

POP88264: Varieties of Authoritarianism
Hilary Term 2024

Instructor: Dr. Noah Buckley

Email: buckleno@tcd.ie

Office Hours: TBA

Class will be held TBA

Module Description and Objectives

This graduate seminar provides an overview of how authoritarian regimes are structured and the different strategies that authoritarian leaders use to stay in power. Each week we will discuss a set of “varieties” of authoritarian rule or dynamics of these regimes. Much like democracies come in many shapes and forms, so do non-democracies. The goal of this module is to introduce you to the richness of styles and approaches that authoritarian leaders use to maintain their authority.

Assessment

Participation (15%)

Student attendance, participation, and discussion is crucial to this seminar. Students are expected to have read all required readings before class. You should plan on digging in deeply with each reading—you are advised to develop critiques of readings, connections between them, suggestions for improvement or future research, and to build links to other political science research before you arrive to discuss them with the group in class.

Students will be evaluated on the *quality* of their input in discussions. Asking questions, bringing evidence, explaining your views and thoughts, and debating issues of significance, relevance, research design, real-world applicability, accuracy, and other factors will be important in participating fully.

A critical component of the course is lively discussion of the week’s readings.¹ You should be prepared to discuss each reading on the syllabus for each week. You have not really done the readings until you are able to succinctly restate the argument, describe the methodology, and identify some strengths and weaknesses of the work. In other words, reading the article once, or worse, skimming the abstract, the introduction and conclusion alone, will not be sufficient.

You should assess the logical consistency, clarity, and novelty of the theoretical argument. Does it produce new insights? Are the assumptions of the theory clear and reasonable? Is the logic of the theory internally consistent? Do the hypotheses flow logically from the theory? Does the theory generate hypotheses that could be tested, but are not? Does the theory suggest possible causal mechanisms?

¹ These four paragraphs are adapted from Timothy Frye’s 2021 syllabus for “The Politics of Autocracy.”

You should also assess the evidence provided in support of the argument. Are the empirical tests convincing? Are the procedures used to assess the argument described adequately? Are the measures valid and reliable? Does the author consider multiple mechanisms which may link variables? Are other interpretations of the evidence more plausible? How important are these problems? Can they be addressed? If so, how?

You should also consider the implications of the argument. Has the author made claims that extend beyond the evidence? Are the findings important? If so, for what? For substantive outcomes? For normative reasons? For social science? Has the author convinced you that you should care about the finding? How does this work relate to similar work? To what related topics could the theory, evidence, or research design apply? Are there policy implications for the work?

Response Papers (20%)

Students will be required to submit two response papers over the five weeks of the module. These papers should **not** offer a summary of the readings for that week, but, rather, they should engage with the readings. Critiques, establishment of connections between readings, and other insightful thoughts coming from a critical perspective are all good elements to include, where appropriate. See above guidelines for in-class participation—these may be helpful for the response papers as well. Response papers should engage with multiple required readings for that week (although you can focus on one if you want), but can also include suggesting readings in addition.

Each response paper should be around 600-900 words in length, double-spaced in 12pt font. They should be submitted to Blackboard **by midnight on the Sunday** before class. Late submissions will be penalized up to 5 points per day late.

In-class Presentation (15%)

Students will each make one short, live presentation to the class in weeks 1-5 of the mini-term.

These presentations will be 12 minutes (no more) each, and you should use slides. We will then have discussions about the materials. In general, weaker presentations will simply summarize the readings ("Smith says x, Jones says y").²

You should choose one authoritarian country (or two, if you really want and have good reason) in the 20th or 21st century. Do a bit of digging and reading on that country: you don't have to become a historian, but you should know more about it than most of us!

In your presentation, you should give a brief description of:

- What 'type' or types of authoritarianism dominated in that country?
- How did the autocrat(s) in that country (try to) solve the fundamental tensions of authoritarian rule?

² Ibid.

- How well do the theories we've learned about apply? Did they help in understanding the country case? Do they seem wrong about something in this case?

