the state bends, folds, and retaliates against bottom-up challenges. This book helps fill that critical gap.

This last claim though is where the book could have gone further. As impressive as the state's positive-sum ramp-up in responsive and repressive capacity has been, Elfstrom concludes by labelling many of the government responses as suboptimal. Too much spending is being devoted to public security with less attention given to the distributional demands driving worker resistance. These decisions result in a Chinese state "warping—or struggling, bulging, ducking, and struggling to get a grip" (153).

Yet many governments, democratic and nondemocratic alike, struggle to perfectly calibrate their response to intensifying labor conflict, but not all fall as a result. Do we see evidence that the models of control in place in China are instigating rather than assuaging tensions with the working class? In other words, I was left wondering how to evaluate the degree to which the government is effectively addressing labor demands while managing unrest. Elfstrom argues that the seeds are already being sown for much deeper conflict

between the state and both the managerial and the labor classes. But if anything, the book draws a clear picture of current governance models in China as still varied, flexible, and adaptive. Is the real risk rather that creeping rigidity and “tightness” threaten to undo this flexibility and poison any gains made in labor relations?

Response from Manfred Elfstrom

I am grateful to Professor Szakonyi for his thoughtful engagement with *Workers and Change in China*. In his review, he highlights several important themes in the book—and sums them up in a way that makes me wish I had explained my ideas as well myself!—while raising questions that I will continue to reflect upon in subsequent projects. Exchanges of this sort are immensely useful.

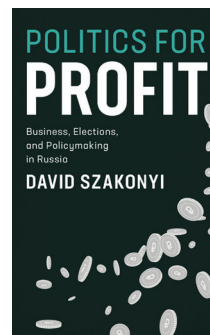
It is true that the book provides stronger evidence for the Chinese state’s adaptiveness in the face of grassroots pressures than it does for my argument that Beijing, through its contradictory actions, is placing itself in a suboptimal position. In my concluding chapter, I offer some indicators of the costs of China’s approach, beyond the spending data that Szakonyi highlights: surveys showing that migrants continue to lag behind others in their evaluation of the government and quotes from workers shocked by the repression they have experienced, as well as, conversely, interviews with businesspeople attesting to their frustrations with what they view as excessive *concessions* to labor. Yet, this part of the volume is less developed than my discussion of the (often creative) ways that regional governments deal with industrial disputes.

Szakonyi also rightly observes that “many governments, democratic and nondemocratic alike, struggle to perfectly calibrate their response to intensifying labor conflict.” Indeed, at the time of this writing, the United States is experiencing a strike wave bigger than any it has seen in decades. My contention in the book is simply that the stakes are higher for non-democracies. Because autocrats do not possess the same ability to channel industrial conflicts through ostensibly neutral institutions, they end up “absorbing tensions in society... directly into the body of the state.” Muddling through is thus more perilous for a government like China’s.

This whole discussion raises a bigger issue, though. Even if one focuses narrowly on change *within* authoritarian governance, as I do, one cannot punt on the question: “Change toward what in the end?” Strengthened state capacity, whether even or uneven, ought to give the regime a longer lease on life, all

else equal. In contrast, imperfect choices ought to compound, with the effect of threatening a regime’s existence—if not anytime soon, then sometime in the distant future. The old transitology versus resilience paradigms therefore cannot be so easily discarded.

Even as we seek to identify broad patterns in the evolution of authoritarian governance, perhaps we should allow more space for contingency in our analysis. State reactions to popular pressures open certain possibilities and foreclose others, altering the terrain of future policymaking. But there are still important choices to be made. The new “creeping rigidity” Szakonyi raises as a potentially bigger problem for China than the country’s previous efforts to deal with workers is a great example. The Chinese leadership has, as I discuss in the book, evidently decided to lean more heavily on its repressive capacity recently. There were other options at its disposal, though. We can only hope it will pursue some of those and correct its course in the years ahead.



