LOBBYING THE AUTOCRAT

THE DYNAMICS OF POLICY ADVOCACY IN NONDEMOCRACIES

Max Grömping and Jessica C. Teets, Editors

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    Sarah Shair-Rosenfield

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Contents

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Figures

Tables

Acknowledgments

Part I
Introduction

1 | Lobbying the Autocrat

A Theoretical Road Map

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Prevailing theories of authoritarian politics emphasize the power imbalance in state-society relations. Autocrats adopt institutions—such as elections, legislatures, political parties, or semifree media—that allow bargaining and power sharing among elites and extract information from society (Magaloni 2006; Gandhi 2008; Boix and Svolik 2013; Lorentzen 2014). Society is often theorized as the passive terrain upon which autocrats act: manipulating, coopting, or coercing to stabilize the regime (Gerschewski 2013). There are, however, countless examples where society actively shapes and influences the authoritarian state. In Ethiopia, for instance, environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have made significant inroads into forestry policy through pilot projects, documenting field evidence, and forging alliances with key decision makers (Ayana, Arts, and Wiersum 2018). Russian advocacy groups have leveraged expertise, credibility, and the political opportunities provided by scandals to insert key language into child welfare reform (Bindman, Kulmala, and Bogdanova 2018). Nonprofits in China, facing the twin pressures of vigorous anticorruption campaigns and a tightening of fragmented governance, have shifted away from their reliance on personal connections to adopt strategies common in more democratic contexts, such as developing expert knowledge or using media strategies to lobby the government (Teets and Almen 2018). 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 health care (Collord 2021), waste management (Wu and Martus 2021), or disability

(Toepler and Fröhlich 2020), to the highly contentious such as corruption (Yadav and Mukherjee 2016), industrial relations (Elfstrom 2021), or fiscal policy (Steinberg and Shih 2012), to name but a few. Although these examples are known by scholars of comparative authoritarianism, they are not accounted for in institutional theories until they take the form of mass protests (Ulfelder 2005; Bellin 2012).

In this volume, we examine how and to what effect advocacy groups lobby autocratic governments to achieve favorable policy outcomes.[1] Our aim is to identify the building blocks of a theory of lobbying under nondemocratic regimes.[2] Empirically, we study the scope conditions under which groups influence policy in such regimes where coercive responses by leaders are a constant threat; when and why are they successful? Answering these questions is important. As one of the most astute observers of political regimes points out, "[a]utocracies do collect garbage, regulate traffic, issue dog licenses, and fill street holes: they govern" (Przeworski 2022, 1). How well they govern relates to the health, welfare, security, and quality of life of billions of people, in a world where 70 percent of the global population lives under authoritarian political regimes (Boese et al. 2022, 12). Yet compared to regime outcomes such as consolidation, stability, or breakdown, important aspects of autocratic governance are less central in the comparative authoritarianism literature. Whether, when, and why organized civil society affects policy outcomes in nondemocracies relates directly to the responsiveness and possibly even representativeness of these regimes. In this book, we thus extend traditional institutional theories to include societal participation in policy making by examining how lobbying differs between nondemocratic and democratic settings, and among different nondemocratic regime types.

In pursuing this research agenda, we adopt and adapt an analytical framework of *influence production* from neopluralist studies of interest groups in democracies (Lowery and Gray 2004). As illustrated in figure 1.1, this helps us identify four focal stages of lobbying that we can then subject to comparative analysis: (i) mobilizing latent societal interests into sustainable organizational forms; (ii) competing and cooperating with other groups in a community 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.

Clearly, this framework cannot simply be transplanted wholesale from the context of liberal democracy to authoritarian political regimes. Most obviously, repression and other, more subtle forms of political control
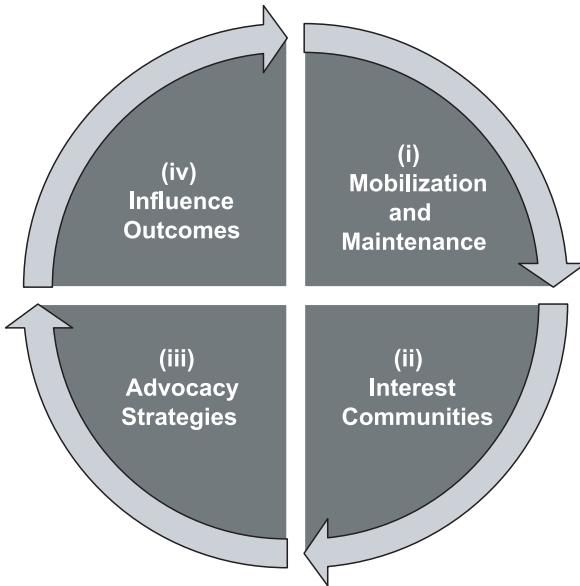
Figure 1.1. Four Stages of Influence Production

remain an ever-present threat to advocacy groups' mobilization, survival, and access, even in the most competitive nondemocracies (Guriev and Treisman 2019; Chaudhry 2022). In addition, key institutions that in a pluralist framework motivate policy makers to take societal interests into consideration—such as elections, legislatures, or the media—may serve different functions under authoritarianism (Magaloni 2006; Lorentzen 2014; Gandhi, Noble, and Svolik 2020). And finally, important societal influences on authoritarian policy making may come from beyond the associational sphere altogether, for example informal distributional coalitions (Pepinsky 2009). We acknowledge some key differences between a democratic and authoritarian context in that interests are transmitted in informal ways through fewer channels, leading to less aggregated and more atomistic preferences. Also that citizens have less access to policy makers and are more likely to encounter repression if they try to organize, leading to less societal information for policy makers.

Despite these differences, there is immense value in applying frameworks developed in one context to other contexts to catalyze conceptual innovation (Collier and Levitsky 1997). For example, democratic theories of electoral competition when applied to autocratic contexts helped shape our understanding of competitiveness in electoral authoritarian regimes (Hyde 2011). Similarly, using concepts and approaches common to the study of democratic legislatures uncovered how these institutions serve

distinctly authoritarian ends under dictatorship (Truex 2016; Schuler 2020). There are also efforts adjacent to ours that examine explicitly how well theories of the policy process, such as the multiple streams framework or punctuated equilibrium, "travel" from democratic to autocratic contexts (Chan and Zhao 2016; Herweg, Zahariadis, and Zohlnhöfer 2022). This is precisely why borrowing conceptual tools from neopluralist theories is a core feature of our project. We do not assume that influence production functions the same in authoritarian regime types as it does in democracies. Rather, having something to compare against will help us discover which parts of lobbying/influence production are similar across regime types and which are not, which creates a foundation for developing a theory of lobbying the autocrat, in similar ways to the theories we now have developed of authoritarian legislatures and elections in hybrid regimes (Schedler 2010). Rigorously testing concepts from one set of cases in another set may yield conceptual innovation, as long as these concepts are not "stretched" but intentionally compared (Collier and Levitsky 1997).

The chapters in this volume develop eight country case studies and three cross-national analyses guided by this framework, focusing upon the four stages of influence production in turn. We can thus compare cases of lobbying under autocracy with findings from the established interest group literature, while the cross-national analyses also enable direct comparison between autocracies and democracies. Synthesizing these empirical results leads us to sketch out the contours of a theory of lobbying under autocracy, which we detail in the concluding chapter. We argue that conditions for societal advocacy under authoritarianism are adverse along three key dimensions: (i) fewer access points to the policy-making process; (ii) less demand for all the information generated through advocacy; and (iii) stricter social control. Yet despite these "dismal conditions," lobbying under dictatorship is often similar to democracies. Using opportunities provided by fragmented governance and incumbents' demands for policy expertise and legitimacy, adaptive advocates can carve out niches in the autocratic policy process. In so doing, they constantly adapt and navigate the state's repression and management strategies, which are designed to reap the informational and legitimacy benefits of lobbying without risking gradual pluralization.

The volume contributes to several existing research areas. First, it joins debates in comparative authoritarianism of how authoritarian regimes learn, adjust to governance challenges, and provide goods. Studies in this space examine, for instance, how institutions such as media or parliaments built at the point of origin enable the state to monitor and adapt to rising

problems (Truex 2016; Roberts 2018), how deep-rooted material interests drive the careful allocation of benefits among regime coalitions to buffer crises (Pepinsky 2009; Shih 2020), or how autocracies struggle to keep overarching goals of stability from seeping into unrelated policy areas (Pan 2020). In this volume, however, we focus on more adaptive sources of change, namely the role of organized interests. In doing so, we build on but go beyond other recent studies of policy advocacy under authoritarianism that consider the reciprocal ways in which the state and civil society transform each other. Some of these are limited by their empirical scope, using single-country case studies, such as China (Hsu 2017; Elfstrom 2021), while existing comparative works are conceptually expansive—covering all of civil society activism, for instance—so as to potentially conflate analytically distinct phenomena (Cavatorta 2013). This volume advances this agenda by providing comparative cases and a focus on theory development. Notably, we cover a range of authoritarian regime types, countries at different stages of socioeconomic development and state capacity, and those with varying international involvement, such as Zimbabwe, Cambodia, Turkey, China, Malaysia, Montenegro, Belarus, and Russia.

Second, in a departure from much of the power-sharing or bargaining literature (see above), this project engages seriously with the preferences and behaviors of nonelite actors by taking the vantage point of groups, rather than of the regime. Ordinary citizens are not simply passive bystanders being coopted, coerced, or ignored entirely. Instead, by forming organized advocacy groups, they become sources of policy learning and potentially of interest representation. Through this focus on nonstate actors, we explore the interactive nature of governance and policy making in authoritarian regimes. This approach recognizes that governance is mutually constitutive, and despite power asymmetries between state and nonstate actors, citizens learn how to lobby autocrats and participate in different stages of the policy process (Ang 2016; Shue and Thornton 2017).

Third, studies of interest groups mostly focus on democracies, disregarding autocratic political regimes altogether. This means that interest-group research assumes that issue proponents mobilize and articulate their advocacy in an open public arena, and that policy makers are in turn motivated via fair elections to listen to public preferences. Both assumptions do not hold under authoritarianism. Thus the book explores how well theories of (neo)pluralist interest representation travel, drawing the contours of a theory of lobbying under authoritarianism that clearly distinguishes when and why lobbying is similar or different from what we observe in democracies.

This chapter proceeds as follows. The next section further defines key concepts and discusses the scope conditions for our investigation. The third section maps the pertinent debates regarding state-society interactions and authoritarian policy making, and introduces our analytical framework. Finally, the last section outlines the plan for the volume, including case selection, focusing on using the cases and the analytical framework to build a theory of lobbying under authoritarianism.

Key Concepts and Scope Conditions

What do we mean by "lobbying the autocrat"? The term lobbying is sometimes used to describe the activities of shady individuals, lobbyists, who influence the decisions of policy makers via persuasion or inducements, outside of the public's gaze. There is often a connotation of secrecy and even impropriety associated with the term. One would be hard-pressed to find a positive depiction of a lobbyist in public commentary. In contrast to this clandestine image, we see lobbying as a much broader set of activities that are actually an integral component of governance. Drawing on Jordan (2009, 372), we define *lobbying* as *activities aimed at modifying public policy in specialist policy debates through persuasion- and information-based interaction between groups and organizations and government*. Notably, this excludes corruption, contesting elections, and armed conflict. Our usage of the term, however, is broader than Jordan's because we also consider protests and direct action, which we see as a specific subtype of persuasion based on pressure politics. Therefore lobbying, in our sense, ranges from direct interactions with policy makers (inside lobbying) to the mobilization of public opinion via news media and public actions (outside lobbying) (Kollman 1998).

Lobbying can be done by a variety of "pressure participants" (Jordan, Halpin, and Maloney 2004). The type of pressure participants we focus upon in this book are *advocacy groups*. These are *voluntary, not-for-profit organizations of private status for which lobbying is a key function*, a definition leaning heavily on canonical accounts of interest groups in democracies (Jordan, Halpin, and Maloney 2004; Beyers, Eising, and Maloney 2008, 1106–1109; Klüver 2013, 5–6). This definition excludes businesses, universities, governments, hired "third-party" lobbying firms, less formally organized collectives and social movements, leisure groups or those purely focused on service delivery, state entities, and political parties.

On the other hand, our definition is intentionally broader than ways in

which others have studied influences on the policy process under authoritarianism. First, in contrast to the Olsonian notion of interest groups as "distributional coalitions" (e.g. Steinberg and Shih 2012), we posit that more than material interests matter. Beyond distributional conflict, ideational and identity-based politics should also be analyzed when discussing societal influences on authoritarian policy making. Second, different from studies locating interest groups in competing elements of the bureaucracy, party factions, or other regime components (Skilling 1966; Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988), we shift attention away from the internal workings of the regime and toward those interests encroaching on it from the "outside," that is, from society. This is notwithstanding the possibility that such outside actors may interface extensively with regime elements to form policy networks (Teets 2018). Third, diverging from approaches focusing purely on ruling coalitions and elites that need to be appeased by the autocrat through policy concessions (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005), we home in on the complex empirical realities of advocacy systems in many countries under authoritarian rule. There we see similar societal organization and group behaviors as observed in pluralist systems. This is not to say that this emergence equals pluralization, but at the very least it warrants a closer look at organized, rather than informal, interests. Finally, there is some tension between our definition and how civil society groups have been characterized in the comparative democratization literature, where they are often linked to processes of democratization and liberalization (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). While this is important, our interest lies in policy change, rather than regime change. We thus include a broader variety of groups, not only autonomous or oppositional ones.

At the same time, there is considerable conceptual and empirical overlap between our definition of advocacy groups and actors studied elsewhere under different rubrics. Table 1.1 compares our definition with different group labels along the salient dimensions: whether a group is formally organized; whether shaping public policy outcomes is its primary focus; whether it is an entity with voluntary membership; whether it operates without a profit motive; whether it has private status, that is, does not contest elections and is not subordinate to a government entity; and whether it has domestic status, that is, is a "home-grown" entity in the country it which it operates. Although definitions vary—and some may even be contested—the table tries to delineate necessary conditions for inclusion and sufficient conditions for exclusion based on some key authors' definitions, and it also clearly shows ambiguity where there is no such clear criterion. For example, NGOs often engage in policy advocacy,

but also in outsourcing of service provision by governments (Brass 2016); thus, NGOs without a policy focus would not be included in our definition of advocacy groups. That said, we are also sensitive to complexity, in that one advocacy strategy might be contracting to provide a service using a new model (Teets 2012). In summary, our "advocacy group" concept is most commensurable with common definitions of interest groups, SMOs, and policy-focused NGOs.

Examining GONGOs (government-organized NGOs) as one example of an overlapping concept may help unpack our "advocacy groups" concept further. GONGOs are NGOs that were either organized originally by the government and/or have government ties through their personnel arrangements, funding, or special registration status (Wu 2003). They thus clearly do not meet the "private status" criterion, since top leaders are in many cases government officials. Still, they often employ voluntary staff alongside government-appointed staff and often run programs with volunteers, thereby fitting the voluntary criterion to some extent. They may also foster unintentional forms of civic activism such as anticorruption campaigns or volunteerism (Hemment 2012). And, while not considered as representing "authentic" societal interests per se, they may still apply pressure internally on certain issues (Hasmath, Hildebrandt, and Hsu 2019). Interestingly, GONGOs sometimes advocate on behalf of their constituents against preferred government policies. One example is the Mass Federation of Women in China, which actively used its government access and resources to successfully push back against government plans to lower the mandatory retirement age for women to create more employment opportunities (Howell 2003). This suggests that there is value in including in our empirical analyses groups described as GONGOs as a specific phenomenon of nondemocratic interest communities, while at the same time being mindful of the differences between these and the other advocacy groups that form the core focus of this book.

Our population of interest are advocacy groups lobbying in countries under *nondemocratic political regimes*. We rely here on canonical definitions of political regimes as sets of norms, rules, and procedures by which power is allocated, exercised, and legitimated (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). There are of course different approaches to circumscribing nondemocratic regimes, depending on whether the concept of democracy is seen as nominal (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014) or continuous (Wahman, Teorell, and Hadenius 2013). Still others argue that examining authoritarian practices, rather than regimes, would be altogether more fruitful (Glasius 2018). The latter is no

TABLE 1.1. Advocacy Groups Compared to Other Group Labels

			Criteria					
Label	Abbr.	Key Source	Formal org.	Policy focus	Voluntary	Non-profit	Private status	Domestic status
Advocacy group		This volume	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Interest group	IG	Beyers et al. (2008)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Social movement organization	SMO	McCarthy and Zald (1977)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Nongovernmental organization	NGO	Martens (2002)	YES	~	YES	YES	YES	~
Civil society organization	CSO	Laville et al. (2015)	YES	~	YES	~	YES	YES
Nonprofit organization	NPO	Salamon and Anheier (1996)	YES	~	YES	YES	YES	~
International Nongovernmental organization	INGO	Heiss and Johnson (2016)	YES	~	YES	YES	YES	NO
Government-organized Nongovernmental organization	GONGO	Hasmath et al. (2019)	YES	~	~	YES	NO	YES
Think tank	TT	Rich (2005)	YES	YES	YES	~	~	~
Bureaucratic interest group		Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988)	YES	YES	~	YES	NO	YES
Distributional coalition		Olson (1982)	~	~	YES	~	YES	YES

Note: Adapted from Halpin (2010, 52) and Klüver (2013, 6). "YES" = necessary criterion for inclusion; "NO" = sufficient criterion for exclusion; "~" = some definitions include the criterion and others do not.

trivial objection, given that practices undermining citizens' ability to hold power bearers to account—a core feature of democracy according to any definition—are also widespread in liberal democracies. In our context, this could then be taken to include policy advocacy in democracies with widespread authoritarian practices. But we do not take this route. This expansive definition is hard to operationalize in cross-national research, and it stretches the concept of authoritarianism in our view. Instead, we follow a mainstream definition of nondemocratic regimes as those where *(i) the chief executive is either not elected at all, or where there is no meaningful de facto competition in elections (closed autocracies)*; or where *(ii) there is electoral competition, but this competition cannot be considered free and fair* according to Robert Dahl's institutional requisites for democracies (*electoral autocracies*) (Lührmann, Tannenberg, and Lindberg 2018). These regimes may be monarchical, personalist, military, one-party or multiparty in nature.