Strong presentations will do at least one of the following:

- Describe any key conceptual issues that must be addressed by work on the question (e.g., a presentation on inequality might discuss different ways of conceptualizing inequality);
- Describe the central arguments/debates in the literature on the question (e.g., a presentation on corruption might focus on different types of variables—such as regime type, decentralization, level of development—that influence corruption levels);
- Describe thorny methodological issues that bedevil work on the question (e.g., a presentation on social revolutions might discuss the problems created by the small-n nature of the phenomenon).
- Offer criticisms and/or suggest pathways for future research.

To help you get started, the syllabus lists "Suggested Readings." These might serve as a place to begin, but students must do their own bibliographic research. You should obviously not feel obligated to cover all of these suggested readings.

Final essay (50%)

Students are required to submit a final essay at the end of the mini-term. The essay should show engagement with the material from across the mini-module as well as readings, concepts, and ideas from the recommended reading list and/or other sources.

Details about the essay topic and assignment will be provided by week 3 of class.

The essay should be about 2,500 words in length (certainly no less than 2000 and no more than 3000) including everything but the reference list; double-spaced in 12pt font. The deadline for submission to Blackboard is **11:59pm (midnight) on TBA**. Creativity, clear and strong argumentation, a good structure, and clear writing are important features of a good essay. The essay should not focus on literature review, historical narrative (or other narrative rather than analytical approaches), or pure summarization. I want to hear your thoughts and analysis!

Plagiarism

Please do not plagiarize. Academic dishonesty is a serious matter, with serious consequences that can result in receiving no credit for an assignment, a failing grade for the module, and even expulsion from the program. It is never permissible to turn in any work that contains others' ideas without proper acknowledgment. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the College Calendar (see <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/calendar>). If you are paraphrasing, cite the source. If you are quoting, use quotation marks and appropriate citation. Remember that academic integrity is a reflection of one's character. In addition, we strongly recommend that you visit <http://www.plagiarism.org/> for more information on what is and is not plagiarism. Lastly, students are required to only submit "new work" in each module, which means work that has

not been submitted previously in any other university module. Students who wish to use previously submitted work as part of a new project will need the approval of the lecturer.

Readings

Some readings for the mini-module, such as book chapters, will be made available on Blackboard. Other readings can be found on Google Scholar or will be provided in digital copy.

Note: I may adjust the contents of the syllabus somewhat in the next week or two as we work through the readings.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1. Autocracy and Autocratic Institutions

- Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge. Chapter 1.
- Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats." *Comparative Political Studies* 40(11): 1279-301.
- Wright, Joseph. (2008). "Do authoritarian institutions constrain? How legislatures affect economic growth and investment." *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(2): 322–343.
- Bueno de Mesquita, B., Smith, A., Siverson, R. M., and Morrow, J. D. (2005). *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapter 2.

Recommended reading:

- Truex, Rory. (2014). "The returns to office in a "rubber stamp" parliament." *American Political Science Review*, 108(2):235–251.
- Boix, Charles and M. W. Svolik. 2013. "The foundations of limited authoritarian government: Institutions, commitment, and power-sharing in dictatorships." *The Journal of Politics*, 75(02): 300-316.
- Gehlbach, Scott, and Philip Keefer. "Investment without democracy: Ruling-party institutionalization and credible commitment in autocracies." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 39, no. 2 (2011): 123-139.
- Gehlbach, Scott, and Philip Keefer. "Private investment and the institutionalization of collective action in autocracies: ruling parties and legislatures." *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 2 (2012): 621-635.
- Gunitsky, S. (2015). Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability. *Perspectives on Politics*, 13(1), 42-54.
doi:10.1017/S1537592714003120

2. Personalism, Single-Party Rule, and Military Rule

Please read **each** of these:

- Geddes, Frantz, and Wright. "Military rule." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17, 147-162.
- Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge. Chapter 3 or 5 or both. Skip the game theory ("formal model") stuff and appendices.