Politics for Profit: Business, Elections, and Policymaking in Russia. By David Szakonyi. Cambridge University Press. 2020. 350p. Hardcover and eBook.

Review by Manfred Elfstrom, Assistant Professor, Dept of Economics, Philosophy, & Political Science, University of British Columbia, Okanagan

Why do businesspeople run for office themselves rather than seek political influence through other, less direct—and less costly—channels? How do the firms of successful businessperson-candidates benefit? And, apart from securing their own, immediate interests, what impact do elected businesspeople have on the broader direction of policymaking? In his excellent new book *Politics for Profit*, Professor David Szakonyi answers these questions in the context of Russia, while offering insights to people studying other countries—not least the United States, which just experienced four years of leadership by a real estate and reality television tycoon.

Szakonyi’s core argument is that businesspeople have reason to be concerned that politicians will shirk on promises extracted through traditional lobbying. This issue is particularly pronounced in regions where political parties are underdeveloped and cannot discipline their members. Running for office oneself cuts out the unreliable middleman. However, institutional variables are not the only

ones that drive businesses into electoral campaigns. Market competition and cash to burn are drivers, too. To maintain their independence, companies prefer single-member districts (Russia's hybrid system offers both district- and party list-based routes to office). Once in power, businesspeople direct contracts to themselves, punish other companies with inspections and blocked bids, and realize astounding returns: "the difference in profit margin over the term that a winning firm director holds office ranges from 10 percent to 20 percent" (196). Far from delivering efficiency or increasing employment, businesspeople-politicians focus narrowly on "economic infrastructure" at the expense of "social infrastructure," i.e., they invest in bridges over schools, while making public procurement processes more, not less opaque. In other words, they "do more to push a pro-business agenda than to improve government performance" (235).

The book methodically addresses its motivating questions. To understand which factors make firms more likely to put forward candidates for office, Szakonyi analyzes observational data on corporate finances and various measures of economic competition and party strength at the regional level, as well as a survey of businesspeople and scores of qualitative interviews (chapter 3). Then, drawing on the same data, the book homes in on those entrepreneurs who choose to invest their time and money in campaigns, testing a series of hypotheses concerning why these people opt for single-member district races versus party lists, why candidates affiliate with particular parties, and why firms send certain representatives of their companies into contests rather than others (chapter 4). Finally, in the fifth and sixth chapters, Szakonyi estimates regression discontinuity design models based on wins in unusually close elections to determine the impact of businesspeople winning offices, both with regard to their businesses' bottom lines and with regard to local policy priorities (this time the focus is the municipal, not regional level). Again, interviews, many of them quite revealing, round out the statistics. Although, as the description above indicates, the book has a number of moving pieces, it rarely feels that way: Szakonyi is an exceptionally clear writer and ensures that each piece falls neatly into place.

Ultimately, *Politics for Profit* is concerned more with how society (or a portion thereof) influences authoritarian governance than the reverse. This is a refreshing change. We are spared the increasingly tiresome process of shoehorning every anomaly in an autocratic society into a claim regarding regime resilience. Although Szakonyi shows how Russian parties benefit from business support, businesspeople have real agency in

his analysis. What is most different about the book, though, is that Russia is the springboard for broader claims about the private sector and politics across regime types. Democracies often assume this analytical role, but, for whatever reason, rarely non-democracies. Yet, as Szakonyi explains in his conclusion, where he lays out several policy recommendations, we all have much to learn from Russia's experience.

One issue that *Politics for Profit* does not explore in depth is the way in which businesspeople in Russia—or elsewhere—deal with rival social forces attempting to sway the state. Do firms whose directors are elected to office typically use their new perches to muscle other groups aside? Or do they tend to seek corporatist compromises? Given that wildcat strikes in Russia appear to have risen in recent years, one wonders whether labor militancy, in particular, might be a concern for Szakonyi's protagonists. In this regard, my own book is the inverse of *Politics for Profit*: I focus on the impact of workers to the exclusion of that of businesses. A more comprehensive study of bottom-up pressures than that provided by either of our two volumes could potentially be revealing.