Studying Lobbying under Authoritarianism

Why would it even make sense to study lobbying in nondemocratic settings? After all, countries like China explicitly forbid the lobbying of policy makers (Teets 2018, 126). Authoritarian rule is characterized by a centralization of power in the hands of a small group and by a monopolized access to decision making (Boix and Svolik 2013). What is more, authoritarian regimes exercise tight political control over society, drawing into question the very possibility of group mobilization and action (Gerschewski 2013; Reny 2019; Toepler et al. 2020; Chaudhry 2022). Unsurprisingly, democracy is a strong predictor of interest group system institutionalization and lobbying activity more generally (Kanol 2016; Bearce and Roosevelt 2022), suggesting that the phenomenon we want to investigate may be marginal at best under authoritarianism.

We also know, however, that social forces and organized actors do interact with authority figures, including ruling parties, under autocratic rule. Scholarship on coalitional politics has shown how the demands of different constituencies are weighed carefully against the preferences and costs of other groups, requiring autocrats to find the right policies to maintain equilibrium (Pepinsky 2009). We also know that the introduction or preservation of elections, legislatures, or political parties provides authoritarian regimes with information and venues for power sharing and bargaining among rivaling political elites, thereby counteracting threats to their survival. Recent studies demonstrate spillover effects in that policy

issues may occasionally originate from the bottom up (Gandhi, Noble, and Svolik 2020). Furthermore, we know that authoritarianism is more often than not "fragmented" and that its bureaucratic style of problem solving is riddled with principal-agent dilemmas, factionalism, and policy problems too complex for any one actor to solve (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988). There is therefore a theoretical space for mutually constitutive relationships to develop among some regime components such as the bureaucracy, legislators, or the courts on the one hand, and organized societal interests on the other hand. Local authorities in particular deal with organized pressures from below as well as top-down structures of power at the national center. Recent work in this vein has shown that civil society networks using a range of advocacy strategies may make incremental inroads into the policy agenda of authoritarian incumbents without being necessarily fully autonomous of the state (e.g. Wells-Dang 2012; Yadav and Mukherjee 2016; Li, Lo, and Tang 2017; Ayana, Arts, and Wiersum 2018; Bindman, Kulmala, and Bogdanova 2018; Dai and Spires 2018; Teets 2018; Zhang 2018; Toepler and Fröhlich 2020; Collord 2021; Elfstrom 2021; Wu and Martus 2021). Importantly, this literature draws attention to the reciprocal ways in which the state and civil society transform each other, while at the same time acknowledging the profound power imbalance in this relationship. Regulations and management strategies frequently reinforce the dominant role of the state, turning NGOs into a service provision arm of the state itself (Hsu 2017). Advocacy groups are allowed to operate but are simultaneously surveilled intensively, providing positive and negative incentives to prevent unintended pluralization while maximizing information acquisition. Navigating the constraints, advocacy groups may find necessary access point to elites in the same management strategies that are meant to contain them, such as "dual regulation" requirements in China (Teets 2018).

Based on this empirical evidence, we contend that despite repression, cooptation, and *faux* civil society inclusion, there is genuine societal lobbying under authoritarianism. In the following section, we outline our analytical framework to study this phenomenon, borrowing from neopluralist theories of interest representation, social exchange, and transaction cost economics, which will allow us to ask pertinent cross-cutting questions of the authoritarian case studies presented in this volume.

Influence Production and Information Exchange

In pluralist theories of interest representation, advocacy groups have long been considered crucial to connecting citizens to political elites and policy

making (Truman 1951). Democracies thrive when they have an active public sphere facilitating the free flow and contest of information, ideas, and preferences, so that the full breadth of organized interests can present contending views of policy priorities, problems, and solutions. Of course, successive generations of scholars have also shown that the mobilization of interests is difficult (Olson 1965) and that interest representation in Western democracies is skewed toward economic interests (Schattschneider 1960). In the recent neopluralist turn of this research agenda, scholars have examined numerous aspects of societal interest intermediation, including group formation, organizational form, or political activation (Walker 1991; Halpin 2014); how groups interact, form coalitions, and wax and wane in a population of organized interests (Holyoke 2009; Lowery, Halpin, and Gray 2015); what lobbying and framing strategies they employ (Baumgartner, De Boef, and Boydstun 2008; Dür and Mateo 2016); and the determinants of groups' policy success (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Klüver 2013), to name but a few topics.

The insights of this literature inform our analysis of lobbying under autocracy as an *influence production process* (Lowery and Gray 2004). Specifically, such an analytical lens outlines four stages in the generation of influence by advocacy groups, from (i) mobilization and maintenance, to (ii) competition and cooperation in an interest community, to (iii) the selection of influence strategies, and finally (iv) access and influence. The strength of this approach is that it draws attention to the interconnectedness of different stages of influence production and to the fact that there are multiple points at which contextual factors—such as the political regime type—may matter. Of course, this framework rests on two assumptions that need to be critically examined in nondemocracies. First, that a public sphere exists in which issue proponents can mobilize and articulate advocacy, and second, that inside actors in the policy process care about information or pressure provided by outside sources. These assumptions notwithstanding, we believe that the analytical lens of influence production provides an opportunity. It serves as a heuristic to break down the complex phenomenon of lobbying into substeps that are, in the first instance, independent of regimes or other societal superstructures. In fact, applying such a model allows us to ask the pertinent questions to delineate the differences and commonalities of lobbying under different political regime types. As such, we use the influence production process to structure our analysis throughout the book. In what follows, and as summarized in table 1.2, we briefly describe each stage and think through how it may be different or similar in autocracies.

TABLE 1.2. Expected Features of Influence Production under Autocracy

Stage	Condition	Democracies	Autocracies	Expected Features in Autocracies
(i) Mobilization and Maintenance	**Entry control**	Low to moderate	High	(1) Fewer and smaller groups
	Funding sources	Diverse	Limited, mainly foreign donors or gov't	(2) More informal groups
				(3) Extent of entry control and repression varies by policy area
	Repression	Low	High	
(ii) Interest Communities	**Availability of resources** (access, members, funding)	High	Low, subsidized for gov't aligned groups	(4) Lower density of group system
				(5) Lower diversity of group system
	Opportunities for cooperation	High	Limited	(6) Similar dominance of business interests
				(7) Cooperation primarily with either regime-aligned groups or with TANs
	Pressures from competition	High	High	
(iii) Advocacy Strategies	**Structure of decision making**	Dispersed	Concentrated	(8) Bureaucratic strategy more prevalent
	Key policy actors	Diverse	Top executive, bureaucrats	(9) Legislative strategy less prevalent, depends on electoral competitiveness
	Parliamentary powers	Moderate to high	Low to moderate	(10) Media strategy less prevalent, associated with higher risks and higher rewards
	Media freedom	High	Low to moderate	(11) Preference for local access seeking
				(12) Informal networking more prevalent
(iv) Outcomes	**Sources of policy-relevant information**	Diverse	Limited	(13) Influence restricted to nonsensitive policy areas
	Demand for policy-relevant information	High	Low to high	(14) Influence depends on demand for policy-relevant information, which is highest in electoral autocracies and complex economies
	Extent of cooptation	Low to moderate	High	(15) Smaller ratio of groups making representative claims vs. those providing expert information
				(16) Autonomous groups risk cooptation as downside of influence

Stage One: Mobilization and Maintenance

The first stage of influence production—and the first section of this volume—examines why and how latent societal interests coalesce into sustainable organizational forms. Free-rider problems, organizational drift, or member attrition make it difficult to mobilize collective organizations without offering selective material, ideational, or solidary benefits (Olson 1965; Walker 1991). After mobilization, advocacy groups must invest in organizational maintenance tasks, such as raising money, attracting new members, and keeping them engaged. Advocacy groups can enhance chances of survival by finding specialized niches to reduce competition for resources with other similar groups (Gray and Lowery 1996) and by cultivating legitimacy vis-à-vis core constituencies (Walker and McCarthy 2010).

These challenges of mobilizing and maintaining advocacy organizations are compounded under authoritarianism by regimes' social management and repression strategies aimed at regulating the entry of autonomous groups into the system and preventing larger social mobilization (Toepler et al. 2020; Chaudhry 2022). In Cambodia, for instance, new legislation introduced in 2015 tightened the regulatory environment for both domestic and foreign NGOs. Arduous registration and financial disclosure requirements set high hurdles for the establishment of new organizations. New neutrality requirements, removal criteria, and terrorism provisions provide easy recourse for the disbanding of existing ones (Young 2021). In Ethiopia, similar laws prohibited foreign-funded NGOs from engaging in politically sensitive advocacy, forcing many groups to either disband or "re-brand" their activities (Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2015). Developments like these are part of a global trend of shrinking civic space. This suggests much higher start-up and maintenance costs for advocacy groups in dictatorship, requiring stronger incentives for members, and likely leading to fewer and smaller groups due to funding, registration, and hiring challenges.

Beyond this, one may also question whether mobilization is a necessary stage of influence production under authoritarianism. For example, distributional coalitions advocating for different responses to the Asian financial crisis in Indonesia lobbied forcefully for adjustment policies without forming any organizational platform (Pepinsky 2009). In other contexts, kinship networks and neopatrimonial ties may render interest organizations unnecessary as vehicles for influence production (Ilkhamov 2007). These objections are not trivial and deserve consideration. If, for

example, group formalization presents no discernible benefit for achieving policy goals, or is even counterproductive because it attracts repression, it is less likely to occur. In turn, this might suggest that the formal advocacy organizations that *do* exist in autocracies are merely part of authoritarian legitimation strategies (Lorch and Bunk 2017) or means to infiltrate civil society (Collier and Collier 1991). Although this might be true in some cases, the number of new regulations aimed at controlling these groups also suggests that authoritarian leaders view them as potentially valid representatives of societal concerns. It seems indeed implausible, except perhaps in the most totalitarian cases, that advocacy organizations form only by administrative demand and not (also) in response to social problems.

Whatever the case, asking questions about the mobilization of formal advocacy groups under authoritarianism is still valuable. For one, informal power groups also exist in democracies, but this does not render insights of decades of interest group literature meaningless. Furthermore, the mobilization lens might make visible the regime's calculus of balancing legitimacy payoffs against increased collective action potential, loss of framing hegemony, or incremental policy change toward more popular participation. How does the regime manage these risks? Does it use positive incentives to direct lobbying to certain areas while curtailing others? Does it allow more space at the local level but intense repression at the national level? Are tax, libel, registration, and foreign funding laws deployed strategically against certain groups but not others? Or is there perhaps no coherent strategy to mitigate the risk of accidental pluralization? Some studies find that the mix of management strategies aimed at group mobilization depends on whether advocacy groups have reconcilable interests with a regime and what threat they pose (Reny 2019; Chaudhry 2022). This in turn suggests that the policy area around which a group mobilizes will matter, some of which may be deemed permissible and some taboo. Examples of such sensitive issues under authoritarianism may be, for instance, human rights, defense, internal security, or media regulation.

Stage Two: Interest Communities

Once mobilized, advocacy groups enter a community of organized interests where they encounter opportunities for alliance building as well as pressures from other groups for funding, members, and agenda space. These patterns of competition and cooperation shape community density, diversity, coalition building and a number of other features of the group

ecology (Lowery, Halpin, and Gray 2015). Core resources such as policy maker access, new members, and potential funding may be scarcer under dictatorship so that the carrying capacity of the interest system is constrained (Kanol 2016). But the rise and decline of advocacy groups may also be a function of the changing opportunities of the organizational ecology itself, for instance, mutual legitimation payoffs in sparse ecologies and crowding out in dense ones. This "density dependence" has important consequences for group entry and exit. In the nascent stage of interest communities, group survival is precarious, as first movers need to establish the legitimacy of the issue sector, its specific organizational forms, and its strategies. Once more groups join the community, growing density increases the legitimacy of the sector and boosts group birth, while after a certain tipping point, higher density also increases mortality. Density also impacts niche-seeking behavior, which will likely be the norm in dense ecologies, but less common in nascent ones, when imitation rather than differentiation increases chances of survival (Halpin 2015, 230). While such dynamics may *in principle* hold under authoritarianism, autocrats' management strategies also superimpose new pressures on group entry and exit, as discussed above. Density dependence, for instance, may be broken if an autocrat decides to artificially support certain groups like sponsored GONGOs, or selectively crack down on those representing deviant issue agendas.

The diversity of interest communities is another important facet at this stage of influence production. Diverse interest communities are more likely to arise in sectors where advocacy groups represent heterogenous member interests, but some interests may be better represented than others. The numerical dominance of business groups—as opposed to occupational associations or citizen groups—is well-documented in interest group studies of liberal democracies (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012). There is no reason to believe this differs in autocracies; instead this likely differs by levels of state control over some sectors like resource monopolies. Community diversity may, however, be affected negatively by the constrained range of issues allowed on the authoritarian policy agenda (Or 2019) and more volatile due to frequent external shocks, such as regulatory changes or crackdowns.

Similarly, coalition building, or its absence, should at least in part result from ecological pressures, regardless of regime type. Advocacy coalitions coalesce around shared core policy beliefs (Sabatier 1988), but they are also dependent on the perceived strength of oppositional advocates and the scope of a group's issue interest (Holyoke 2009). In denser interest

communities, coalitions are more likely to form. Coalition building, however, may follow different dynamics under authoritarian management strategies of cooptation or containment. For example, groups might prioritize alliances with actors close to the regime. The limited agenda space and funding sources—and in corporatist models, the ability to only have one organization representing an issue or area—foster competition among groups rather than cooperation. Coalition-building in autocracies might also be more geared toward transnational advocacy networks than in democracies, at least in certain issue spaces. The "boomerang model" of human rights advocacy, for instance, highlights that local advocates under authoritarianism frequently ally with INGOs who in turn lobby governments in the Global North to put pressure on the human-rights-violating government (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Groups may use this strategy not only because of a lack of access points to directly lobby the authoritarian state, but also because the only viable funding opportunities are via international networks. Recent restrictions on foreign funding for domestic NGOs in many states, however, might hinder these linkages and source of fiscal support (Chaudhry 2022).

In sum, the model of the influence production process urges attention not only to the analytical unit of individual groups, but also to the aggregate or "ecological" level of advocacy groups in a country. This allows researchers to study the patterns of group entry and exit and how these are managed by niche seeking or cooperation with the regime. This model analyzes how groups compete and cooperate, if and how transnational advocacy networks influence national organization ecologies, and whether authoritarian interest communities are biased toward certain group types or issues.

Stage Three: Strategies

Advocacy groups select strategies of influence according to their goals and capacities within the political opportunity structure. These choices likely reflect groups' twofold goal of political influence on the one hand (i.e., convincing the public and policy makers that "their" issue is worth addressing), and organizational maintenance on the other (i.e., attracting funding and members). Transaction cost economics suggest that organizations will aim for the most efficient way to generate important goods by finding a "least cost supply" solution (Williamson 1981). Applied to lobbying, this supposes that groups will calibrate their investment in different

strategies according to the perceived costs and the perceived demand on the side of the dictator for different "access goods" implied by these strategies (Bouwen 2004). This will be discussed in greater detail further below.

In the interest-group literature, there are three key arenas advocacy groups target in their lobbying efforts: the bureaucracy, the legislature, and the media (Binderkrantz, Christiansen, and Pedersen 2015). The first two arenas are commonly described as the targets of "inside lobbying" because they are about generating direct interactions with policy makers, while the latter forms the primary route of "outside lobbying" (Kollman 1998). Some scholars expand outside lobbying to also include the courts, demonstrations, or appeals to international allies and networks. In general, advocacy groups lobbying for public-interest issues prefer outside strategies, whereas business groups tend to use the inside route (Dür and Mateo 2016). Groups usually combine strategies, however, rather than relying only on one (Trapp and Laursen 2017).

Scholarly accounts describe the *bureaucracy* variously as a powerful actor dominating policy making through its monopoly on expertise, a mere agent of politically elected principals, or as captured by organized interests it is meant to regulate. Whichever the underlying model, advocacy groups frequently embed bureaucratic actors in so-called "policy communities" (Richardson and Jordan 1979). These interactions among groups and government officials mostly take place outside of the public's view, making the bureaucracy the core insider arena. Groups' repertoire for influencing the bureaucracy may range from mobilizing "pressure from above" by targeting key policy makers or by directly participating in formal consultations, which are a core feature of many modern democratic bureaucracies. Among autocracies, bureaucratic capacity varies considerably, with personalist dictatorships and monarchies usually performing worse than single-party regimes (Charron and Lapuente 2011). On the one hand, such weak bureaucracies may be the subject of easy capture by interest groups; but on the other hand, their weakness may also make them irrelevant as a target for lobbying, simply because all the action happens elsewhere. In contradistinction, bureaucracies in high-capacity single-party regimes are the site of significant policy conflict among different vertically integrated factions and networks (Gilli et al. 2018). These bureaucracies should be a preferred target of lobbying. Additionally, given power concentrations in authoritarian regimes, the number of policy makers might be much smaller than in democracies, shrinking to only a handful in totalitarian regimes. These features of authoritarianism will

likely make the bureaucracy the main target for advocacy, which makes building strong relationships and networks key to success.

Regarding the *legislative arena*, studies have highlighted that authoritarian legislatures—far from being mere rubber stamps—are in fact arenas of genuine politics. Yet they serve distinct authoritarian purposes, such as power sharing among regime elites (Svolik 2012), the cooptation of oppositional elites (Gandhi 2008), or the distribution of clientelistic goods (Blaydes 2010). The representation of interests takes place, if at all, only "within bounds" of permissible policy issues (Truex 2016) or as an extension of intraexecutive policy networks (Noble 2020). On its face, this makes authoritarian legislatures unlikely targets for advocacy groups. On the other hand, faced with complex policy problems, legislators may be keen to gain insights into possible policy solutions, or might even want to learn about true constituency preferences in order to boost their own performance records (Manion 2015). Especially in competitive authoritarian regimes, performance might matter as much as in democracies. While advocates may not change the material interests of elites engaged in parliamentary bargaining over policies, they may well influence their ideas of how to design policies. Within the margins of permissible policy areas, they may even add issues onto the legislative agenda. This target is more likely to be responsive at the local level, where governance capacity and technical knowledge are reduced. The local entry points may help mobilize policy networks in other branches and levels of government.