And (at least) **one** of these:

- Brownlee, Jason. 2007. "Hereditary Succession in Modern Autocracies." *World Politics* 59(04): 595–628.
- Menaldo, Victor. 2012. "The Middle East and North Africa's Resilient Monarchs" *Journal of Politics*. 74.3.
- Magaloni, Beatriz. 2008. "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(4): 715-741.

Recommended reading:

- King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. "How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression." *American political science Review* (2013): 326-343.
- Greene K., 2010, "The Political Economy of Authoritarian Single-Party Dominance," *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(7), pages 807-834.
- Smith, Benjamin. 2005. "The Life of the Party: The Origins of Regime Breakdown and Persistence Under Single party Rule" *World Politics* 57(3).
- McGregor R., 2012, *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*, Harper Collins, Chapter 1 "The Red Machine: The Party and the State."
- Amos Perlmutter (1980) "The Comparative Analysis of Military Regimes: Formations, Aspirations, Achievements," *World Politics*, 33:1
- Frantz, E., & Kendall-Taylor, A. (2014). "A dictator's toolkit: Understanding how co-optation affects repression in autocracies." *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(3): 332-346.
- Mancur Olson, "Democracy, Dictatorship, and Development," *American Political Science Review* 87,3 (1993)
- Svoboda, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge. Chapter 3.

3. Hybrid Regimes and Electoral Authoritarianism

- Magaloni, Beatriz. (2006). *Voting for autocracy: Hegemonic party survival and its demise in Mexico*. Read the **introduction** and at least two chapters (your choice) of chapters 2-8.
- Levitsky, S., and L.A. Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51-65.
- Schedler, Andreas. 2002. "The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 36–50.

Recommended reading:

- Hale, Henry. 2010. "Eurasian Politics as Hybrid Regimes: The Case of Putin's Russia," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 1(1).
- Blaydes, Lisa. 2008. "Authoritarian Elections and Elite Management: Theory and Evidence from Egypt." Working Paper.
- Rozenas, Arturas, and Denis Stukal. "How autocrats manipulate economic news: Evidence from Russia's state-controlled television." *The Journal of Politics* 81, no. 3 (2019): 982-996.
- Dawn Brancati (2014) "Democratic Authoritarianism: Origins and Effects." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17:2
- Pop-Eleches, Grigore and Graeme Robertson. 2015. "Elections, Information, and Political Change in the Post-Cold War Era." *Comparative Politics*.
- Harvey, Cole J. 2016. "Changes in the Menu of Manipulation: Electoral Fraud, Ballot Stuffing, and Voter Pressure in the 2011 Russian Election." *Electoral Studies* 41 (March): 105–17.
- Frye, Timothy, Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi. 2014. "Political Machines at Work: Voter Mobilization and Electoral Subversion in the Workplace" *World Politics*.

- Enikolopov, Ruben, Vasily Korovkin, Maria Petrova, Konstantin Sonin, and Alexei Zakharov. 2013 “Field Experiment Estimate of Electoral Fraud in Russian Parliamentary Elections.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110(2).
- Diamond, Larry. 2002. “Thinking about Hybrid Regimes.” *Journal of Democracy* 13: 21-35
- Zakaria, Fareed. 1997. “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs* 76: 22-41.
- Magaloni, Beatriz. 2010. “The Game of Electoral Fraud and the Ousting of Authoritarian Rule.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54 (3): 751–65.

4. Autocracy and Geopolitics

Please read these two:

- Gunitsky, Seva. "From shocks to waves: Hegemonic transitions and democratization in the twentieth century." *International Organization* (2014): 561-597.
- Weeks, Jessica L. "Autocratic audience costs: Regime type and signaling resolve." *International Organization* (2008): 35-64.

And then choose (at least) one of the following sub-topics to read:

Conflict

- Weeks, Jessica L. “Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict.” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 106, no. 2, 2012, pp. 326–347.
- Colgan, Jeff D., and Jessica LP Weeks. "Revolution, personalist dictatorships, and international conflict." *International Organization* (2015): 163-194.