Response from David Szakonyi

Professor Elfstrom raises many compelling questions in his review of *Politics for Profit*, and I thank him for thinking so critically about what my book can and cannot say about the representation of special interests under autocracy. He is absolutely correct that the focus of the book is on how business actors enter politics and compete with one another, rather than business's interaction with other political and social actors. Indeed, I found little evidence of bargaining between capital and labor within regional parliaments.

Part of the reason is that labor is not well-represented in legislatures in Russia. Although Russia trails only China in terms of the sheer number of unionized workers, union members have won a comparatively small number of deputy seats. There is only one union member for every eight or so businesspeople in regional office. Because, as my book shows, business is far from a cohesive bloc, the most intense parliamentary battles at the regional levels take place between rival economic groups, rather than between classes or different social groups. Other corporatist commissions outside of parliament designed to bring capital, labor, and the state to the negotiating table fail to deliver binding agreements.

The real action in Russian labor politics instead occurs in a much more decentralized fashion, led by spontaneous organizers and alternative labor unions much less connected to the state. Correctly perceiving a cozy cooptation between the largest Russian trade unions and the regime, wildcat strikers have adopted more militant tactics and made direct appeals to government authorities for help in their conflicts with employers. A decade ago, most of these demands were purely economic in nature, but growing frustration has compelled many strikers to incorporate more political rhetoric. Employers have responded by using their formal political access to ask authorities for more state intervention, such as subsidies and transfers, in an attempt to keep factories open and workers paid. Capital tends to work within the system, while labor works outside it.

It has been fascinating to compare the tactics of Russian wildcat strikers to the boundary-transgressing ones in China discussed in Professor Elfstrom's book. This is the area I see the most convergence between the two countries: an increasing number of bold, empowered labor groups that reject the compromising position of the largest unions and innovate by putting different kinds of pressure on the state. I'm less confident, however, that Elfstrom's account of the Chinese state adapting and evolving so adeptly to handle these demands will be repeated in Russia. With capital so entrenched in the corridors of power, we just haven't witnessed such flexibility from Russian authorities, who instinctively view most protest as politically motivated and a threat to their hold on power. I worry that the mechanisms for dialogue and engagement between labor and capital in Russia are not sufficiently developed to diffuse potential unrest.

Joint Commentary from Elfstrom and Szakonyi

We would like to express our appreciation to the editors for the chance to engage with each other's research here. Both of us thoroughly enjoyed the exchange of ideas. The countries we study differ along a number of dimensions. Nonetheless, our findings overlap in important regards. And we believe they highlight some potentially productive areas for future scholarship.

Both books show that a narrow focus on the privileged role of the "selectorate" under autocracy misses the range of special interest and movements successfully getting their voices heard in these countries. Resilient autocrats not only have to manage trade-offs between loyalty and competence among their cadres, but also find ways to placate workers, businesspeople, and

others within their societies. Oftentimes, we as scholars focus on explaining regime change or the lack thereof, rather than considering how various actors articulate demands within the system. In fact, we have relatively few studies on how special interests and movements put forth claims as well as the conditions under which they secure access to policymakers. Although models borrowed from democracies are helpful for initially situating these types of representation, actors in Russia and China frequently apply different strategies, using both formal and informal channels. Likewise, responses by targeted authorities run a much wider gamut. To understand autocratic governance, we need to do a better job of illuminating relationships between not just regime and society broadly speaking, but with specific organized groups.