Media-centric lobbying strategies rest on the logic of expanding the scope of policy discussion by drawing both the interest and favorable support of publics to create sufficient public pressure for the issue to be considered valid by policy elites. In democracies, public support will provide electoral leverage that may threaten incumbent politicians, but in many authoritarian regimes this is not an option due to fears of repression, lack of free media, and absence of electoral competition pressure. Politicians in closed autocracies do not face electoral pressures at all, and under electoral authoritarianism, incumbents are disproportionally more likely to return to office. What is more, media are routinely curtailed in autocracies, restricting the range of issues advocacy groups may promote (Stier 2015). Instead, media broadcast propaganda, diverting public attention to regime-congruent issue areas (Alrababa'h and Blaydes 2021). Despite these challenges, in many regimes autocrats attempt to balance the "dictator's dilemma" of suppressing collective action while facilitating the monitoring of societal preferences and local policy problems by the regime

(Lorentzen 2014). In these cases, the information-gathering function of authoritarian media systems might create limited openings for advocates. By actively seeking out journalists and providing newsworthy content on "their" issue, advocacy groups may supply granular, policy-relevant information that the autocrat seeks to source (Gao and Teets 2020). If the issue is too sensitive or goes viral, however, the groups might trigger repression, unless the issue goes viral before it can be censored. Thus the media strategy is high-risk high-reward, given that media attention to issues makes autocratic legislators more responsive to public preferences, even in dictatorships (Schuler 2020). Social media is not as challenging to access and allows for quick virality more than traditional media, but the same problems of repression and disinterested policy makers (or at least not avidly following public opinion) remain (Bellin 2012).

In sum, we expect differences in strategy choice between democratic and nondemocratic settings based on restricted political opportunity structure, namely fewer policy maker access points and reduced channels for public participation. Given the weakened functioning of elections and—at best—partially free media, strategies aimed at the public may be less salient than those targeting bureaucracies. Media strategies, however, may be more attractive absent formal access points to legislatures or bureaucracies, but these are high-risk high-reward. Overall, establishing and maintaining informal networks with policy makers, local officials, or journalists may become even more valuable than it is in democratic systems.

Stage Four: Outcomes

The last stage of the analytical framework examines whether advocacy groups achieve concrete policy influence at the issue level or enhance responsiveness at the aggregate level. The extant literature offers a spectrum of potential outcomes, ranging from simple "voice" where groups share aggregated societal interests with policy makers, to policy makers adopting either a problem frame or potential solution set, all the way to situations where policy makers adopt wholesale policy language from groups' research-based advocacy or demonstration sites (for good examples of this range, see Lust-Okar and Zerhouni 2008).

Empirically, although there is no clear agreement on how to operationalize "influence," it is commonly assumed that access to relevant venues such as the legislature and the bureaucracy is its key precursor. Factors such as groups' material resources, coalitions, framing prowess, or posi-

tion vis-à-vis the status quo facilitate access in democracies (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Klüver 2013; Dür and Mateo 2016). These factors likely matter in nondemocratic settings as well (Zhang 2018). In addition to supply-side factors, theories of social exchange urge attention to the demand side of policy advocacy. From this perspective, lobbying is not a one-way street, but an exchange of different goods among the actors involved (Berkhout 2013). Elites suffer from information overload and ambiguity in the policy information they need to process, be it in democracies or autocracies (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Walgrave and Dejaeghere 2017). These constraints can be alleviated or "subsidized" by advocacy groups with precurated, reliable, and low-cost technical and political information, that helps elites (a) gauge the scope, causes, and consequences of social problems, (b) choose among alternative policy solutions to address the problem, and (c) assess the degree to which those solutions are politically feasible (Kingdon 1984; Avant, Finnemore, and Sell 2010). This information is scarce under authoritarianism given censorship, repression, and reduced avenues for political participation. What makes advocacy groups potentially valuable to the autocrat is that they can supply reliable and often inaccessible information due to their trusted engagement with community members and via their policy expertise; and in exchange, they are granted limited and uneven access to the policy making process (Teets 2018).

We contend that information demands differ across autocratic regime types. For instance, more competitive party-based regimes likely have higher information demands than personalist or military regimes without electoral pressure. In addition, policy information will likely be more valuable in knowledge-intensive economies compared to rentier states. High information demands in turn incentivize a more open approach to interest groups. This does not mean, however, that these authoritarian regimes will resemble pluralistic democracies; instead, we might theoretically expect a smaller ratio of groups making representative claims on behalf of societal groups compared to purely expertise-driven advocacy.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that access may blur into cooptation, a strategy meant to enhance elite cohesion and steering capacity by tying actors to the regime (Gerschewski 2013, 22). Groups may be invited into decision-making forums in exchange for their loyalty, yet without gaining true voice. In that sense, an advocacy system may be another quasi-democratic innovation adopted by autocrats to infiltrate civil society, introducing state-aligned organizations alongside autonomous ones, while giving the former preferential access (Collier and Collier 1991). Despite the desire for social cooptation on the part of autocrats,

through this very process, society also actively shapes the authoritarian state, in which lobbying may enhance governance, responsiveness, and even representation in authoritarian contexts.

Plan of the Book

The chapters in this volume examine the phenomenon of civil society lobbying in nondemocratic regimes. Although the chapters cover a diverse range of cases from a variety of types of authoritarianism and through different methodological approaches, the authors all focus on addressing the key research questions outlined in this introduction. This common focus allows the cases to build an empirical foundation we use to develop an initial theory of advocacy under authoritarianism.

Three of the eleven substantive chapters use cross-national research designs, while the other eight deeply examine individual case countries: China, Russia, Belarus, Cambodia, Malaysia, Montenegro, Turkey, and Zimbabwe. The case studies range from the most authoritarian—China, at 0.04 in V-Dem's liberal democracy index (Coppedge et al. 2021)—to the least authoritarian, Montenegro at 0.35. They cover a range of autocratic regime types (one-party, multiparty, personalist) on different continents, and they encompass different systems of government: some unitary (Cambodia, Montenegro, Turkey, Zimbabwe, Belarus), some federalist (Russia, Malaysia), and some with highly complex unitary multilevel governance arrangements (China). In terms of human development, the cases range from medium (Cambodia, Zimbabwe) to very high (Montenegro, Russia, Turkey). The analyses touch upon a range of policy areas, including global trade (chapter 2), the environment (chapters 2, 3, 5, 8), foreign policy (chapter 4), tourism (chapter 3), civil and political rights (chapter 6, 7, and 9), welfare (chapter 10), and land rights (chapter 11). These chapters were selected for their diversity to assist in developing a theory of authoritarian advocacy that helps scholars understand and compare many different regimes.

Selected cases also represent different degrees of advocacy group system institutionalization. Figure 1.2 plots each country's path over twenty-eight years (1990–2018) along two axes: First, the degree to which the government achieves control over entry and exit by civil society organizations (CSOs) into public life (x-axis). This ranges from unconstrained entry to monopolistic control, in which only government-approved groups may form. And second, the extent to which CSOs are routinely consulted by

policy makers (y-axis). This ranges from no consultation, implying a near insulation of policy makers from outside inputs, to routine consultation, in which CSOs are recognized as stakeholders in important policy areas and given voice on such issues. The graph thus plots countries' trajectories in two important stages of the influence production process: mobilization and outcomes. Each pane of the figure includes a simple scatterplot of these two variables over all 2,528 autocratic country-years in the world since 1990. Unsurprisingly, the fit suggests a negative relationship between entry control and access ($R = —0.63$, $p < 0.001$). Some of the case countries—such as Malaysia, Montenegro, or Russia—fit this correlation well. Others are outliers. China, for instance, consistently shows levels of access that are above the average predicted for its extremely strict entry controls. Belarus or Cambodia, on the other hand, provide fewer points of access than expected for their degree of entry control. The countries also show variation over time. Russia and Cambodia, for instance, first loosened entry controls, then tightened them again, in line with these countries' overall autocratization. Malaysia, on the other hand, significantly relaxed entry conditions over time and granted more access, even before the momentous election defeat of the ruling coalition in 2018. In yet another pattern, we see slight worsening of the conditions for mobilization in Zimbabwe, but surprisingly, opportunities for access increase over time.

The empirical chapters assemble the building blocks of a more general theory of lobbying under nondemocratic conditions in comparison to democratic conditions, as outlined in the concluding chapter. In addition to the variation observed on the two dimensions above, the variety of research designs and methods employed in the individual chapters expands the scope for causal inference, ranging from large-N cross-section and time-series statistical analysis (chapters 2, 7, and 12), to in-country longitudinal designs (chapters 9 and 11), to within-case or cross-case comparisons via process tracing (chapters 3 and 10), interview-based accounts (chapters 5 and 6), text analysis via structural topic modeling (chapter 4) and survey-based case studies (chapter 8).

As discussed earlier, we use the analytical framework of the influence production process to structure the empirical chapters in this volume into four sections to allow explicit comparison among authoritarian regimes and also with democracies. Chapters in **Part II** of the book address how latent interests in society come to be represented by specific advocacy organizations, what conditions hinder or facilitate mobilization, and what incentives lead autocrats to allow degrees of societal mobilization.

In **chapter 2**, Marcel Hanegraaff and Iskander De Bruycker explore
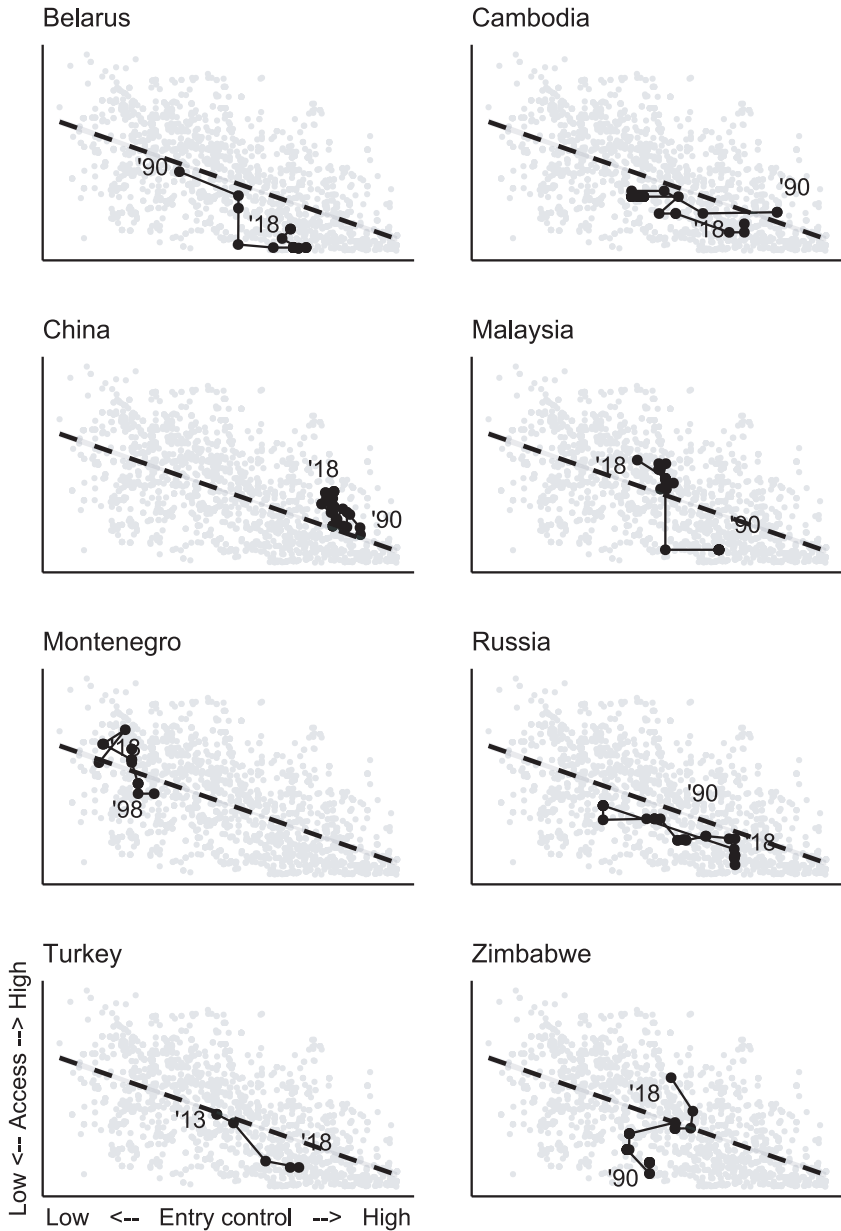
Figure 1.2. Entry Control and Lobbying Access among Selected Nondemocracies, 1990–2018

Data source: Coppedge et al. (2021), *N* = 2,528 autocratic country-years.

Note: Turkey is classified as democratic until 2012, Belarus from 1991–1996, and Montenegro in 1990–1997, 2003–2005, 2009, and 2015.

variation in the information demands of policy makers across democratic and autocratic regimes in their exchanges with advocacy groups. They show that policy makers in democracies value political information about constituent interests and the strength of coalitions relatively more than those from autocratic countries, whereas demand for expertise-based information is more universal across regime types. Consequently, groups better able to provide expertise-based information, that is, those with more resources (such as business groups), are at an advantage. Thus an elitist and status quo bias is a likely universal feature of advocacy group mobilizations in autocracies.

Chapter 3 by Sanja Hajdinjak analyzes the factors facilitating successful mobilization and lobbying for environmental protection and around strategic investments in the tourism sector in Montenegro. She finds that, as in democracies, group mobilization is key to ensure sustained pressure campaigns. Unlike democracies, however, if the policy issue at stake endangers the incumbents' patronage system, seemingly innocuous policy areas become "no-go" issues. These are not fixed, but dynamic and often surprising, requiring more adaptability from advocacy groups.

Chapters in **Part III** take a broader look at the aggregate or "ecological" level of interest communities in a country. What patterns can be observed regarding entry and exit of groups into this ecology? Is there convergence or niche seeking in terms of organizational forms or issue agendas? How do groups compete and cooperate?

Chapter 4 by Reza Hasmath examines contemporary foreign policy topics discussed by think tanks in China. While for the most part, Chinese foreign policy think tanks do not overtly lobby the state, the author finds evidence of divergence on less-critical policy topics and relative conformity on the policy tenets relevant to China's core domestic and international interests. This suggests that there are permissible policy topics for lobbying in an authoritarian institutional environment, while other topics are considered deviant or not permissible.

Drawing on cases of Cambodian environmental advocacy, **chapter 5** by Sokphea Young unpacks how interest communities adapt to authoritarian crackdowns. The chapter suggests that advocacy groups with strong linkages to transnational advocacy networks face unique challenges under authoritarianism, in particular when the regime mobilizes national sovereignty to delegitimize them as Western "stooges." Adapting to these challenges, groups move to online media and decentralize their organizational morphologies, even to the point of disbanding and reconstituting as unregistered and diffuse movements.

In **chapter 6**, Bilge Yabancı examines the case of Turkey under AKP rule to argue that lobbying ecologies in competitive authoritarian regimes are effectively bifurcated into "government-oriented" and "autonomous" interest communities. Proregime communities with deep financial and discursive links to the ruling party steer public opinion through "tactful contention" without challenging status quo policies. Antiregime groups on the other hand voice diverging constituent interests but are largely excluded from the policy process. The bifurcation duplicates available niches, which means that the interest system may sustain more groups than expected. Coalition building is a frequent answer to population pressures on both sides of the political divide.

Part IV encompasses chapters aimed at deciphering groups' strategy choices, considering the reduced channels of public participation available to them under authoritarianism. The chapters ask how groups select among the influence tools available to them, and what venues groups primarily target in their lobbying effort.

Chapter 7 by Max Grömping draws on an organizational survey of NGOs in eighty-five countries to investigate when and why human rights advocacy groups engage in media strategies. Counter to expectations, outside lobbying is equally prevalent in autocracies and in democracies. Close ties to the opposition predict stronger outside lobbying under authoritarianism, but not in democracies, and only in pluralistic media environments but not in closed ones. While autocracies provide, on average, far less media pluralism than democracies, the highest likelihood of outside strategies is in autocracies with a moderately free media.

In **Chapter 8**, Hui Li asks what advocacy strategies Chinese environmental advocacy groups use and how political resources affect their repertoire. She finds that the media strategy is the most prevalent, whereas legislative advocacy is least prevalent. Similar to the situation in liberal democracies, advocacy groups in China calibrate their strategies to supply information and expertise in exchange for access to the policy process. In a government-dominated institutional environment, however, they strategically foster government embeddedness to enhance legitimacy and carve out meaningful space for policy influence.

Using a longitudinal case study of a Malaysian electoral reform advocacy group, in **chapter 9** Ying Hooi Khoo and Carmen Leong examine how constraints and opportunities for advocacy repertoires change during the life cycle of groups. Through interviews and social media data analysis, they show that differing degrees of access impact strategy choice. The advocacy group under investigation underwent three phases, from

politicized opposition-aligned movement, to depoliticized but "marginalized" movement, to finally becoming a policy insider after the historical defeat of the ruling party in 2018. Their choice of strategy shifted concomitantly from network building, protest, and media attention-getting to direct engagement with policy makers in institutionalized venues.

Chapters in **Part V** focus on discerning success or failure of lobbying activity. The authors reflect critically on the conditions facilitating or hindering success and on the extent to which the interest system as a whole influences the course of public policy. Does "success" mean better representation of citizens' preferences, and can governance be enhanced despite cooptation?

In **chapter 10**, Eleanor Bindman and Tatsiana Chulitskaya present a case comparison of Russia and Belarus to argue that advocacy groups in these post-Soviet autocracies encounter some opportunities to influence policy in issue areas that are less politicized than others but which remain highly important for regime legitimation. NGOs working in the area of social policy and social service delivery in both countries are neither fully oppositional but also have not been fully coopted by the state. They form policy networks with regime insiders and supply expertise-based policy knowledge in a high-demand area of policy that has a significant impact on the daily lives and well-being of the population. Overall, these dynamics are more pronounced in Russia than in the more centralized and authoritarian system in Belarus.

Chapter 11 by Kirk Helliker, Sandra Bhatasara, and Manase Kudzai Chiweshe traces over time the advocacy efforts of two separate interest communities in autocratic Zimbabwe: donor-dependent "classic" civil society organizations, and associations of independence war veterans. The authors outline historical alliances, political agendas, and advocacy methodologies as drivers of the success or failure of these competing interest groups in pursuing their policy preferences regarding land reform. The relative success of the veterans' lobbying was driven by the fear of losing support of important elements of the regime coalition that could not be coopted by limited concessions, and by their ability to provide information in a policy area key to the regime's legitimation discourse.

In **chapter 12**, Angelo Vito Panaro hypothesizes that rulers' demand for policy information structures the degree of lobbying access, as measured by "CSO consultation." Demand in turn depends on the way in which the regime legitimates their position in power. His empirical analysis of cross-national time-series data suggests that authoritarian regimes who rely on legitimation discourses of socioeconomic performance and

democratic procedures grant more access for CSOs to interact with public officials. Panaro finds the reason in information exchanges in which advocacy groups supply the technical and political information required by autocrats to deliver on these legitimation claims.