Sanctions

- Abel Escribà-Folch, Joseph Wright, Dealing with Tyranny: International Sanctions and the Survival of Authoritarian Rulers, *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 54, Issue 2, June 2010, Pages 335–359, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2010.00590.x>
- Peksen, Dursun, and A. Cooper Drury. "Coercive or corrosive: The negative impact of economic sanctions on democracy." *International Interactions* 36.3 (2010): 240-264.

Aid and international organizations

- Wright, J. (2009), How Foreign Aid Can Foster Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53: 552-571.
- Poast, Paul, and Johannes Urpelainen. "How international organizations support democratization: preventing authoritarian reversals or promoting consolidation." *World Pol.* 67 (2015): 72.

Recommended reading:

- Weeks, Jessica LP. *Dictators at war and peace*. Cornell University Press, 2014.
- Lyall, J. (2010). Do Democracies Make Inferior Counterinsurgents? Reassessing Democracy's Impact on War Outcomes and Duration. *International Organization*, 64(1), 167-192.

- Branislav L. Slantchev, Politicians, the Media, and Domestic Audience Costs, *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 50, Issue 2, June 2006, Pages 445–477, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2006.00409.x>
- Way, Christopher, and Jessica LP Weeks. "Making it personal: regime type and nuclear proliferation." *American Journal of Political Science* 58.3 (2014): 705-719.
- Weiss, Jessica Chen. "Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences, and Nationalist Protest in China." *International Organization*, vol. 67, no. 1, 2013, pp. 1–35.
- Carter, Jeff. "The Political Cost of War Mobilization in Democracies and Dictatorships." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 8 (September 2017): 1768–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715620469>.

5. When Autocracies Bite: Repression, Coercion, Violence

- Albertus, Michael, and Victor Menaldo. "Coercive capacity and the prospects for democratization." *Comparative politics* 44, no. 2 (2012): 151-169.
- Frantz, Erica, Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Joseph Wright, and Xu Xu. "Personalization of power and repression in dictatorships." *The Journal of Politics* 82, no. 1 (2020): 372-377.
- Kendall-Taylor, Andrea, Erica Frantz, and Joseph Wright. "The digital dictators: how technology strengthens autocracy." *Foreign Affairs* 99 (2020): 103.
- Greitens, Sheena Chestnut. *Dictators and their secret police: Coercive institutions and state violence*. Cambridge University Press, 2016. Chapter TBA.
- Blaydes, Lisa. *State of Repression: Iraq under Saddam Hussein*. Princeton University Press, 2018. Chapter TBA.

Recommended reading:

- Svobik, Milan W. "Contracting on Violence: The Moral Hazard in Authoritarian Repression and Military Intervention in Politics." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 5 (October 2013): 765–94.
- Truex, Rory. "Focal Points, Dissident Calendars, and Preemptive Repression." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 63, no. 4, Apr. 2019, pp. 1032–1052, doi:[10.1177/0022002718770520](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718770520).
- Escribà-Folch, Abel. "Authoritarian responses to foreign pressure: Spending, repression, and sanctions." *Comparative Political Studies* 45.6 (2012): 683-713.
- Thomson, Henry. "Repression, redistribution and the problem of authoritarian control: Responses to the 17 June uprising in socialist East Germany." *East European Politics and Societies* 31.01 (2017): 68-92.
- Dragu, Tiberiu, and Adam Przeworski. "Preventive repression: Two types of moral hazard." *American Political Science Review* 113.1 (2019): 77-87.
- Rozenas, Arturas. "A Theory of Demographically Targeted Repression." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 64, no. 7–8, Aug. 2020, pp. 1254–1278, doi:[10.1177/0022002720904768](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002720904768).
- Gregory, Paul R., Philipp JH Schröder, and Konstantin Sonin. "Rational dictators and the killing of innocents: Data from Stalin's archives." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 39.1 (2011): 34-42.