Setting aside existential threats to autocracies, both books also examine whether the changes wrought by special interests and movements serve to bolster or undermine authorities in the medium term. Here, our findings are mixed. In Russia, Szakonyi shows that the Putin government has accepted a trade-off between sub-optimal policymaking, on the one hand, and making corporate executives feel more a part of the system (and tapping into companies' powerful financial resources!). In China, Elfstrom argues that the state's increases in repressive and responsive capacity in the face of worker resistance are contradictory and will ultimately warp political development. Yet, as Szakonyi notes, industrial relations are difficult to manage anywhere, and the evidence so far shows Chinese officials to be remarkably agile. Rather than rendering a particular verdict on the effect of bottom-up pressures across the board, it might be useful for future research to ask which groups tend to empower versus hurt dictators by entering the political process—and why. Do greater grassroots challenges spur greater creativity on the part of rulers? Do lesser challenges give them the space to grow?

More broadly, our volumes make a case for treating state policies in non-democracies as the outcome to be explained. We are both clear about the ways that the Russian and Chinese systems shape the options of social groups within them. Institutions such as Russia's mixed member voting system and China's party-controlled trade unions play important parts in our analyses. Yet, we hope the books spur others to approach various arrangements in autocracies less as fixed parameters or as things to be explored mainly in terms of their internal logic and more as changing reactions to the demands that are continually put before rulers.

Meet the Authors



Dr. Eleanor Bindman is Senior Lecturer in Politics and Public Administration at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Prior to this, she was a lecturer in Politics at the University of Liverpool and a postdoctoral research fellow at Queen Mary University of London. She has also held visiting research fellowships

at New York University and the University of Helsinki. Her research interests include policymaking processes in authoritarian regimes, civil society development, and welfare reform in post-Soviet states with a particular focus on Russia and Belarus.



Tatsiana Chulitskaya is a senior researcher at the Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) (Lithuania). She received her PhD in social sciences from Vilnius University in 2014. She has been recently involved in several international research projects including an EU-STRAT project focused on Eastern Partnership (EaP)

program analysis and a C.O.N.T.A.C.T. Project focused on hate speech and hate crime. Her research interests include public policy analysis, civil society in non-democratic regimes, Belarus, and the welfare policies of the post-Soviet states. She has a number of academic and research publications. From 2011, Tatsiana has cooperated with the Belarusian informal educational project and think tank SYMPA, within which she serves as an academic director.



Iskander De Bruycker is an Assistant Professor in EU Politics and Policy at Maastricht University. Before, he was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Antwerp (2015–2019) and the University of Amsterdam (2015–2016). He was a visiting researcher at the European University Institute in Florence (2019) and

the University of Aarhus (2015). Iskander's research activities lie in the fields of European public policy, political communication and interest group politics. He has published on these topics in journals such as the *European Journal of Political Research*, the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *European Union Politics* and *Political Communication*.



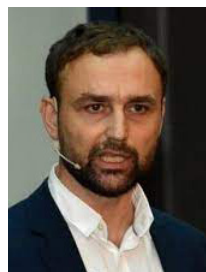
Manfred Elfstrom is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, Philosophy, and Political Science at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan. He is the author of *Workers and Change in China: Resistance, Repression, Responsiveness* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Dr. Elfstrom has a doctorate from Cornell University and was previously a Postdoctoral Scholar and Teaching Fellow at the University of Southern California's School of International Relations and a China Public Policy Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Before entering academia, he worked with non-profits supporting workers' rights and improved grassroots governance in China.



Max Grömping is a Lecturer at the School of Government and International Relations at Griffith University. He researches interest group politics, comparative authoritarianism, and electoral integrity, with a regional focus on Southeast Asia. Max previously worked as Research Associate at the

Electoral Integrity Project (University of Sydney), and as Lecturer at Heidelberg University, Germany. He was a visiting Research Fellow at the Social Science Center Berlin (WZB) in 2016/17. Max's work has been published in *Political Communication*, *Governance*, *Party Politics*, and *Democratization*, among others. Twitter: @MaxGroemping



Marcel Hanegraaff is an Associate Professor in Political Science at the University of Amsterdam. His dissertation (defended in 2014) focused on explaining the development of transnational interest group communities, as well as the strategic action by interest groups in the context of global governance. He

researches the politics of interest representation in a transnational and EU context, as well as the functioning of international organizations in the fields of climate change and global trade. He recently received a four-year Veni grant focusing on the agenda setting power of interest groups in the European Union. His work has appeared in *Comparative Political Studies*, *European Journal of Political Research*, *European Union Politics*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Governance*, *Review of International Organizations*, and *West European Politics*, among other outlets.