In the concluding chapter, **chapter 13**, the editors summarize the findings of the individual empirical chapters analytically. We compare these to the expectations outlined above in table 1.2, derived from both the comparative authoritarianism and interest groups literature. This analysis allows us to identify the commonalities and differences of policy advocacy under democracy and autocracy and to outline an initial theory of lobbying the autocrat, focusing on three scope conditions as identified in the empirical chapters—access to policy making, information demands, and social control—to explain these differences and similarities. These "dismal conditions" hinder advocacy systems under autocracy more in the first two stages of influence production—mobilization and ecology—while in the second two stages of strategies and outcomes, advocacy groups are more similar to democratic counterparts. Within these bounds, however, adaptive lobbying may still bring about localized responsiveness and representation. Finally, we outline a future research agenda relying on our initial theory building that will allow for continued theory testing and adaptation by using this comparative framework to see where each specific case is similar and what is unique and should be further explored.

NOTES

1. As discussed further below, we rely on a broad definition of lobbying as activities by formally organized nonprofit and nongovernmental advocacy groups aimed at affecting concrete policy outcomes. These can consist of direct interactions with policy makers or indirect mobilization of public opinion via media and public actions.

2. When referring to political regimes, we use the terms nondemocracy, autocracy, authoritarian regime, and dictatorship synonymously throughout the book.

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Part II

Mobilization and Maintenance

2 | The Lobbying Demands of Autocratic and Democratic Leaders

A Comparative Perspective

Marcel Hanegraaff and Iskander De Bruycker

Scholarship on interest groups to date has predominantly focused on established democracies in Western contexts. Some research has examined the exchanges between policy makers and interest groups[1] in non-democratic settings, but these tend to be case studies in single countries without the purpose of creating general theories of lobbying under authoritarian political regimes (e.g., Kennedy 2009; Teets 2013, 2014; Steinberg and Shih 2012). This chapter seeks to address this lacuna by asking the following: What are the information demands of policy makers 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 type of information they possess is valuable to policy makers. If not, and if groups are excluded from political decision-making procedures, they will likely not survive in the long run (Lowery 2007). At the very least, the interest group system will be severely biased in favor of organizations that do gain access to policy makers. In this chapter we thus explore whether lobbying demands differ across regime types, and which organizations therefore have a better chance of survival across different types of political systems.

More specifically, in our contribution we adopt theories of information exchange developed in democratic contexts (e.g., Bouwen 2002; Berkhout, Hanegraaff and Braun 2017) and apply these across regime types. We first conceptualize the types of information scarcities political leaders in

both democratic and autocratic regimes face. We hereby make a distinction between the content and source of information supply by interest groups. With "content" we mean what is supplied to policy makers by interest groups: technical and political information. Do leaders in autocratic countries seek both, or do they prefer one over the other? With "source" we explore whether it makes a difference who supplies information. Do policy makers in autocratic regimes value whether groups have enough resources or represent a broader coalition, or is it more important that interest groups support their policies? In this chapter we innovatively answer these questions by analyzing the content and sources of information exchanges between interest groups and policy makers from autocratic and nondemocratic regimes.

Second, we answer these questions in a comparative manner. More specifically, we compare the nature of information exchanges between policy makers across a wide range of countries to see whether there is a difference in the type and sources of information that policy makers seek or demand from interest groups. This is possible, because we asked 292 policy makers the same questions about their relations with interest groups. In this sample, gathered at global climate change and trade negotiations, there are policy makers from more than a hundred countries, including many from countries with low democratic standards. This allows us to see whether some type of information or some type of source is valued more by autocratic or democratic leaders.

Our analysis indicates, on the one hand, that autocratic leaders value political information far less than leaders in democratic systems. Thus there are limited incentives for organizations in autocratic systems to develop representative tools, such as seeking broad support in society or brokering different opinions among members. On the other hand, our analysis highlights that technical information is equally valued across democratic and autocratic states. This means that in autocratic systems, the associational sphere seems to function less as an intermediate between society and political actors—such as in most developed democratic systems—but rather as a "service bureau" (cf. Hall and Deardorff 2006; Beyers and Hanegraaff 2017) that is tolerated in the system as long as it serves to maintain the political status quo. Moreover, our study indicates that this favors the survival chances of groups with more resources and with a good reputation and political track record. Just as in democratic states, we should therefore expect similar types of biases to occur in interest group communities across autocratic states. That is, a system biased toward more resourceful groups and political insiders.

This chapter follows a four-pronged approach. First, we develop an information exchange perspective that accounts for both the information content and sources that policy makers value. Second, we evaluate the variation in information demands across political regime types when formulating research hypotheses. Third, we present our research design and, subsequently, our results. We conclude with some closing thoughts and avenues for future research.

Political and Expertise-Based Exchanges

Lobbying is often conceived of as an exchange between policy makers and organized interests, whereby the latter supply relevant information to policy makers and expect to gain access to the political arena or obtain some desired policy concession in return (Bouwen 2002; De Bruycker 2016; Hanegraaff and Berkhout 2018). These exchanges are driven by the fact that policy makers, in our case international negotiators, face considerable uncertainty in terms of what is feasible in both political and practical terms. These uncertainties create opportunities for organized interests capable of supplying the necessary expertise (Bernhagen and Bräuninger 2005). Therefore, lobbying can be conceived of as a competitive race to provide the most and the best information (i.e. reliable, research-based, relevant) in exchange for scarce policy concessions (Holyoke 2009; Stevens and De Bruycker 2020).

In this competitive race, organized interests can rely on different modes of information exchange with policy makers. We extract a distinction from the literature between (1) expertise-based and (2) political exchanges. Traditionally, exchanges by interest groups and policy makers are classified in terms of the content of these exchanges. Policy makers are often in need of technical or scientific expertise from interest organizations. Technical information as supplied by interest organizations refers to substantive expert information about the scientific aspects, the technical feasibility, or the effectiveness of a certain policy (Mahoney 2008; Bouwen 2002; 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, we argue later, to be provided by highly specialized and resourceful interest organizations (Flöthe 2019; Stevens and De Bruycker 2020).

In contrast, policy makers also often seek political information from lobbyists. 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 (see for instance 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 such as workers or the chemicals industry. The exchange of political information with opposing interest groups may put political pressure on policy makers and persuade them to change an existing policy (or keep it unchanged) such that the policy corresponds with the prevailing political views among the represented constituents.

Importantly, while the former modes of information exchange—political and expertise-based exchanges—are distilled from existing studies, we also seek to expand them by conceiving of the information demands of policy makers as broader than only the information *content* desired. Namely, we also consider the information *sources* that policy makers engage with as important subjects of appreciation. We propose two distinguishing characteristics at the level of information sources that are relevant for political exchanges. First, it is reasonable to assume that policy makers do not value the political information that is provided by different interest groups equally. We propose two cues that policy makers rely on to determine the value of an interest group to engage with in political exchanges. First, when policy makers seek political information, they are likely to value whether the information source is a single interest organization or an advocacy coalition. The political leverage of an interest organization increases when it is part of a 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 (Hojnacki 1997; Hula 1999; Klüver 2013). This makes advocacy coalitions attractive information sources for policy makers that seek to engage in political exchanges. Second, we expect that the position of an interest group determines its value as an information source in political exchanges. Policy makers aim to position themselves close to their constituencies' positions in policy debates but not too far from alternative views, to avoid deadlock in decision making. This means that although policy makers are more likely to reach out and value the position of groups with whom they share political views (Hall and Deardorff 2006), policy makers still value information from opponents to estimate the political leverage or negotiation leeway they have when striking deals. Depending on how capable opposing constituents or parties are at incentivizing or

blocking policy making, policy makers will also seek political exchanges with interest groups with different or opposing policy positions to circumvent potential political protest or constituency loss.

Similarly, expertise-based exchanges cannot be reduced to only the supply of technical information. In expertise-based exchanges, policy makers value information from credible sources that effectively and reliably collect technical and scientific expertise. We propose two cues that policy makers rely on to determine the value of an interest group to engage with in expertise-based exchanges. First, the resources that an organization possesses are a cue to estimate the capacity of interest groups to collect and process technical expertise. More resourceful organizations can rely on a greater set of trained professionals and experts dealing with highly complex dossiers in their day-to-day jobs (Dür 2008; Hall and Deardorff 2006). Lobbyists can thus distinguish themselves as credible information sources by highlighting their organizational capacities (Bernhagen 2013, 22). In addition, policy makers also seek expertise from organizations that enjoy a reputation as trustworthy interlocutors. Broader than resources, a reputation for being credible and trustworthy is especially important when interest groups engage in direct interactions with policy makers (Schlozman and Tierney 1986, 103). In these direct interactions, mostly technical information is conveyed (Beyers 2004; De Bruycker 2016). This does not mean that reputation is not important for political (or indirect) exchanges, but because of the less sophisticated and by definition positional nature of political information, we assume that political exchanges are less subject to resources and reputation requirements (Flöthe 2019). Figure 2.1 gives an overview of the two modes of information exchange and the corresponding information content and sources that policy makers value.
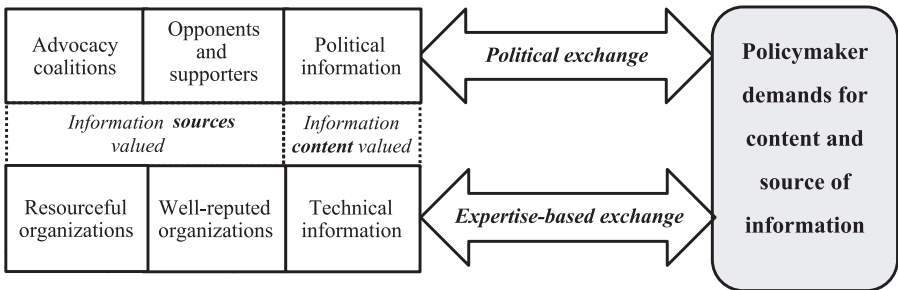
Figure 2.1. Information Demands in Political and Expertise-Based Exchanges

Explaining Information Demands across Regime Types

Drawing from these assumptions, we expect that the type of exchanges that policy makers value varies between autocratic and democratic states. Each political regime has its own procedures and rules about how state-society relations should be organized and about how information should be gathered and processed, which likely leads to different information demands. As a result, we cannot take the polity as a constant in the information exchange theory but instead need to reflect on how differences between political regimes affect information exchanges. In this chapter we explore the role of democracy: Are the content and sources valued by policy makers in information exchanges different in democratic states when compared to nondemocratic ones?

In terms of *political exchanges*, we expect a higher demand for political information by policy makers from political systems that are more accountable to the public (Lucas, Hanegraaff, and De Bruycker 2019). Policy makers stemming from such polities can be presumed to more actively gather and process the demands and grievances of both opposing and supporting constituents on a constant basis because this allows them to respond to public demands and manage the public grievances that might emerge. Not complying with or ignoring political information may result in the loss of constituency support or even electoral damage (Kollman 1998). For instance, for government delegates from the United States or France, it is crucial to have information on public opinion regarding the issues they negotiate at the global level, because their continued tenure in office depends on winning re-election. For policy makers from autocracies such as Saudi Arabia or China, such information is arguably less consequential because, absent effective electoral linkage, public opinion is less potent and more easily controlled. Nonetheless, as discussed in chapter 12 of this volume, autocratic states may still rely on political input to inform their legitimation 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). In autocratic regimes, such gathering of political information serves to foster and maintain the image of a legitimate authority, while under democracy a lack of such information will not only harm a policy maker's image but also threaten their prospect of re-election.

Moreover, while autocratic regimes often allow for some political opposition and critical media coverage for the sake of a legitimate image, these are much more constrained and orchestrated when compared to the opposition in democratic regimes (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017, 257). It is therefore likely that the outcomes of the international negotiations studied in this chapter will be discussed favorably or with restrained criticism by the opposition and mostly state controlled media in authoritarian regimes. Overall, the political acceptability of policies is less important for policy makers from authoritarian regimes when compared to their democratic counterparts. Hence the need for political exchanges is likely to be higher in democracies compared to autocracies.

This preference for political exchanges will not only result in a higher demand for political information but also implies that policy makers from more democratic regimes value information from particular information sources. First, we expect policy makers in democratic contexts to value information provided by both their opponents and supporters, whereas policy makers from less democratically accountable countries primarily seek exchanges with political allies (Lucas, Hanegraaff, and De Bruycker 2019). Democracy implies certain receptiveness to alternative or even opposing opinions (Moravcsik 2004; Inglehart and Welzel 2010). Political information from opponents is invaluable to estimate 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 polities where democracy is under pressure, advocates with opposing opinions are seen as less worthy exchange partners or even suppressed (Carothers 2006; Mahoney 2016). Nonetheless, information about political opponents might be relevant for autocratic leaders in strengthening and maintaining the legitimacy of their leadership. As documented by Dukalskis and Gerschewski (2017, 256), autocratic leaders seek to foster a passive attitude among subjects and most notably 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 policy makers from democratic states more receptive to exchange with political opponents. We expect that policy makers from autocratic states, in contrast, are relatively more prone to value information exchanges with political supporters compared with policy makers that hail from more democratic polities.

Second, as discussed above, whether interest groups mobilize in a

coalition can also make them more valuable partners in political exchanges. 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, but they are less engaged in confrontational advocacy tactics and less formally organized (Teets 2018; Zhan 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, policy makers 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 policy makers 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 the above leads us to formulate the following hypothesis regarding democracy and political exchanges:

> H1: Policy makers in autocracies have less demand for political exchanges with interest groups than do policy makers in democracies.

For *expertise-based exchanges*, however, we do not expect much of a difference between regime types. Almost all empirical studies on the information exchange between interest groups and policy makers in the Western hemisphere reveal that technical information is the most important currency in these exchanges (Chalmers 2013; Klüver 2012; Mahoney 2008). 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 (Guriev and Treisman 2019). 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). Indeed, how policy affects corporate profits, what the effect of policy is for human health, and how high tariffs should be for optimal efficiency of a sector are relevant for efficient and effective governance and hence for autocratic and democratic leaders alike.

As argued before, we see the demands that come with expertise-based exchanges as being broader than a sole preference for technical informa-

tion. Policy makers also have a demand to engage with exchange partners that are known to provide them with qualitative and reliable expertise. This is signaled by an interest group's reputation as well as by the resources it possess. Policy makers from democratic states obviously aspire to implement technically sound policies that effectively help in addressing societal problems. Technically flawed policies can lead to severe electoral losses and reputational costs. To secure the information necessary for taking the appropriate decisions, democratic leaders will prioritize engaging with resourceful and well-reputed organizations (Bernhagen 2013; Flöthe 2019; Stevens and De Bruycker 2020). This is, again, no different for policy makers from autocratic states. These policy makers 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 well-reputed and resourceful, while others—less wealthy and less-reputed players—are considered less relevant for appeasing the selectorate. Hence we expect that all leaders, irrespective of their democratic ideals, value such sources of information. The resources an interest group represents are important for the long-term prosperity of a country, which is critical for all leaders. Likewise, being a trustworthy supplier of information seems as relevant for autocratic leaders as well as for democratic ones. In other words, and in contrast to political-based exchanges, we therefore see no reason to suspect that the need for expertise-based exchanges should vary across regime types. This leads to the following hypothesis related to expertise-based exchanges:

> H2: Policy makers in autocracies have equal demand for expertise-based exchanges with interest groups as policy makers in democracies.

Research Design

To test our hypotheses, we rely on a novel dataset regarding the information demands of 297 policy makers active in the fields of trade and climate change (see Hanegraaff et al. 2015; Hanegraaff 2015a; Hanegraaff 2015b). The data were collected at seven global diplomatic conferences: the 2011

and 2012, 2015, 2016, 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 session of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (MCs) in Switzerland, Kenya, and Argentina. These venues were chosen because they are the most important decision-making fora in two key international policy fields, trade and climate change. Additionally, policies made in these areas affect a wide range of stakeholders and attract many different types of interest groups. Furthermore, both climate change and multilateral trade have clear technical components (e.g., calculating emission standards or tariffs) and political components (e.g., the effects for citizens and business organizations), which makes policy makers working in these areas in demand of both technical and political types of information. Third, both venues represent typical instances of international negotiations and policy making (Davis 2004; Narlikar 2010), which demonstrates the external validity of our results. On the one hand, decision making at these venues depends, as in most transnational negotiations, on unanimous support, and it often takes many years before any decisions are made. On the other hand, if decisions are made, they normally embody package deals in which a diverse set of interests are integrated. Finally, most interest groups active at these venues are national organizations (Hanegraaff, Braun-Poppelaars, and Beyers 2011; Hanegraaff and Poletti 2017). This makes it valid to rely on interviews with policy makers at these venues to study patterns of domestic lobbying. Given the nature of the negotiations, behind closed doors and with limited salience, the link to inside lobbying is most apparent. Given our intention with the chapter, that is, information exchanges, we are comfortable that our answers are valid estimates of such exchanges.

At these diplomatic meetings, a small team of three to four research assistants randomly asked international negotiators to participate in an interview of fifteen to thirty minutes. The respondents were asked to mention one specific issue they were working on and to report on their positions regarding this issue and the type of interactions they had with interest groups, both at home and at the conference. In total, we interviewed 292 international negotiators from 102 different countries. Their involvement spanned twelve different issues discussed at the conferences.[2] These negotiators were diplomats and civil servants such as ambassadors, consuls, or government attachés who were involved in the negotiations at the respective conferences. We have extensive empirical variation across countries in terms of their levels of democracy and development, which

perfectly aligns with the purposes of this chapter. Since policy makers are nested in countries, we have conducted multilevel regressions with random intercepts for the countries policy makers stem from.

All respondents were included in the formal national delegation of their country, with the aim of safeguarding the interests of their respective state during the negotiations at hand. This makes them eligible to answer questions about their reliance on interest groups for political and expertise-based input. Interviewing policy makers at global diplomatic conferences provides some advantages for our particular question. First, it gave us the chance to talk face-to-face to a large set of policy makers from a wide range of countries in a relatively short time span (three to ten days), which would not have been feasible if we were to visit negotiators from so many different countries. Second, the interviewed policy makers were active on similar issues in two different policy fields. This keeps much policy-specific idiosyncrasy under control, which increases the robustness of our findings. One could argue that some of the negotiators we interviewed had experience working at the international level and, as a consequence, could be socialized to some extent by the international context. But we do not see this as problematic for our argument. Namely, even under the assumption of perfect socialization to the international level, international negotiators will still have different information demands depending on the country they come from because these information demands are strongly driven by the countries' democratic and economic properties and because most information is gathered and processed in a domestic context. We therefore see socialization as a methodological advantage because it enables us to analyze the information demands of policy makers from different countries, *ceteris paribus* the political venue and social environment in which they are active.