Hui Li is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Hong Kong. She is interested in public and nonprofit management, NGO-government relations, civil society governance, and civic engagement—issues that link NGOs to public agencies and the policy

process. She has published in *Public Administration Review*, *Administration & Society*, *The American Review of Public Administration*, and *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, among other outlets.



David Szakonyi is Assistant Professor of Political Science at George Washington University and co-founder of the Anti-Corruption Data Collective. His research focuses on corruption, clientelism, and political economy in Russia, Western Europe, and the United States. His book—

Politics for Profit: Business, Elections, and Policymaking in Russia (Cambridge University Press, 2020)—examines why business people run for elected political office worldwide, how their firms perform as a result, and whether individuals with private sector experience make better policy decisions. Other research looks at the effectiveness of anti-corruption campaigns, employers' mobilizing their employees to vote, and nepotism under authoritarian rule. His investigative work has been published in the *Washington Post*, *Foreign Policy*, the *Daily Beast*, and the *Miami Herald*, among other outlets.



Jessica C. Teets is an Associate Professor at Middlebury College, and Associate Editor of the *Journal of Chinese Political Science*. Her research focuses on governance in authoritarian regimes, especially the role of civic participation. She is the author of *Civil Society Under Authoritarianism: The China Model*

(Cambridge University Press, 2014) and editor (with William Hurst) of *Local Governance Innovation in China: Experimentation, Diffusion, and Defiance* (Routledge Contemporary China Series, 2014), in addition to articles published in *The China Quarterly*, *World Politics, Governance*, and the *Journal of Contemporary China*. Dr. Teets is currently researching local governance under Xi Jinping.



Bilge Yabanci is Marie Curie fellow at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. In her current research, she explores the politicization of the civic space and courts in Turkey amidst dynamics of oppositional mobilization. Her broader research interests extend into populism, reflections of partisan polarisation in the civic space, and

the role of emotions and performance in political mobilization and public opinion. Her latest publications include "Turkey's Tamed Civil Society: Containment and Appropriation under a Competitive Authoritarian Regime," "Work for the Nation, Obey the State, Praise the Ummah: Turkey's Government-Oriented Youth Organizations in Cultivating a New Nation," and "Home-State Oriented Diaspora Organizations and the Making of Partisan Citizens Abroad: Motivations, Discursive Frames, and Actions Towards Co-Opting the Turkish Diaspora in Europe."

Editorial Team

Executive Editors



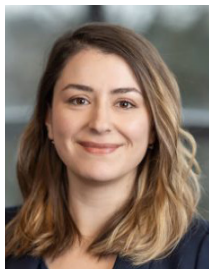
Dan Slater specializes in the politics and history of enduring dictatorships and emerging democracies, with a regional focus on Southeast Asia. At the University of Michigan, he serves as the Ronald and Eileen Weiser Professor of Emerging Democracies, the Director of the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies, and

Professor of Political Science. Previously, he served for 12 years on the faculty at the University of Chicago, where he was the Director of the Center for International Social Science Research, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, and associate member in the Department of Sociology.



Rob Mickey is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Michigan. His research focuses on U.S. politics in historical perspective. He is interested in American political development, political parties, racial politics, and policy responses to inequality.

Guest Editor



Sasha de Vogel is a postdoctoral fellow at New York University's Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia. She received her PhD in Political Science from the University of Michigan in 2021, and also holds an MA in Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian Regional Studies from Columbia

University. Her research focuses on the politics of authoritarian regimes and collective action, particularly in Russia and the post-Soviet region, and has been supported by the National Science Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation/Harriman Institute, among others.

Managing Editor



Derek Groom is an Academic Program Specialist with the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies. In this role, he manages the programming, administration, and research/outreach activities of WCED. Before coming to U-M, Derek worked in Washington, DC at American Councils for International Education,

administering the Overseas Flagship Programs and Flagship Language Initiatives in Eurasia and Africa. In 2013, Derek completed the Russian Overseas Flagship Program in St. Petersburg, Russia as a Boren Scholar.

About *Democracy and Autocracy*

Democracy and Autocracy is the official newsletter of the American Political Science Association's Democracy and Autocracy section (formerly known as the Comparative Democratization section). First known as *CompDem*, it has been published three times a year since 2003. In October 2010, the newsletter was renamed *APSA-CD* and expanded to include substantive articles on democracy, as well as news and notes on the latest developments in the field. In September 2018, it was renamed the *Annals of Comparative Democratization* to reflect the increasingly high academic content and recognition of the symposia.

About WCED

Housed in the International Institute at the University of Michigan, the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies (WCED) began operation in September 2008. Named in honor of Ronald and Eileen Weiser and inspired by their time in Slovakia during Ambassador Weiser's service as U.S. Ambassador from 2001-04, WCED promotes scholarship to better understand the conditions and policies that foster the transition from autocratic rule to democratic governance, past and present.



Section News

We now have three new officers for the section:

Chair: David Samuels (*Distinguished McKnight University Professor, University of Minnesota*)

Treasurer: Avital Livny (*Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign*)

2022 Program Chair: Paul Schuler (*Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Arizona*)

We thank our outgoing officers for their service to the section!

The following annual Section awards were announced at the fall meeting. You can find complete details on the [section website](#):

Juan Linz Prize for Best Dissertation in the Comparative Study of Democracy

Winner: **Christopher Carter**, *States of Extraction: The Emergence and Effects of Indigenous Autonomy in the Americas*

Honorable Mention: **Jane Esberg**, *Strategies of Repression in Pinochet's Chile*

Best Article Award

Winner 1: **Vilde Lunnan Djuve, Carl Henrik Knutsen, and Tore Wig**, "Patterns of Regime Breakdown Since the French Revolution," *Comparative Political Studies*, 2020

Winner 2: **Matthew Graham and Milan Svolik**, "Democracy in America? Partisanship, Polarization, and the Robustness of Support for Democracy in the United States," *American Political Science Review*, 2020

Honorable Mention 1: **Sharan Grewal**, "From Islamists to Muslim Democrats: The Case of Tunisia's Ennahda," *American Political Science Review*, 2020

Honorable Mention 2: **Robin Harding**, "Who Is Democracy Good For? Elections, Rural Bias, and Health and Education Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Politics*, 2020

Best Book Award

Winner 1: **Guillermo Trejo and Sandra Ley**, *Votes, Drugs, and Violence*

Winner 2: **Daniel Mattingly**, *The Art of Political Control*

Best Field Work Award

Winner: **Mashail Malik**, "The Microfoundations of Identity Politics in Pakistan's Megacity"

Honorable Mention: **Michelle Weitzel**, "Drones, Sirens, and Prayer Calls: Unheard Consequences of a Politics of Sound"

Best Paper Award

Winner: **Nikhar Gaikwad, Erin Lin, and Noah Zucker**, "Genocide and the Gender Gap in Political Representation"

Leslie E. Anderson (*Research Foundation Professor, Political Science, University of Florida*) recently published the following two articles:

Anderson, Leslie E., Lawrence C. Dodd, and Won-ho Park. 2021. "[Aquiescencia y resistencia: el régimen de Ortega en Nicaragua.](#)" *América Latina Hoy*, Vol 87: 151–170.