Next we describe the variables used in the regression analyses (see also table 2.1). We relied on a set of questions for our dependent variables related to the type and sources of information they exchanged on the last issue they interacted with interest groups on. The questions are part of a broader set of questions that allowed us to gauge with whom policy makers prefer to talk and what type of information they value. The respondents could mark boxes for the following set of attributes: did they provide technical information, did they provide political information, did they represent a broader coalition, did they agree with your policy stand, did they ever provided you reliable information before, and did they have the resources to make things happen on the issue of concern. Each of the boxes serves as a dependent variable in our analysis. This means we have

TABLE 2.1. Overview of Variables Used in Chapter

Variable	Operationalization	Mean	Min	Max
Political information	Did they provide political information? 1 = yes (n = 111); 0 = no (n = 181)		0	1
Technical information	Did they provide technical information? 1 = yes (n = 188); 0 = no (n = 104)		0	1
Coalition	Did they represent a broader coalition? 1 = yes (n = 85); 0 = no (n = 207)		0	1
Support	Did they agree with your position? 1 = yes (n = 80); 0 = no (n = 212)		0	1
Resources	Did they have resources to make things happen? 1 = yes (n = 57); 0 = no (n = 235)		0	1
Reputation	Did they provide reliable information before? 1 = yes (n = 70); 0 = no (n = 220)		0	1
Democracy	Varieties of Democracy. 1 = Democracy (n = 225); 0 = Autocracy (n = 67) (see also figure 2.1)		0	1
Level of development	GDP/capita (WorldBank)		1	4
Salience	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
Economic globalization	Foreign direct investment in country (World Bank)	3.41	−0.78	28.35

six dependent variables, one each for either the type of information that is demanded (political or technical) or related to the sources of information (coalition, support, resources, and reputation).

The independent variable of interest is the democratic nature of a country. For this we rely on the Variety of Democracy "Regimes of the World" indicator (Coppedge et al. 2020). It distinguishes 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. The distribution is listed in figure 2.2. In our sample we have more democracies than autocracies. Due to the low number of closed autocratic countries in our sample, in the statistical model we make a difference between democratic countries (both liberal and electoral democracies) on the one end, and autocracies (both electoral and closed autocracies) on the other end.
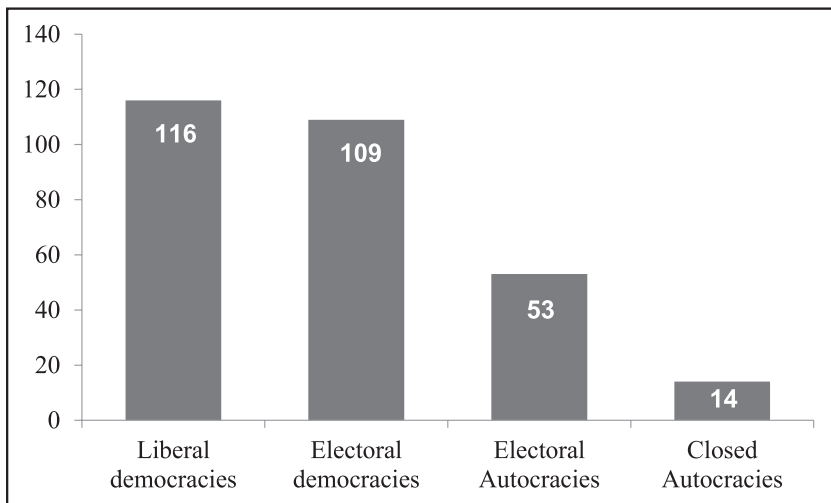
Figure 2.2. Overview of Respondents in Sample by Country's Regime Type
Note: N = 292. Regime type is based on Varieties of Democracy indicator. In the statistical analysis we merge the two autocratic regimes and the two democratic regimes. In total there are 102 unique countries.

We also included a set of control variables. First, we control for the level of development based on a country's GDP per capita (retrieved from the World Bank classification system). Second, we control for the salience of an issue in a country. (The question asked: "How much attention from the media and the public does this issue attract in your country?" The scale is from 1 to 3.) We expect that on issues that gain a lot of media attention, political information becomes more important for negotiators. Third, we control for the type of policy maker, being an elected official, a diplomat, a civil servant, or other (such as working for a specialized agency). We asked each of the respondents what their function was. It could very well be that elected officials value political information more than the policy makers who are not held accountable at the ballot box, such as civil servants. Finally, we control for the economic globalization of a country. It may very well be that countries that are more economically globalized have a higher need for technical information. We rely on the common indicator for this, which is the total foreign direct investment in a country.

Results

What explains variation in autocrats' demand for expertise or political exchanges as provided by interest groups? To answer this question, we run regressions for each of the six dependent variables described above: three related to expertise-based exchanges and three for political exchanges. As these are all measured on a dichotomous scale based on whether the respondents mentioned an attribute as important when interacting with interest groups or not, we rely on binary logit regressions. Furthermore, the regression analyses include random intercepts for each country to control for potential clustered effects related to countries.

What do we find? We start with explaining the political-based exchanges between negotiators and interest groups (see table 2.2). First, we see that regime type has a positive and significant effect on the need for political information. Not complying with or ignoring political information is not an option in democratic countries because it leads to a loss of constituency support and, in the long run, to electoral damage (Kollman 1998; Schattschneider 1960). The reverse is true for delegates who hail from autocratic countries for whom public opinion is easier to control, and therefore such information is less valuable to policy makers.

Second, we find a positive relationship between the demand to exchange with broad coalitions and regime type of a country, meaning that in democratic countries there is a higher demand for exchanges with broad lobby coalitions than there is in autocratic countries. Indeed, 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 (Hojnacki 1997; Hula 1999; Klüver 2013). The data clearly show that policy makers from autocratic countries, as hypothesized, are less likely to put much value on the strength of coalitions.

Third, we find, as expected, a positive relationship between the level of agreement among negotiators and interest groups and the democratic nature of the respondent's country of origin, which means that policy makers from autocratic states are relatively more prone to value information exchanges with political allies than are policy makers who hail from democratic polities. As argued, democracy implies certain receptiveness to alternative or even opposing opinions (Moravcsik 2004; Carothers 2006; Mahoney 2016). The results show that political information from opponents in democratic systems is indeed invaluable because it informs policy makers about whether they should take stock of potential protest or opposition and whether and how electoral retribution can be circum-

TABLE 2.2. Demand for Politically Driven Exchanges by Level of Democratic Accountability

	Political Information		Coalition		Support	
	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S.E.
Democracy	0.763**	(0.309)	1.001***	(0.452)	−0.770**	(0.322)
Salience						
High	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Medium	−0.171	(0.662)	−0.016	(0.234)	0.154	(0.283)
Low	−0.665*	(0.368)	−0.266**	(0.121)	−0.704**	(0.295)
Function						
Politician	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Diplomat	−0.684	(0.672)	0.464	(0.619)	−0.217	(0.544)
Civil servant	−0.274	(0.565)	0.125	(0.555)	−0.106	(0.491)
Other	−0.763	(0.754)	0.118	(0.712)	−0.204	(0.611)
Level of development	0.074	(0.103)	0.022	(0.111)	0.022	(0.090)
Economic globalization	−0.097	(0.076)	0.205***	(0.062)	−0.055	(0.050)

Diagnostics

Constant	−1.304	(0.624)	−1.618***	(0.630)	−0.693***	(0.521)
Country level intercept	0.000	(0.000)	0.444	(0.415)	0.000	(0.000)
Log-likelihood	−110.566		−162.98		−165.73	
N	292		292		292	
Countries	102		102		102	

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

vented. The opposite is true when democracy is under pressure. In these systems, the fear of electoral retribution is less problematic, and hence the need to be informed about potential conflicts among interest groups and their constituents becomes less important.

In explaining political exchanges between interest groups and policy makers, we can thus conclude—in line with hypothesis 1—that the democratic nature of a country increases the willingness of its policy makers to listen to the demands of societal constituencies and public opinion. Although lobbying in Western contexts is often seen as hindering or bypassing democratic representation, our findings show that in such democratically accountable countries, interest groups can play a vital role in elucidating public pressures and demands to policy delegates. The opposite can be said for groups active in autocracies. Interest groups giving a voice to opponents or dissidents among citizens and civil society are less important actors to policy makers from these countries. Overall, we thus find much support for the assertion that the democratic nature of a country leads to more demand by negotiators for political exchanges.

In the second part of the empirical analysis, we seek to explain expertise-based exchanges between policy makers and interest groups. The results are presented in Table 2.3. They differ markedly from the results for political-based exchanges across countries. For starters, for technical information we observe no relationship between the level of democracy in a country and the demand for technical expertise. This finding is important because it means that policy makers in autocracies interact with interest groups to acquire technical information to a similar extent as we are used to seeing in democratic systems. The same can be said about the sources of information. Both the resources groups have at their disposal and the reputation of groups does not affect who policy makers reach out to across countries with varying levels of democracy. To put it simply: autocrats value resourceful and trustworthy lobbyists just as much as democratic states do, which highlights the universal nature of these exchange goods for interest groups.

Combined, these results highlight that there is no (statistical) difference in both the content and the type of sources of expertise-based

TABLE 2.3. Demand for Expertise-Driven Exchanges by Level of Democratic Accountability

	Technical information		Resources		Reputation	
	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S. E.	Coef.	S.E.
Democracy	0.482	(0.401)	−0.763	(0.440)	0.463	(0.343)
Salience						
High	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Medium	0.422	(0.365)	−0.145	(0.319)	0.302	(0.315)
Low	−0.557	(0.668)	−0.671	(0.538)	1.086**	(0.417)
Function						
Politician	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Diplomat	1.150	(0.818)	−0.432	(0.651)	−0.376	(0.566)
Civil servant	0.653	(0.781)	0.135	(0.546)	−0.353	(0.497)
Other	0.618	(0.893)	0.337	(0.677)	−0.033	(0.607)
Level of development	−0.124**	(0.036)	−0.040*	(0.021)	−0.116	(0.135)
Economic globalization	−0.006	(0.061)	−0.074	(0.066)	−0.125**	(0.063)

Diagnostics

Constant	−2.747	(0.823)	−0.980*	(0.552)	−0.842***	(0.549)
Country level intercept	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
Log-Likelihood	−114.50		−139.56		−153.61	
N	292		292		292	
Countries	102		102		102	

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

exchanges across leaders in states with different democratic institutions. It seems that these traits are universally attractive to policy makers, irrespective of the regime type in which state leaders and officials operate: they all rely on groups to provide them with technical expertise, and they prefer to get this from resourceful and reputable interest groups. Overall, this is in line with our second hypothesis: expertise-based exchanges are equally important in democratic and autocratic states.

Conclusion

The information exchange perspective is one of the most dominant theories in interest group scholarship. Most studies so far have addressed the supply of interest groups in information exchanges with policy makers (see for instance Klüver 2013; Broscheid and Coen 2007; Chalmers 2013; Beyers and Hanegraaff 2017; Hanegraaff, Vergauwen, and Beyers 2020). Our chapter contributed to this literature by focusing on the policy makers' side of information exchanges and explored variation in the information demands of policy makers across democratic and autocratic countries in their exchanges with interest groups. Our findings highlight that, first, our notion of politically driven exchanges is valid and can adequately be explained by regime type indicators of countries that policy makers come from. Specifically, 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 are policy makers from autocratic countries. This has important implications for the mobilization and survival prospects of organizations that seek to function as intermediates between citizens and policy makers in less democratic states. Under autocracy, such organizations will face much higher obstacles for collective action and likely be outcompeted by groups that seek to support the status quo or those that provide technical information. As a result of this there will likely be fewer groups making representative claims on behalf of a constituency, and these groups will tend to be smaller and more informal in nature. As a result, the inclusion of civil society in political decision-making procedures may not enhance representation at the aggregate level, but might serve more to help autocratic leaders foster an image of legitimate rule making. For instance, it may help such leaders create an image of openness and responsiveness to citizens, and bolster their legitimation

claims surrounding democratic procedures and inclusiveness, something that is further explored in chapter 12 of this volume.

Second, our notion of expertise-based exchanges also proved valuable, yet in this case to highlight how such information exchanges are much more universal. Even leaders in autocratic states need interest groups to provide them the necessary expertise to run their country and make policy decisions. They thus share some important similarities in their relation to interest groups with leaders from democratic nations. An important consequence of this finding is that interest group systems in autocracies will likely exhibit similar biases toward groups better able to provide such information. This includes groups with more resources (such as business groups), but also political insiders with a good reputation and track record. An elitist and status quo bias thus seems to be a universal trait of interest group systems.

These results have several broader consequences for current scholarly and normative debates. First, the analysis showed that the information exchange model is applicable beyond developed democracies and demonstrated that although the exchange perspective travels well from one polity to another, informational demands also vary across polities (see also Braun 2012). Other comparative interest group studies, analyzing and comparing different polities, should take stock of the different informational commodities valued in more or less democratically accountable countries. Nonetheless, there is much more room for future studies to extend our framework, especially regarding the relation between institutional characteristics, issue characteristics, and influence production. For instance, is the demand for political information higher in competitive autocracies compared to hegemonic ones? How do the structure of the economy or state capacity affect the demand for technical information? Some of this is explored in the next chapter of this volume, specifically how different policy areas relate to differential information demands and social control needs.

Second, our findings are also important for the scholarship on advocacy in a global or a non-Western context (see Tallberg et al. 2015; Berkhout and Hanegraaff 2019). As for many entries of this edited volume, we have seen that lobbying is not radically different in autocratic states, and many similarities exist. Most importantly, the need for technical information is high in autocratic states, just as it is in democratic states. Moreover, the differences we do observe can be explained, at least to some degree, with the same theoretical toolkit that has been abundantly applied to Western states. That is, from a resource-exchange perspective it makes

perfect sense that the need for political-based expertise is lower in countries where policy makers are not entirely dependent on electoral support. From this point of view, it seems perfectly logical that we expand our empirical scope to include a wider set of countries in our analysis. Especially in a world that is rapidly becoming more economically and socially intertwined and in which democracy is in retreat globally.

NOTES

1. We rely on the broad and functional definition of interest groups discussed in chapter 1, that is, organizations that seek political influence but have no intention of holding office (Beyers, Eising, and Maloney 2008). This definition can include organizations such as business associations, NGOs, labor unions, and firms.

2. This includes a broad variety of issues, albeit mostly related to global trade and environmental policies (see Lucas, Hanegraaff, and De Bruycker 2019). For the UNFCCC these are: climate finance: who should contribute? degrees-goal; NDCs: annex or COP decision?; MRV: strength of compliance (developing); MRV: strength of compliance (developed); NDCs: commitment period and assessment; loss and damage: finance mechanism; loss and damage: funding; NDCs: guidance; adaptation fund; transparency framework; gender action plan; adaptation communication. For the WTO these are: GATS negotiations; TiSA negotiations; export subsidies in agriculture; export subsidies in agriculture: marketing and internal transportation subsidies; agriculture: pillars; cotton; nonagricultural market access (NAMA); special safeguard mechanism on agriculture; future of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA); public stockholding in agriculture; public stockholding: conditions; fisheries; e-commerce; e-commerce: who should negotiate; investment facilitation; investment facilitation: who should negotiate; trade facilitation agreement on services.

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3 | Between Pressure and Patronage

Navigating Legitimacy and No-Go Issues in Montenegro

Sanja Hajdinjak

In democracies, civil society (Newton 2001) and the media (Whitten-Woodring 2009) exercise vigilance over political elites and, when needed, act as catalysts of collective action to ensure that adopted policies align with broader societal interests (Olson 1965). Past work has argued that membership in other types of horizontal associations, like expert groups, boosts social capital and improves governance (Putnam 1995), rendering interest groups crucial for the functioning of democracies (Beyers, Eising, and Maloney 2008). When ideas advocated by citizens' initiatives resonate with public opinion, democracies tend to apply integrative strategies in dealing with the challengers (Kriesi 1996).

While interest representation is relatively well understood in the context of liberal democracies, we know little about how interest groups[1] and citizens' initiatives[2] lobby to affect the policy-making process in hybrid regimes.[3] Much work on advocacy under authoritarianism focuses on individual groups or on highly sensitive policy topics, such as human rights, while there is a dearth of research examining how the state manages group formation in and pressure coming from groups in more innocuous policy areas, and how this affects groups' chances at substantive policy successes.[4] Contributing to this literature, this chapter focuses on Montenegro as a case study. Specifically, I study policy advocacy in the country's environmental protection and tourism sectors.

A small southeastern European country, Montenegro has seen tremendous economic and political progress since it became independent in 2006. According to the Varieties of Democracy Liberal Democracy indi-

cator, with its score below 0.4, the country's regime is not fully democratic, but a hybrid one (Coppedge et al. 2020; Freedom House 2020). In this chapter, I refer to the Montenegrin regime as a dominant party regime,[5] meaning that unlike in single-party regimes that prevent opposition parties from participating in elections, opposition is permitted to compete in multiparty elections, but the alternation of political power is usually not allowed (Magaloni and Kricheli 2010). Specifically, in Montenegro, national electoral competition has been very skewed: up to 2020, the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) has won every national-level election since democracy was formally introduced in the early 1990s.[6]

These regime characteristics have consequences for the advocacy groups I study. Smear campaigns have targeted Montenegrin NGOs, and their most critical members have faced persecution, undermining their image and influence in society. Citizens are largely apathetic about the prevalence of corruption in high-level politics, and the number of citizens' initiatives is low (Bisogno et al. 2011). Even though government-critical media outlets are allowed, reporters investigating the hybrid nature of the regime are regularly slandered and even physically attacked with impunity (Freedom House 2013).[7]

An important characteristic of the Montenegrin economy is its dependence on tourism, with 24 percent of Montenegro's national GDP attributed to this sector (WTTC 2018). Therefore, protection of cultural and natural heritage should be important for economic stability. Tourism, however, also provides the government with resources to sustain the patronage basis of the regime through lucrative deals for the supporters and members of the dominant party, oftentimes at considerable cost to the environment or the public interest. As a result, many of the country's advocacy groups focus on exposing shady tourism deals and lobby for the implementation of existing legislation, which political elites tend to creatively disregard. Considering the importance of the tourism sector (and therefore a clean, preserved environment) for the Montenegrin economy, focusing on this policy area generates insight into the dynamics of lobbying autocratic rentier states. It also elucidates the unique opportunities that advocacy groups carve out to affect decision making in such a context.

Through this analysis, I find that a degree of mobilization and pressure on the political leadership are necessary to force policy issues onto the political agenda. In line with the findings of the preceding chapter of this volume, I find that better-organized NGOs and expert groups, with more personnel and expertise, can offer better policy advice and ensure a higher degree of mobilization, which is therefore more likely to become sustain-

able, garner public attention, and serve as a backbone for the organization of the citizens' initiatives. But even the best-organized groups cannot hope to influence policy output if they fail to expand the conflict to broader publics. Crucially, group mobilization relies on pre-existing grievances and public dissatisfaction, driving citizens toward either NGOs or citizens' initiatives. A modicum of critical media, able to supply independent information to the public, is also a crucial condition for successful mobilization campaigns. Furthermore, successful policy lobbying is positively correlated with external pressure as Montenegro attempts to further its EU membership aspiration and, therefore, provides the EU with strong policy lobbying leverage. These mechanisms correspond well to those known from interest group studies in liberal democracies.

I also find, however, that in the Montenegrin dominant party regime, policy topics that endanger the political and economic interests of the incumbents are policy lobbying no-gos. These topics are not fixed, but rather change as the interests of the incumbents do. The likelihood of policy lobbying success consequently also varies by policy topic and the level of group mobilization. Nevertheless, in no-go policy areas, mobilization may be comparatively strong but ultimately ineffective. These findings imply that policy lobbying can, even if not common, be successful in hybrid regimes if there is sufficient public pressure and the issue at hand does not represent a threat to the regime patronage network.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I provide an overview of the theoretical assumptions regarding policy lobbying in democracies and formulate expectations regarding their translation into a hybrid regime context. Second, to familiarize the audience with the case study, I introduce Montenegro as a dominant party regime. Third, I map out the Montenegrin landscape of interest groups and citizens' initiatives by focusing on the regulatory framework, resources, expertise, and strategies for survival in a dominant party regime. The fourth section focuses on analysis. The final section summarizes the most important findings.

Mechanisms of Influence

In this section, I discuss literature on lobbying in democracies and on the conditions under which advocates are more likely to succeed in their efforts. Specifically, I focus on the stage of group mobilization and how it links to the likelihood of ensuring policy lobbying success. I then elaborate on how autocracies differ from democracies concerning the context

in which advocacy groups form and lobby and the conditions under which their policy influencing can be successful.

In democracies, NGOs are well-recognized for their role as facilitators of collective action; such groups combine expertise and can bring together relevant stakeholders (Newton 2001). NGOs also tend to be better positioned than individual citizens to file lawsuits; they understand the legal language and framework and have the experience to initiate and circulate petitions for the annulment of laws. Expert groups, such as unions and professional associations, provide field-specific knowledge and convey group interests to political decision makers (Lowery and Brasher 2011). The extensive literature on lobbying in democracies suggests that the ability to influence policies depends on interest groups' resources, including funding, personnel, and experience (Dür and De Bievre 2007), and, crucially, the ability to mobilize the public (Dür and Mateo 2014; Smith 2000) in order to place an issue on the agenda (Kingdon 2003).

In turn, the ability of citizens to mobilize and organize in support of policy change is riddled with collective-action problems (Ostrom 2011; Olson 1965). Selective incentives and resonant collective action frames may be necessary to overcome free-riding and other issues (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Snow and Benford 1988). Scholarship on collective political action has also emphasized the importance of grievances or relative deprivation for motivating people to agitate together for change (Klandermans, Roefs, and Olivier 2001). Individuals—however aggrieved they may be— also need to feel that their actions can make a difference and believe in the likely success of a group in order to act collectively (e.g., Finkel, Muller, and Opp 1989).

But in principle, in societies where citizens believe that things can change and where political trust is comparatively high, the collective-action problem is surmountable. Citizens actively participate in political life and organize into citizens' initiatives to resolve issues (Rothstein and Varraich 2017).

Taken-for-granted conditions for this scenario are uncensored media and plural sources of information to act as watchdogs against the misuse of power and violations of public interest (Pfetsch and Esser 2013). If the free formation of preferences exists—no censorship of the media—NGOs can inform the public about unlawful activities, and citizens' initiatives can garner attention for their offerings (Keck and Sikkink 1998), thereby pressuring political representatives and creating a political opportunity to influence policy making and implementation.

In an autocratic setting, however, informal interest groups with clan,

family, or patronage links to the ruling elites might be more able to influence policy making than formal, organized groups, such as NGOs or registered lobbyists. Not only are NGOs and lobbyists often negatively portrayed as being controlled by foreign powers, but government officials also perceive cooperating with interest groups as harmful for their image of political power. Due to the lack of electoral and rule-of-law checks, the public in autocracies is more likely to perceive such cooperation as an imposition of private or foreign interest over the domestic, public interest (Fink-Hafner and Thomas 2019).

Advocacy groups in autocracies face stronger difficulties in overcoming collective action problems since their (and their families') safety, property, and working places might be compromised if their loyalty to the political regime is questioned (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). Insufficient access to information that would enable the citizens to attempt to hold their political leaders accountable also frequently plagues electoral autocracies (Schedler 2002). Even if civil society has the necessary expertise to formulate policy advice, it cannot rely on the media to inform the public about the misuse of public resources and to create pressure on the government. Similarly, autocracies have closed structures of access to the political system (Eisinger 1973) and provide less opportunity for investigative journalists critical of the political leadership (Stier 2015). In autocracies with some incumbent-critical media, I expect that their role in publishing information on advocacy groups' efforts will be crucial for the success of policy lobbying. Overall, and similar to democracies, it can be presumed that more resourceful groups and those with the ability to mobilize pressure on the political leadership to place issues on the political agenda would also be more successful in influencing policy making and output in autocracies.

Electoral autocracies also resemble democracies in their quest for legitimacy, often ensured through a semblance of governance reforms and a focus on economic performance (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). The focus on the economy opens up space for policy lobbying, so autocrats can cherry-pick advice and strategies to improve their economic performance while refraining from making democratic claims (Spires 2011). Beyond economic performance, autocracies also resemble democracies by seeking procedural legitimacy: common approaches include staging electoral campaigns, introducing anticorruption reforms, and allowing a modicum of civil society and media freedoms. This applies particularly to cases in which international approval provides benefits such as membership in international organizations and aid. Following this argument, I argue that

external pressure can open up space for policy lobbying. I expect that autocrats would be willing to adopt policy advice that can improve their economic performance and international reputation without harming the interest of the incumbents.

This is, naturally, also possible in democracies. In autocracies, however, policy influence is limited to those policies that do not directly endanger the dominant party regime. The survival of the regime is of utmost importance, so policy influencing occurs only with issues that do not threaten the power and benefit the status quo. This contrasts with sensitive policy areas that are central to regime maintenance, what I term "no-go" policy issues. Here the formation and operation of advocacy groups will not necessarily be repressed in the mobilization phase but will ultimately be rendered ineffective through political machinations. Since regimes can be sustained in different ways, it is important to note that there is no universal way to define issues as threatening vs. nonthreatening for autocracies. In dominant party regimes, the party elites and their network are supplied with jobs, privileged access to tenders, and special benefits, ensuring political support and obedience (Brooker 2017). As a result, the leadership would attempt to adopt only policies that do not harm the rentier class. This can be done in various ways. For example, currying favor with an important investor and turning a blind eye to some regulations can be very profitable for the political leadership, rendering advocacy groups' efforts to influence policies in this area prohibitively expensive. Specific policies do not, however, endanger all autocracies equally. Therefore, I expect policy lobbying to be ineffective when and where it tackles the foundations of a spoils system.

How do these assumptions regarding no-go policy issues apply to issues of environmental sustainability and the tourism sector? In some economies, reliance on tourism can become so prevalent that rents from the use of natural and cultural resources create distortions in the economy, and tourism deals represent an important source of patronage, thus creating pressure on the political leadership to distribute valuable resources (Richter and Steiner 2007). Due to the secretive nature of patronage deals, such cases can be difficult to recognize and classify appropriately. In comparative perspective, it can further be assumed that such "nonnegotiable" issues will be fewer the more democratic a country is.

To summarize, I expect, all else being equal, that mobilization occurs more readily around policy topics where grievances create a climate for discontent and public pressure. In addition, policy topics that do not endanger political and economic patronage interests of the incumbents

are more open to influence production, while no-go topics are not. I hypothesize, however, that these no-go topics are not "fixed," but rather vary with the incumbent's interests. The prevalence of patronage in a rentier state context translates into few policy areas that are not regime-threatening. Therefore, I expect successful group mobilization to be the exception rather than the norm. Consequently, I expect substantive policy successes to be unlikely. For topics that are seen as nonthreatening to the regime, media coverage is essential for creating domestic and external pressure on the political elites and getting the topic on the political agenda. Finally, group ecologies matter, but only as much as they correlate with better identification of problems, support in organizing citizens' initiatives, and, therefore, stronger pressure on the political leadership.

Research Design

I test the previously outlined expectations using the case of Montenegro. Specifically, I study the lobbying efforts of advocacy groups in two distinct policy areas: environmental protection and tourism. My analytical strategy is twofold. First, I assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms behind lobbying a natural resource protection case, here the Tara riverbed, in two phases. In the first phase, when lobbying was initially successful, and in a second phase, when it was not. Second, I examine two tourism projects, where I investigate how NGO information politics engagement can result in successful policy lobbying (Valdanos Bay), or in a failure when combined with strong public pressure, but focusing on a no-go policy issue (Mamula Fortress). A two-by-two contingency representation of the argument is outlined in table 3.1.

The case studies are situated in Montenegro, a small, Balkan, coastal country in southeastern Europe inhabited by 660,000 people. Following a referendum, it became independent in 2006. Between the introduction of a multiparty system in 1991 and 2020, the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS)—the communist party successor—won every parliamentary and presidential election held in Montenegro, except in 2020.[8] As a result of the lengthy dominance of the DPS, there was a lack of boundaries between the ruling party and the state (Morrison 2011). Privatization cases and large-scale investments in the Montenegrin economy often generated controversy as the final deals, the details of which were unavailable to the public, were allegedly made privately between the DPS leadership and the investors. Friends and relatives of the DPS leadership had their own com-

TABLE 3.1. Grievances, Patronage Interests, Mobilization and Policy Lobbying of Advocacy Groups

		Success in Lobbying	
		No	*Yes*
Grievances	*High*	Strong mobilization *Mamula Fortress*	Very strong mobilization *Tara Powerplant*
	Low	Weak mobilization *Tara Highway*	Weak mobilization *Valdanos Bay*
		Yes	*No*
		Patronage Interests	

panies or important political functions, rendering policy making a function of DPS interests.[9]

Considering the hybrid nature of the regime, it is important to note Montenegro has EU aspirations, which affects the engagement of interest groups. As a result of the accession leverage, the EU has a strong influence on Montenegrin domestic and foreign affairs. Nevertheless, the progress in adopting the EU legal framework has been uneven. Corruption, skewed electoral competition, organized crime, and environmental regulation remain the most often quoted obstacles to Montenegrin EU accession (European Commission 2019). Despite EU pressure, little progress has been made in any of these areas. Between 2013 and 2018 only 19 percent of all grand corruption court cases were penalized and only one case includes DPS elites (MANS 2020).

Environmental sustainability represents a paradox: Montenegro, by its constitution, is an "environmental state" (Parliament of Montenegro 2007). This is oftentimes brought up in official documents, development programs, and in the executive political communication and public discourse. In addition, Montenegro relies heavily on tourism, where it banks on the preserved nature and richness of cultural heritage. This should incentivize the adoption of policies that would ensure environmental protection, but the political leadership continuously ignores environmental problems stemming from the energy and construction sectors (Zanoni 2011; Milovac and Mrdović 2012).

Advocacy Group Landscape in Montenegro

Before initiating the analysis, I provide a basic outline of the interest groups and citizens' initiatives landscape relevant for the fields of environment protection and spatial planning by focusing on the legal framework, resources, tactics, and fields of expertise and engagement.

NGOs and Expert Groups

The NGO sector started to develop in the 1990s, after the formal introduction of democracy. Trade unions, chambers of commerce, and students' associations, however, existed already in socialist Montenegro (Cekik 2015). Since 2011, the Law on NGOs (2011) regulates two forms of NGOs: associations and foundations. According to the register of the Ministry of Inner Affairs, there are almost 5,000 registered NGOs: 4,500 associations, 174 foundations, and 11 branch offices of foreign NGOs (2020). NGOs are small in terms of personnel and funding. On average they have five employees, and 40 percent declare annual income lower than EUR 10,000. Many of the NGOs use state or municipally owned office space and have at their disposal some state funds (Stojanović 2018), even though funding allocation is considered nontransparent and biased according to political criteria (Abdullaev et al. 2016). Foreign donor funding (as the main source of funding for the NGOs) has been in decline since the early 2000s (USAID 2012). The legal environment for the functioning of NGOs is strengthened by five pieces of secondary legislation aimed at implementing the Law on NGOs, a Strategy for Improving the Incentive Environment for NGOs 2018–2020, and the Action Plan (European Western Balkans 2020). Despite the well-developed regulatory framework, the members of those NGOs that are critical of the government face challenges in their engagement.

Due to EU accession leverage, civil society has been granted more opportunities to be included, at least formally, in consultations on the regulatory framework (European Commission 2019; European Western Balkans 2020). The government went a step further than candidate countries in previous enlargement rounds and enthusiastically ensured places for NGOs in the negotiation working groups. But real cooperation has not emerged, except in those cases when such an arrangement suited the government (USAID 2012).[10] NGO leaders contend that their participation has been aimed at ensuring external legitimacy; in reality their representa-

tives were denied even the most basic information and their suggestions have routinely been ignored (MANS 2020).

The coexistence of the hybrid regime and the interest groups is possible in two ways. On the one hand, to protect against repression, groups critical of incumbents inform foreign embassies and international institutions of threats against them, relying on the government's need for external legitimacy to protect themselves (PCNEN 2004). On the other hand, NGOs that address societal needs while refraining from criticizing incumbents can operate without threats against their work (Stojanović 2018).

When discussing the Montenegrin NGO landscape focusing on patronage and environmental sustainability, one NGO is particularly prominent: The NGO MANS[11] is well resourced (eighteen employees) and organized (research, legal, logistic, and administrative teams as well as a strong web presence). The group's work includes investigating malfeasance, making information regarding violations of law publicly available in media and on their website, as well as filing criminal charges against the individuals who violate Montenegrin laws. Initially, the organization focused on electoral (MANS 2015) and rule-of-law violations (MANS 2008), but toward the 2010s, it branched out to include environmental cases and urban development (MANS 2010, 2009). To be more specific, MANS analyzed problematic aspects of more than a dozen tourism projects and published detailed descriptions explaining breaches of the Montenegrin legislation.

Other NGOs and expert groups focus on the rule of law and environmental protection but attempt to gently influence policy making by organizing lectures, exhibitions, and preparing publications on topics of public interest while avoiding confrontation with the incumbents. Expeditio, Green Home, and KANA include policy experts actively dealing with issues of spatial planning and urbanization in Montenegro. Their engagement includes publishing about sustainable spatial planning and organizing lectures on the effects of large investment projects on the landscape (NGO Green Home and Expeditio 2012). KANA[12] is a particularly important defender of public space and natural resources. Their work includes the organization of public demonstrations, such as protests against the misuse of public space and devastation of architectural heritage (Rajković 2015). There are cases in which experts find it necessary to openly criticize the unsustainable use of land and cultural heritage (Vijesti 2016; CGO 2013; Kalezić 2012, 2014). Finally, members of some of the NGOs are in the incumbent party, and their family members are in the executive branch. They therefore do not seek to criticize the regime (Stojanović 2018).

Citizens' Initiatives

Corruption and patronage are widely accepted among citizens as the inevitable parts of life in Montenegro. Citizens lack belief in political change, making the fight against regime pathologies and protection of the environment through collective action unlikely. Only 9 percent of the Montenegrin population has participated or is currently involved in any type of group activity (Komar et al. 2015). Citizens' initiatives in tourism and urbanism (of particular interest for this chapter), focusing on patronage and protection of natural resources, have been relatively rare, weak, and underorganized (Hajdinjak 2017). To this date, the protection of the Tara riverbed (described in more detail in the following section) is the largest, most encompassing, and the only successful example of citizens' initiative policy lobbying.

The costs of criticizing incumbents and mobilizing against it are high, and citizens are reluctant to organize against political leadership (Anderson et al. 2005). As incumbents have control over the judiciary, access to public employment, state-sponsored benefits, and contracting of public works, an individual critical of the regime could be punished economically (by being excluded from state-sponsored benefits) and in terms of safety (Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Wright 2020). The payoff is not so good either. Representatives of the citizens' initiatives are included in policy making only when pressure on the political leadership increases so much that it becomes harmful for the incumbents to ignore it.

Analysis: Influencing Natural Resource Use

When discussing factors that influence success in policy lobbying, I hypothesize that, as in democracies, grievances facilitate mobilization and public pressure on the political leadership, which are both crucial for successful policy influence. Specific to hybrid regimes, though, I suggest that incumbents' patronage interests foreclose lobbying success on certain no-go issues. Focusing on natural resource protection and tourism projects, I test whether this is the case in Montenegro as a dominant party regime. A tabular summary of the cases is available in appendix A. In the following section I discuss the cases of Tara riverbed protection initiatives in 2004 and 2020.

Tara Riverbed Protection

Owing to its high flora and fauna biodiversity, the Tara river canyon is on the UNESCO's list of the "Man and Biosphere" protected areas. NGOs and expert groups' efforts to protect the river Tara from environmental destruction have a two-decade-long history in Montenegro and show how lobbying on natural habitat protection led to two divergent results. Both cases focused on the protection of Tara. The first one (Tara Powerplant) featured successful and sustained mobilization, which resulted in a substantive policy win. The second episode (Tara Highway) lacked larger public mobilization and arguably evolved around a project that provided benefits for the patronage network, rendering it a policy no-go issue.

The powerplant episode began in the early 2000s, when the riverbed was threatened by the government's energy strategy that envisioned the development of the Buk Bijela hydro power plant facility and flooding of the Tara canyon (Kujundzic 2012). In 2004, NGOs and expert groups organized protests against the flooding and created a petition calling for formal protection of the river Tara. Their ability to mobilize public attention was a result of media coverage (both foreign and domestic) and their capacity to provide the necessary information to all interested individuals, media, and groups (Stevović 2005). Domestic groups organized protests, informed the public, and alarmed the international organizations, whose attention to the issues created additional pressure on the political leadership. The issue being one of broad interest, the petition was signed by more than ten thousand citizens, a legal requirement to initiate a parliamentary procedure in Montenegro. Because of the immense pressure, the Montenegrin Parliament adopted the Declaration on the Protection of the Tara River, and DPS's coalition partner Social Democratic Party of Montenegro (SDP) sided with the opposition, creating a new majority in favor of the Declaration (Kujundzic 2012). The collective efforts to protect Tara were frequently emphasized by NGOs and expert groups as an example of successful policy influencing in Montenegro (Krcić 2015).