Anderson, Leslie E. 2021. "[Robert Dahl, la Constitución Estadounidense y Donald Trump. Algunas consideraciones sobre la supervivencia de la democracia en los Estados Unidos](#)" ("Robert Dahl, the American Constitution and Donald Trump: Some Thoughts on Democracy's Survival in the United States"). *Huellas de los Estados Unidos*, Buenos Aires, 21 (2): 5–28.

Archie Brown (*Emeritus Professor of Politics at the University of Oxford and Emeritus Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford*) won the Pushkin House Book Prize 2021, for *The Human Factor: Gorbachev, Reagan, and Thatcher, and the End of the Cold War* (Oxford University Press). The prize, an international one for English-language books relating to Russia, is awarded each year for "original, insightful and well-written books and to encourage public understanding and intelligent debate about Russia and its culture."

Archie has been at Oxford for the last fifty years, having been appointed University Lecturer in Soviet Institutions and elected a Fellow of St Antony's in 1971. From 1989 until his retirement from teaching in 2005, he was Professor of Politics. Elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1991, he has been a Foreign Honorary Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 2003.

The Chair of the distinguished panel of judges, Dr. Fiona Hill (former Senior Director for European and Russian Affairs on the US National Security Council), said that "The overall winner represents the very best in western scholarship on Russia and comparative politics" and that *The Human Factor* contains "a lifetime's achievement of wisdom and insight" and is "in many respects the culmination of Archie Brown's long and distinguished career as a scholar and writer" (<https://www.pushkinhouse.org/pushkin-prize>).

Lenka Bustikova (Associate Professor of Political Science, Arizona State University) will join the University of Oxford in September 2022 as Associate Professor in European Union and Comparative East European Politics.

Paula Clerici (Political Science, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella-CONICET) received an award from the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella for best virtual teaching during the pandemic times in 2020.

J. Ray Kennedy was selected to serve as one of the 14 members of California's Citizens Redistricting Commission for the 2020–2030 term.

Anne Meng (Assistant Professor, Department of Politics, University of Virginia) has two new publications:

Meng, Anne, Leonardo Arriola, and Jed DeVaro. 2021. "[Democratic Subversion: Elite Cooptation and Opposition Fragmentation.](#)" *American Political Science Review*, First View. DOI:10.1017/S0003055421000629.

Meng, Anne. 2021. "[Winning the Game of Thrones: Leadership Succession in Modern Autocracies.](#)" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65 (5): 950–981.

The second article won the 2021 Best Article Award, African Politics Conference Group Section of the American Political Science Association. Also, Anne's book, *Constraining Dictatorship: From Personalized Rule to Institutionalized Regimes* (Cambridge University Press, 2020) won the 2021 APSA William H. Riker Prize for the best book on political economy published during the past three years.

Kelly McMann (Professor of Political Science, Case Western Reserve University) has a new publication with Jan Teorell, Staffan Lindberg, and others:

McMann, Kelly, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, Jan Teorell, and Staffan Lindberg. 2021. "[Assessing Data Quality: An Approach and An Application.](#)" *Political Analysis*, First View: 1–24.

Gregory Michener (Associate Professor, Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas (FGV EBAPE)) published the following article:

Michener, Gregory, Octavio Amorim Neto, and Jamil Civitarese. 2021. "[The Remoteness of Democratic Representation.](#)" *Party Politics*.

Virginia Oliveros (Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Tulane University) would like to announce her new book, now available:

Oliveros, Virginia. 2021. [Patronage at Work: Public Jobs and Political Services in Argentina.](#) New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lynette Ong (Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Toronto) has a book with Cambridge University Press Elements Series in Contentious Politics, with an expected online publication in December 2021. It is titled [The Street and the Ballot Box: Interactions Between Social Movements and Electoral Politics in Authoritarian Contexts.](#)

Güneş Murat Tezcür (Jalal Talabani Endowed Chair and Professor) was appointed Director of the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs at the University of Central Florida in fall 2021. Tezcür is also a co-PI in a new NSF Build and Broaden 2.0 Grant (PI: Kenicia Wright) that will study the political behavior and policy preferences of the Latinx community in Florida and the United States.