A more recent cycle of environmental lobbying against the continuous ecological devastation incurred through the construction of the Bar-Boljare highway was less successful in attracting members, funding, and public attention. Plans for the project, funded through a one-billion-dollar loan by the Chinese government and connecting the north and south of Montenegro, included 165 km of roads, 48 tunnels, and 107 bridges and viaducts. In addition to skepticism regarding the financial sustainability of the highway (Mardell 2019),[13] the investment contract specified that China

could seize Montenegrin territory in the event of a default on the loan (Higgins 2021).

Six environmental NGOs have filed criminal charges against the relevant ministries, inspectorate, and the Chinese contractor for the devastation of the Tara riverbed with waste construction material and changes to the river flow (MANS 2019c). The impact of the highway construction was internationalized through the NGOs' campaign (MANS 2019b), and the European Commission and UNESCO both issued warnings that waste disposal and changes of the Tara riverbed were to be stopped immediately. Reports from the field, however, suggest that the described harmful practices continued (MANS 2019a).

In short, while the power plant episode resulted in a sustained and successful mobilization, the highway campaigns did not draw in significant public support. Two explanations of these divergent outcomes in protecting Tara as a biodiversity site are possible. I suggest that the highway construction, which endangered the Tara riverbed in 2019, represents a higher political priority for the incumbents than the planned development of the Buk Bijela hydropower plant. First, the construction of the highway has been referenced as a project of strategic importance for integrating the northern part of Montenegro with the coast and the remainder of the country. Second, the terms of the investment contract specify that at least one-third of works must be allocated to local contractors, providing an outstanding opportunity to ensure political patronage (Mardell 2019). Seemingly supporting this argument, according to MANS, $280 million went to a construction company alleged to have close ties to the political elites that have originally made the contract (MANS 2018).

But another explanation is possible. Despite the media attention, external pressure, and the efforts of well-resourced and capacitated NGOs and expert groups, the efforts to prevent the highway-related devastation of Tara canyon has not captured public attention. While some Montenegrins think the project will devastate Tara and likely bankrupt Montenegro, for others, especially those from the country's northern areas, the highway is an important means of development (Mardell 2019). As a result, efforts to mobilize larger public pressure on the political leadership, which had been crucial for putting the protection of Tara on the political agenda in 2004, fell short. This suggests that at the early stage of influence production, objective grievances are an important conditioning factor for a lobbying campaign's success. Even selective incentives and shrewd organizing cannot compensate for the absence of strong grievances, making it difficult for advocacy groups to attract members and public attention. Further-

more, while mobilization could still occur on topics affecting key patronage interests of the regime, policy success will be unlikely.

Lobbying in the Tourism Sector: The Valdanos and Mamula Cases

To further explore the extent to which grievances and policy red lines affect the mobilization of interests, I analyze two tourism cases, Valdanos Bay and Mamula Fortress. The Tourism Projects Dataset (Hajdinjak 2017), listing all strategic tourism investments in Montenegro, shows that out of seventy-one projects, NGOs lobbied for project modifications in eleven cases. Their engagement conclusively pressured the political leadership against implementing only one of those projects: Valdanos Bay. Based on publicly available indications, the misuse of function and patronage were present in all eleven cases. The case of Valdanos, therefore, suggests that NGOs can, under certain conditions, successfully lobby changes in the implementation of tourism projects, while the other ten projects show how unlikely and difficult such change is in general.

Valdanos Bay, located in Ulcinj, the southernmost Montenegrin municipality, is known for its ancient olive trees grove (eighteen thousand olive trees, some of which are more than 500 years old) and has the status of a cultural good protected by the Montenegrin state. In 2008, the Montenegrin Privatization Council opened an international tender for the long-term concession of the bay, intending to develop hotels and residential apartments. The spatial plan allowed for the construction of one hundred residential villas and three hotels with seven hundred accommodation units in the bay and, despite its status as a protected cultural heritage, the removal of the ancient olive groves (MANS 2011).

Two offers were received and subsequently ranked (MANS 2011). MANS cautioned, however, that based on publicly available data, the preferred offer did not fulfill three out of four tender requirements and was therefore not a viable option. After the financial status of the consortium behind the preferred offer was published in government-critical newspapers with high circulation, public dissatisfaction with the Valdanos agreement broke out. But the case has not led to a strong mobilization of the public in the form of citizens' initiatives. Regardless, under these circumstances, the tender for Valdanos was canceled (MANS 2011). The case clearly showed that NGO campaigns, even when not backed by a citizens' initiative, can successfully prevent resource and function misuse. Taking into account, however, that this is an isolated case, the lack of interest of the political elites in pursuing this specific

investment with these partners would seem like a more probable reason for the successful lobbying attempt.

To explore the role of public grievances vs. incumbents' interests as a decisive mechanism for mobilization and successful lobbying, I turn to the Mamula Fortress project. In this case, a citizens' initiative, supported by the international community and the engagement of interest groups (architects, spatial planners, culture associations, and war veterans), was ultimately not successful in its attempt to lobby the policy development because it ran counter to the political elites' interest in its implementation.

The case revolves around a long-term concession at the historical Austro-Hungarian fortress of Mamula and the plan to turn it into a luxurious and exclusive tourist resort. The fortress is a protected cultural heritage site and has an important place in Montenegrin history, as it served as a fascist concentration camp in World War II. In opposition to this exclusive model of tourism development that was favored by the government, citizens organized on Facebook[14] and started a citizens' initiative that collected signatures to halt the concession allocation process until a more suitable developmental model could be found. The initiative received instant domestic media coverage (Radio Jadran 2014; Al Jazeera 2014) and was supported by NGOs, expert groups, and even local war veterans' group, resulting in significant pressure on the political leadership.

The news of the plan to commercialize a former concentration camp, recognized as a cultural heritage site, soon crossed the Montenegrin borders. Tourism experts and representatives of international organizations wrote letters in support of the citizens' initiative and against the commercial use of the fortress, which, as an exclusive resort, would exclude the local population from access to it (Savio 2016). Local political leadership sided with the citizens' initiative and supported their efforts to halt the concession of Mamula.

The concession of the fortress was put to vote in the Montenegrin Parliament where, after the first attempt failed in July 2015, it was approved on the second vote in December 2015. Some MPs from SDP, DPS's coalition partner, voted against the deal, but it was passed with supporting votes of an opposition party. Other than agreeing to turn one of the prison cells into a memorial museum commemorating the victims of the fascist regime, none of the other recommendations were taken into account.

Why was the citizens' initiative unsuccessful? It should be noted that the investors in Mamula already initiated the development of a brand-new tourist town in the Lustica Bay, which is based on the Strategic Partner-

ship with the Government of Montenegro. Considering the size of the investment in Lustica Bay,[15] maintaining a relationship with the investor represents a stronger incentive than the public pressure to find a different tourism development model for Mamula. The case demonstrates that lobbying efforts of advocacy groups, even when undergirded by strong public grievances and external pressure, face strong headwinds when the interests of the political leadership are at stake.

What about the role of the media in influencing policy making and policy implementation in the tourism sector? As shown in all four cases, media coverage was instrumental in informing the citizens about the engagement of the advocacy groups, as well as focusing public attention to pressure the political leadership. While the media do not have a direct influence on tourism projects or policy making, they are instrumental in informing the public and shaping public opinion.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the conditions under which advocacy groups mobilize and lobby for policy change in hybrid regimes. I suggested that factors driving successful mobilization in democracies could also be at play in hybrid regimes: well-resourced groups, media coverage, and public grievances are important resources for successful policy lobbying. Following the assumption that political leaders in autocracies also care about legitimacy, I argued that they cherry-pick the advice of advocacy groups when this does not endanger the regime and its patronage structures. Conversely, where patronage interests are threatened, authorities either ignore or actively undermine advocacy efforts. Effectively, even in issue areas where there is public discontent with prevailing governmental policy, and where groups are thus able to easily attract members and public support, successfully influencing policy is unlikely if and when these issues impinge on patronage interests.

To illustrate these mechanisms, I focused on the case of Montenegro, a dominant party regime, and its problematic use of natural and cultural resources. First, through the case of the Tara riverbed, I showed that incumbents' interest, along with media coverage and public pressure, is an important determinant of successful policy lobbying. Second, I investigated the efficacy of mobilization efforts in two selected tourism projects with a variation in the incumbents' interests. In the case of Valdanos, the NGO campaign, not backed by strong grievances, still resulted in a policy win because

incumbents' interest in this specific investment was marginal. In contrast, the case of the Mamula Fortress exemplified a no-go policy topic, one of particular economic and political interest for the incumbents. Here, even though public grievances were strong and advocacy groups mobilized significant pressure, they were ultimately unable to punch through elite resistance. I further demonstrated that without media coverage, NGOs and expert groups cannot hope to get the critical attention of the domestic or international community or to be invited to participate in decision making. This has consequences for their chances of ultimately influencing policy outcomes. It is likely a reason why advocacy groups often opt for media-centric lobbying strategies, even in nondemocracies, a theme that is further explored in chapters 7 and 8 of this volume.

Overall, these findings speak to the third cross-cutting factor that is theorized to impact all stages of influence production in the concluding chapter: social control. The results concur with studies suggesting that policy red lines exist under autocracy and that they limit and guide the possibility of societal influences on authoritarian policy making (e.g., Lyons and Gomez 2005; Truex 2016). Yet they may play out differently at different stages of the lobbying life cycle. Depending on the severity of the oppression, they might not make group mobilization as such impossible, but they might decrease the likelihood of policy influence as the incumbents protects their strategic interests. But, while in other contexts these topics are relatively fixed or determined simply by policy area (see next chapter), this need not always be the case. Rather, no-go topics change as the interests of the incumbents do. In the context of rentier states, such as Montenegro, the extraction of natural or cultural resources is a sensitive policy area. As this chapter has shown, however, lobbying red lines are drawn at the micro-level, based on whether clientelistic networks have an interest in a specific development or not. In order to mobilize successful campaigns, advocates must therefore remain flexible as they adapt to the constantly changing terrain of no-go issues and permissible ones.

Just as the preceding chapter, my findings also suggest that to a certain extent, some mechanisms of policy lobbying in democracies also apply well in hybrid regimes. Group resources, public grievances, and favorable media attention are related to successful mobilizations in both contexts. I emphasize however that the applicability of these mechanisms may depend on a regime's likeness to democracy, such as a relatively free supply of information and the relative safety of those who engage in policy lobbying. The case of Montenegro thus represents an outlier, in that its "softer" variety of authoritarianism—less repression, little censorship—

provides more favorable conditions for mobilization than some of the other case studies explored in this volume.

NOTES

1. Referring to the definition presented in chapter 1 of this volume, I understand interest groups as actors characterized by organization (excluding broad movements), political interests (attempts to influence policy outcomes), and informality (not seeking political office). I include both NGOs, (e.g., environmental organizations) and expert groups (e.g., professional associations) in this category.

2. Citizens' initiatives can be characterized by their conflictual relationship toward an opponent, a set of common beliefs and goals, and a repertoire of collective action (Kriesi 2007). Unlike interest groups, however, they are based on dense informal inter-organizational networks, where no single actor can claim representation of a movement as a whole (Diani and Bison 2004).

3. By hybrid regimes I refer to ambiguous regimes between defective democracies and competitive authoritarian regimes (Diamond 2002), which mimic some characteristics of democracies but do not fulfill all attributes of modern democracies: free and fair elections, universal participation, civil liberties, and responsible government (Pérez-Liñán 2017).

4. When discussing policy success, I refer to de facto fulfillment of the goals interest groups have set, rather than selective handpicking of the technical details from the side of the government.

5. Often also called hegemonic party regimes.

6. The 2020 parliamentary elections in Montenegro resulted in a slender victory for the opposition. While Milo Đukanović's Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) still won the largest share of votes, three opposition parties managed to win sufficient seats in the national parliament to form a majority. V-Dem still gave the country a liberal democracy score below 0.4, classifying it as not a fully democratic one.

7. Reporters Without Borders criticized the oppressive climate for investigative journalism, such as the death of owner and editor in chief of the *Dan* newspapers Duško Jovanović in 2004, a physical attack on journalists for *Vijesti* newspapers Olivera Lakić during her work on covering corruption affairs in 2012 and 2018, several bomb attacks on *Vijesti*'s cars in 2011 and bombing of *Vijesti* journalist Tufik Softić's house, a physical attack on *Vijesti* editor Mihailo Jovović and director of *Vijesti* Željko Jovović, and a bomb attack on the *Vijesti* office in 2013 (Ponoš 2014).

8. By winning the parliamentary elections, I refer to winning the highest number of votes and being the main coalition party forming a government.

9. See Morrison (2011) for (1) an account of KAP (Kombinat Aluminijuma Podgorica) privatization and the deal struck between Russian billionaire Oleg Deripaska and then prime minister Milo Đukanović, (2) an account of Milo Đukanović's business interests (First Bank of Montenegro) and allegations of links to the Italian and Balkan underworld groups, and (3) a broader DPS modus operandi, such as DPS's ex-coleader Svetozar Marović and the role his family and friends had in forging business deals in the Budva municipality.

10. Jovana Marović, the executive director of the Politikon network, a Podgorica-

based think tank, said, "The 'opportunity' given for conversation and formal involvement mean little to nothing, as the proposals are not measured by whether they are constructive or not, but whether they threaten the interests of the ruling party" (European Western Balkans 2020).

11. MANS: Network for Affirmation of Non-Governmental Sector (Mreža za Afirmaciju Nevladinog Sektora).

12. Who if Not the Architects (Ko će Ako Ne Arhitekti).

13. Earlier feasibility studies suggested the highway would not be financially sustainable given the low traffic on the route and suggested that the government only modernize the existing roads rather than build new ones (Semanić 2019).

14. A Facebook group "Let the scream for the salvation of Mamula be heard" was created in February 2014 to raise awareness among citizens about the intentions of the Montenegrin government to sign a long-term rental contract for the island Lastavica. In thirty hours, the group collected six thousand supporters, which can be considered a great success for such a local issue.

15. The resort town will include two marinas, an eighteen-hole golf course, more than a thousand apartments, seven hotels, and other facilities such as a school and a hospital.

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Part III

Interest Communities

4 | Convergence and Divergence in Policy Topics among Think Tanks in China

Reza Hasmath

Disaggregating the influence of actors on policy advocacy in authoritarian regimes can be a tea-reading exercise. As discussed throughout the chapters of this book, understanding the policy-making process and the relationship among state, quasi-state and nonstate actors in authoritarian environments is not straightforward. Government and party deliberations are not made public, intricacies of feuding elites are abstruse, and it can be difficult to identify the inputs that cause policy output variances. This contrasts to liberal democratic contexts, where policy inputs are extensively recorded through interest group policy submissions, legislative debates, public opinion surveys, and state communiques.

The People's Republic of China is an exemplar case of this challenge. Information that scholars typically rely upon in making analytical assessments on foreign policy-making processes are subject to state constraints. New analytical techniques have circumvented some of these barriers (e.g., King, Pan, and Roberts 2017), but applications of these methods to Chinese foreign policy making remain in their infancy. This chapter bridges this gap by looking at a large corpus of publicly available data that was collected on foreign-policy-oriented think tanks during the early period of Xi Jinping's administration (2013–present).

Over the past two decades, think tanks have rapidly populated the policy entrepreneurial space: today China has the second largest number of think tanks globally, trailing only the United States (McGann 2015, 32). Originally serving as ideological legitimizers under Mao Zedong, China's think tanks today serve as pragmatic sources of policy research and technical expertise (see Shambaugh 2002). While research on China's think tanks was traditionally inhibited by a lack of access to empirical data, con-

temporary Chinese think tanks increasingly place their analyses, opinion pieces, and media interviews into the public domain to increase their profiles and reputations (Abb 2015). For the study of policy making in authoritarian settings, this provides a valuable opportunity to better understand the interest community that produces foreign policy thought in China and to shed new light on some potential domestic determinants of those policies. Akin to other chapters in this section, this further sheds light on the density and diversity of advocacy group systems under autocracy and how groups compete and cooperate in this ecology.

Methodologically, I collected and analyzed publicly available policy statements from foreign-affairs-oriented think tanks from 2014 through 2016. These think tanks represent different geographical locations and organizational types such as government (GOV), government-operated (GOTT), and university-affiliated (UATT) think tanks. I descriptively analyze (dis)similarities in the policy texts of these think tanks and leverage advanced analytical techniques from natural language processing, namely structural topic modeling, to explore temporal changes in policy topics and prevalence under the Xi Jinping administration (2013–present).

The study's findings suggests that there appears to be a trend toward convergence in policy content in the early years of the Xi Jinping administration; organizational type and the policy topic in question moderate this convergence. University-affiliated think tanks appear to position themselves more proximately to government think tanks. Further, the policy topics of sovereignty, regional politics, and the Chinese economy account for nearly half the content of the corpus; and think tanks are most responsive to events that concern sovereignty disputes, domestic governance, and social issues. In short, the findings represent novel evidence of divergence on less-critical foreign policy topics, and relative conformity on the foreign policy tenets that are considered crucial to China. Together, these findings add to the conversations throughout this book discussing tacit and overtly permissible policy topics under authoritarianism (see, e.g., chapters 3 and 5). Moreover, they help to descriptively map variance in foreign policy thought onto the institutional ecology in China. This is of acute interest to domestic and international actors who wish to engage with Chinese institutions that influence foreign policy making.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I define the concept of a think tank in the context of China and outline the categorization of think tanks as government, government-operated, and university-affiliated institutes. Then I outline arguments in the extant literature that might lead to expec-

tations of convergence or divergence in the content of think tanks' foreign policy thought. Third, I note the ways in which think tanks influence elite foreign policy thought in China. Although directly tracing the influence of think tanks on elites is outside the scope of this chapter, an empirical exploration of convergence and divergence in think tank thought provides a valuable descriptive contribution to the Chinese foreign policy literature. Fourth, I describe the policy texts collected from think tanks' websites, and present and discuss the results of the text analyses. Beyond the analysis of the early years of the Xi Jinping administration, the conclusion looks forward to the ways in which this landscape might evolve by way of Xi's proposed "new-type think tanks" within China's broader "new era."