Henry Thompson (Assistant Professor in the School of Politics and Global Studies, Arizona State University) recently published the following article:

Thompson, Henry. 2021. "[Authoritarian Repression and Electoral Opposition: Mobilization Under Germany's Antisocialist Law.](#)" *Comparative Politics*.

Rachel Vanderhill (Associate Professor, Government & International Affairs, Wofford College) has received the Council on Foreign Relations' International Affairs Fellowship for Tenured International Relations Scholars for the 21–22 academic year. As part of the fellowship, she is spending the year working with USAID's Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.

Matthew Wilson (Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of South Carolina) received tenure this year.

Members of the **Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute** at the University of Gothenburg published the following policy briefs, working papers, reports, and peer-reviewed articles:

[“Country Brief: Uganda.”](#) 2021. *V-Dem Country Brief Series* No. 11. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute.

Edgell, Amanda, Vanessa A. Boese, Patrik Lindenfors, Seraphine F. Maerz, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2021. [“The Institutional Order of Liberalization.”](#) *British Journal of Political Science*, First View (open access): 1–7. (earlier version published as *V-Dem Working Paper No.79*)

Düpont, Nils, Yaman Berker Kavasoglu, Anna Lührmann, and Ora John Reuter. 2021. [“Party Organizations Around the Globe. Introducing the Varieties of Party Identity and Organization Dataset \(V-Party\).”](#) *V-Dem Working Paper 124*. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute.

Kasuya, Yuko, and Kota Mori. 2021. [“Re-examining Thresholds of Continuous Democracy Measures.”](#) *Contemporary Politics*.

Kavasoglu, Berker. 2021. [“Opposition Party Organizational Features, Ideological Orientations, and Elite Co-optation in Electoral Autocracies.”](#) *Democratization*.

Knutsen, Carl Henrik. 2021. [“A Business Case for Democracy: Regime Type, Growth, and Growth Volatility.”](#) *Democratization* 28 (8): 1505–1524.

Kolvani, Palina, Martin Lundstedt, Amanda B. Edgell, and Jean Lachapelle. 2021. [“Pandemic Backsliding: A Year of Violations and Advances in Response to Covid-19.”](#) *V-Dem Policy Brief* No. 32. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute.

Laebens, Melis G., and Anna Luhrmann. 2021. [“What Halts Democratic Erosion? The Changing Role of Accountability.”](#) *Democratization* 28 (5): 908–928.

Lo Bue, Maria C., Kunal Sen, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2021. [“Clientelism, Public Goods Provision, and Governance.”](#) *V-Dem Working Paper 125*. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute.

Luhrmann, Anna. 2021. [“Disrupting the Autocratization Sequence: Towards Democratic Resilience.”](#) *Democratization* 28 (5): 1017–1039.

Marquardt, Kyle L., and Daniel Pemstein. 2021. [“Estimating Latent Traits from Expert Surveys: an Analysis of Sensitivity to Data-Generating Process.”](#) *Political Science Research and Methods*, First View: 1–10.

McMann, Kelly M., and Daniel Tisch. 2021. [“Democratic Regimes and Epidemic Deaths.”](#) *V-Dem Working Paper 126*. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute.

McMann, Kelly, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, Jan Teorell, and Staffan Lindberg. 2021. [“Assessing Data Quality: An Approach and An Application.”](#) *Political Analysis*, First View: 1–24

Merkel, Wolfgang, and Anna Luhrmann. 2021. [“Resilience of Democracies: Responses to Illiberal and Authoritarian Challenges.”](#) *Democratization* 28 (5): 869–884.