Framework

China's unique institutional environment necessitates a refined contextual specificity with which to understand the concept of a "think tank." Zhu (2011, 669–70) describes think tanks in China as "organizations that research and consult on policy issues to influence the policy process . . . depending on internal and external factors." While the majority of this description accords with the definitions and basic roles of think tanks in Western contexts (see Rich 2005), the "internal and external factors" reference suggests a variance in the manner in which Chinese think tanks operate. Namely, Chinese think tanks do not necessarily act as an advocacy group in an overt fashion, nor do they operate as independent entities free from government oversight as in most Western contexts. Rather, they are embedded within a corporatist structure (see Hsu and Hasmath 2013). Moreover, think tanks share important similarities with other types of advocacy groups discussed in chapter 1 of this book. They can also differ on the dimension of "private status," insofar most of the think tanks discussed in this chapter have a close relationship with the government to some extent.

Originally inspired by the Soviet model, foreign-affairs-oriented research institutes in China were traditionally situated within a formal bureaucratic system, in which tasks flowed down the system and research "went up" in response (Glaser and Saunders 2002). As China's presence in international politics expanded, however, think tanks evolved into pragmatic sources for intelligence, policy consultation, and technical expertise (Abb 2015; Shambaugh 2002). Akin to their Western counterparts, Chi-

nese think tanks place emphasis on research and disseminate their views on public policy issues or, as Wiarda (2010, 30) puts it, "they seek not just to do abstract or 'pure' research on specific issues, but to influence the policy debate toward the think tanks' point of view and to put forth solutions to public policy problems." Their primary target audience is generally political elites in individual ministries and party-affiliated organizations, rather than ordinary citizens or civil society actors. Although Abb (2015, 531) points out that think tanks have increasingly bolstered their public profiles through media appearances and interactions, their dependence on the patronage and attention of political elites for influence places constraints on their research and analyses (Morrison 2012).

For analytical purposes, I disaggregate Chinese think tanks into three categories: government, government-operated, and university-affiliated. Government think tanks refer to those institutions within the Party Central Committee or the State Council, such as the Development Research Center of the State Council and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). From a hierarchical standpoint, these government think tanks are at or above the ministerial level. The second category is government-operated think tanks (GOTTs) that are not, strictly speaking, part of the government organ, but operate within the government's bureaucratic structure and under the supervision of the government organs with which they are affiliated. The lack of independence from the government makes this category of think tanks similar to government-organized nongovernmental organizations (GONGOs), notably in terms of financial reliance and personnel administration (see Hasmath, Hildebrandt, and Hsu 2019; Hsu, Hildebrandt, and Hasmath 2016). Foreign-affairs-oriented GOTTs are under the ministries, ministerial-level commissions, and local governments, such as the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), affiliated with the Ministry of State Security (MSS); and the Shanghai Institute of International Relations (SIIR), under the Shanghai municipal government. The third and final category of think tanks are those attached to universities, such as the School of International Studies, Peking University or the Center for American Studies, Fudan University. These institutes' orientation in educating students and conducting academic research perhaps gives them greater intellectual autonomy. Whether or not these differences equate to similar or varying foreign policy topics of interest is of analytical curiosity.

The Role of the Domestic Context in Foreign Policy Making

Think tanks in China are situated within a domestic foreign policy context that has become more complex in the post-market-reform era. There have been fundamental changes in the structure of Chinese society, including the pluralization and diversification of social interests and increased social differentiation and stratification (Hasmath and Hsu 2009). As Lampton (2001, 27) aptly puts it, "the increasing number of individuals and organizations getting involved in making major decisions, the circle of those involved in consultation and subsequent policy implementation, and the space in which society and local systems can operate have all expanded."

Meanwhile, China's interactions with the world are no longer limited to the state level. Epistemic communities, which diffuse transnational groupings of like-minded individuals, are an example of one of the many nonstate channels for such an interaction (see Hasmath and Hsu 2014, 2020; Hsu and Hasmath 2017). Similarly, Fewsmith and Rosen (2001) assert that public opinion is able to establish a delimited space within which the Chinese leadership must operate. In response, the Chinese leadership has a tendency to rapidly absorb information to fashion decisions through various channels, including advocacy groups and think tanks. By coopting societal forces, the bureaucracy has become more specialized, and much of its added capacity has come in areas that permit China to better fit into the international organizations in which it now participates (Hasmath et al. 2019; Lampton 2001).

While China may not have a full-blown corporatist system, and there is healthy debate in the literature reinforcing this fact (see for example Gilley 2011), there are arguably corporatist elements at the national and subnational government levels that make such a framework uniquely suited for the chapter's analysis (see Hasmath 2020; Hsu and Hasmath 2013, 2014). Indeed, corporatism can help to explain the three types of think tanks' relative positions within China's institutional structure and why these organizations adopt certain modes of practice. The power of a small political elite still predominates, and the decision-making process, overall, lacks plurality. In other words, by no means is the state retreating from its control and influence over entities focused on dominant policy issues.

Consider Odom's (1992) criteria for evaluating the influence of organizations such as a think tank in the Western democratic context: (1) it must capture the core elements of the political system, (2) it must be comparative in nature, and (3) it must account for change. Similar to their counter-

parts in Western democracies, Chinese foreign affairs think tanks attempt to influence policy outcomes, but unlike their Western counterparts (see Grossman 2012; Grömping and Halpin 2021), this is achieved by providing consultation (and generally behind closed doors) rather than overtly shaping policy debates or lobbying decision-making bodies. Nor do foreign affairs think tanks challenge the predominant power of elite Party members; to openly and willing challenge the elites within the CCP is contra to the hidden rules for success in China's political environment and is paramount to organizational suicide in the domestic context. Suffice it to say that foreign affairs think tanks in China, operating within a corporatist bureaucratic institutional environment, are not overtly ambitious in their public claims for overt policy change.

To further this notion of corporatism as a significant process in the activities of Chinese foreign affairs think tanks—notably as a process in which the state controls their activities—it is useful to observe corporatism through a tacit sanctioning lens. As the Chinese state gradually loosened its grip on various sectors of society, there was a transformation from overt sanctioning to tacit sanctioning in state-society relations (Hsu and Hasmath 2014). Varying from the previous strategy of primarily relying on tools of coercion and propaganda to manage the economy and society during the prereform era, today the Chinese state has a tendency to "tacitly" provide space for new and hybrid forms of organizations such as GOTTs or UATTs to develop. Three main features are important in the understanding of the corporatist institutional framework under tacit sanctioning: "first, the state creates and maintains the relationship; second, select organizations and groups are granted the privilege to mediate interests on behalf of their constituents to the state; third, these organizations and groups must adhere to the [stated and hidden] rules and regulations established by the state" (Hsu and Hasmath 2014, 522).

Effectively, a think tank such as a GOTT or UATT are tacitly sanctioned to operate by the state on behalf of scholarly communities specialized in certain areas. Moreover, think tanks operate in a relatively singular institutional environment, whereby competing ideas do not lead to real contestation or much variation in institutional designs. To wit, GOTTs are similar to GONGOs in the sense that they are created, sponsored, and supervised by bureaucratic organizations. In fact, the organizational classification of GONGOs and GOTTs are similar since they are both considered public service units (*shi ye dan wei*). The 1988 Interim Regulations on the Management of Public Sector Units defines this entity as "organizations with the provision of social services in nature, established by the

governmental agencies or other organizations with state-owned assets, working for the public good in activities such as education, science and technology, culture and health" (OECD 2005, 9). Unlike most domains that GONGOs dominate, from poverty alleviation to the improvement of women's rights, foreign policy is confidential and is seen as part of the core national interest that can potentially threaten the CCP's regime stability. This echoes findings in earlier chapters that discuss permissible and deviant policy topics (see e.g., chapter 3). While those GONGOs primarily focusing on economic or social issues might be reorganized or licensed by the state, and enjoy certain levels of independence and autonomy, foreign-affairs-oriented GOTTs are generally created by the state and operate within the state structure.

Nevertheless, think tanks may have a liberating potential through their consultative channels, which would lead to theoretical expectations of policy topics divergence.

The emergence and growth of foreign affairs think tanks can be attributed to the collectivized decision making characterized by China's top elite leadership. Concurrently, the need for better intelligence about international affairs has resulted in foreign-affairs-oriented think tanks becoming more relevant and necessary than ever before. Today, think tanks are given better access to confidential documents and more leeway to report their research results directly through special channels to the top political elites (Hayward 2018; Xue, Zhu, and Han 2018). Newly opened consultative channels at lower levels have enriched the diversity of opinions reaching the top level. Some individuals and organizations may not formally become involved in foreign-policy-making process, but they are given broader, tacitly sanctioned space to act. Particularly, with the trend toward professionalization, the Chinese elite and subelite foreign policy makers tend to have a higher level of specialized knowledge. This leads to the expectation that there may be more variance in policy topics, especially among those that are not deemed to be core interests of the CCP.

Methodology

The above discussion suggests that the literature contains differing expectations about the extent to which China's foreign affairs think tanks exhibit variance in policy topics. I turn to natural language processing methods to gain empirical leverage on this question, analyzing (dis)similarities in the textual content produced by think tanks in China, the policy topics that

these think tanks discuss, and the ways in which text similarities and prevalence of these topics shift over time. Together, these analyses shed light on the convergence (or divergence) in policy topics and prevalence among China's foreign policy think tanks in the early years of the Xi Jinping administration. This is important for our understanding of the diversity of interest communities under authoritarianism.

I collected every policy-related text available on the websites of ten think tanks that conducted research relevant to the foreign affairs of China from 2014 through 2016. These think tanks were chosen based on their prominence and to include a mix of the three think tank types outlined above. The policy texts, originally in Mandarin Chinese and thereafter translated into English, are often short opinion pieces released by think tank scholars that provide commentary on current events and political developments. Some pieces are slightly longer reports or policy briefs. The corpus contains 1,872 documents with 1,944,030 total terms and 32,830 unique terms. Standard text preprocessing criteria were applied to the corpus, including stemming, tokenization, and the removal of punctuation, numbers, and stopwords. Table 4.1 presents the institutes in the sample, along with their abbreviations, mean tokens per document, mean types per document, and government (GOV), government-operated (GOTT), or university-affiliated (UATT) labels.[1]

The analysis hereafter proceeds in three steps. First, I calculate the cosine similarities between the texts for the different think tanks in the corpus in order to illustrate that useful variation exists in the corpus's textual content.[2] Second, I explore the topics that exist in the corpus to better understand the policy issues that are discussed, how those topics correlate, and how topic prevalence varies by think tank type.[3] Finally, I consider temporal variation, namely the extent to which topic prevalence varies over time, and whether think tanks display increased convergence in their textual content under the Xi Jinping administration.[4]

Results and Discussion

Figure 4.1 displays the cosine similarities between the different think tanks, calculated using all texts for that think tank in the corpus. The results suggest that SIIS, CIIS, CICIR, and CHI tend to display higher aggregate levels of text similarity. This result is noteworthy because all these institutes are GOTTs. Furthermore, useful variance exists. For example, the DRC and IWEP are both government-affiliated think tanks

TABLE 4.1. Corpus Summary Statistics

Name	Org. Code	Think Tank Type	Tokens (Mean)	Types (Mean)
Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	IAS	GOV	4169	916
Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	IWEP	GOV	877	298
Development Research Center of the State Council[1]	DRC	GOV	785	289
China Center for Contemporary World Studies	CCCWS	GOTT	2315	713
Charhar Institute[2]	CHI	GOTT	786	348
China Institutes for Contemporary International Relations	CICIR	GOTT	1549	533
China Institute of International Studies	CIIS	GOTT	2716	797
Shanghai Institutes for International Studies	SIIS	GOTT	1073	442
Center for American Studies, Fudan University	FD.CAS	UATT	1294	435
School of International Studies, Peking University	BD.SIS	UATT	1973	538

Notes:
GOV = Government Think Tanks; GOTT = Government-Operated Think Tanks; UATT = University-Affiliated Think Tanks. In the sample, think tanks outside of Beijing are in Shanghai, except for the Charhar Institute, which is in Hebei Province.

[1] The DRC is one of main the planning and evaluation organization for economic and social policy in China. While many of its activities are domestically oriented, it does produce foreign policy research looking at foreign economic relations and international social and economic development (cognizant DRC sections include: Euro-Asian Social Development Research Institute, Institute of World Development, and Asia-Africa Development Research Institute).

[2] Sometimes referred to as Chahar Society.

that research economic issues, but their texts display quite low levels of similarity.[5] Together, these results suggest that the think tanks show interesting variation in the content of their policy texts.

Next, I move beyond these broad similarities and delve into the policy topic content in the corpus. Table 4.2 presents the resultant topics from the STM, discriminating terms based on frequency (Freq.) and frequency and exclusivity (FREX), and the proportion of the corpus devoted to each topic. Labels are qualitatively assigned based on the terms and a reading of the terms in context. The model recovers a relatively coherent range of topics that one would expect to find in a corpus on Chinese foreign policy. I discuss the topics sequentially.

Figure 4.1. Cosine Similarity Measures Between Think Tanks *Note:* Cosine similarity scores calculated from the aggregate document-frequency matrix for each think tank. Higher scores (and darker shading) indicate that the think tank pair produces more similar texts. Table 4.1 lists the think tank labels.
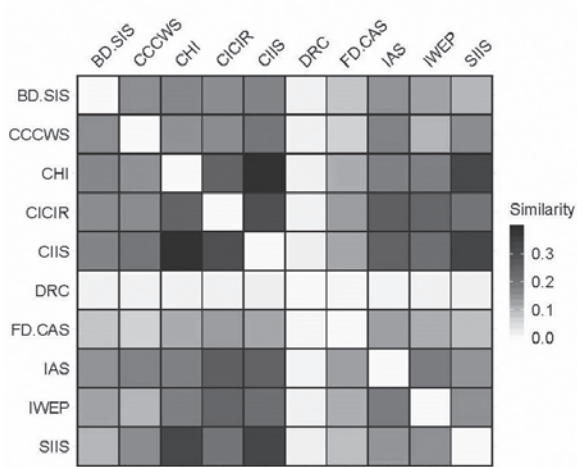
Topic 1 discusses European politics. Tensions in the region ("ukrain-") surface, as well as attention to the United Kingdom, which is likely a function of the June 2016 European Union referendum vote.

Topic 2 includes terms associated with international development ("trade," "invest-"), as well as regional initiatives, particularly the "One Belt, One Road" project. China's recent attention to Africa also appears under this topic.

Topic 3 engages regional politics, evident by terms such as "cooper-," "region," and "asia." Terms like "neighbor," "common," and "mutual" appear in this topic and are often present in Chinese diplomatic discourse. This topic received the most attention among the think tank community, making up 20 percent of the corpus.

Topic 4 looks at domestic governance. Terms that relate to civil society and social concerns such as "social," "peopl-," "work," "public," and "rural" are prevalent. Ji Dengkui, a political figure during the Cultural Revolution, also surface in this topic. Environmental concerns ("carbon," "emiss-") appear here as well. Indeed, a qualitative reading of the documents uncovered a surprising amount of domestic attention in the foreign policy texts.

Topic 5 is noteworthy since content relating to sovereignty and territorial disputes appears to constitute a distinct topic. Terms like "reef" and "island," as well as Vietnam—which continues to challenge China's territorial claims in the South China Sea—suggest that sovereignty and maritime disputes are issues on par with or exceeding the proportion of the corpus dedicated to an issue like European politics.

Topic 6 engages US politics and relations, with terms such as "american," "presid-," and "trump." Discussions of US relations also appear to link with issues regarding Taiwan ("strait").

Topic 7 relates to issues regarding the macroeconomy and economic relations. China's foreign policy appears to be discussed with domestic economic concerns in mind.

Finally, topic 8 covers issues related to regional and international security. In the case of the former, terms such as "korea," "japan," and "dprk" appear. In the case of the latter, terms such as "iran," "saudi," and "syria" are common.

Together, these topics illustrate a picture of a regional power rising on the global stage: domestic interests surrounding the economy, governance, and sovereignty issues receive the most attention, which undergird foreign policy concerns at the level of regional politics and security. Beyond the region, however, the policy texts also devote ample space to international issues, like China's turn to Africa, the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, and issues in Europe, the United States, and the Middle East.

With these topics in hand, I next assess correlations between topics, that is, the extent to which two topics tend to both occur in the same policy text. Figure 4.2 presents the pairwise correlations of topic occurrence. The largest correlations occur between the regional politics and sovereignty topics, regional politics and macroeconomy topics, and macroeconomy and sovereignty topics. In table 4.2, I found that these three topics together account for nearly half of the content in the corpus. The negative correlations here indicate that the policy texts approach these issues with especially focused attention. With these topics in hand, I next assess correlations between topics, that is, the extent to which two topics tend to both occur in the same policy text. Figure 4.2 presents the pairwise correlations of topic occurrence. The largest correlations occur between the regional politics and sovereignty topics, regional politics and macroeconomy topics, and macroeconomy and sovereignty topics. In table 4.2, I found that these three topics together account for nearly half of the content in the corpus. The negative correlations here indicate that the policy texts approach these issues with especially focused attention.

Figure 4.2 furthermore suggests that the policy documents exhibit interesting textual variation and that the STM recovers reasonable topical groupings at the aggregate level. Although these analyses establish the validity of the corpus, they say less about finer-grained variation in the prevalence of these topics according to different institutional types. Here I estimate differences in topical prevalence according to the three types of

TABLE 4.2. Identified Topics with Suggested Labels

Topic	Label	Discriminating Terms	Proportion
1	European Politics	Freq: state, countri, unit, polit, world, europ, european	.09
		FREX: german, british, britain, ukrain, germani, cameron, European	
2	Regional/International Development	Freq: trade, countri, econom, cooper, invest, develop, road	.13
		FREX: african, belt, india, silk, indian, road, africa	
3	Regional Politics	Freq: countri, develop, cooper, intern, secur, region, asia	.20
		FREX: diplomaci, mutual, summit, common, neighbor, concept, Asian	
4	Governance/Social Issues	Freq: govern, develop, system, peopl, social, work, public	.13
		FREX: rural, dengkui, internet, farmer, carbon, emiss, Tanzania	
5	Sovereignty/Territorial Disputes	Freq: state, unit, south, relat, sino, issu, countri	.12
		FREX: philippin, arbitr, reef, vietnam, island, tribun, sino	
6	US Politics/Relations	Freq: polit, elect, parti, american, polici, presid, trump	.07
		FREX: trump, elect, strait, republican, cuba, voter, cyber	
7	Macroeconomy/Economic Relations	Freq: economi, econom, growth, market, rate, global, finance	.17
		FREX: rate, monetari, growth, hike, debt, currenc, price	
8	Regional/International Security	Freq: nuclear, japan, militari, secur, korea, east, state	.09
		FREX: iran, saudi, dprk, arabia, nuclear, yemen, syria	

Note: "Freq." indicates words that are most frequent within a topic. "FREX" indicates words that are frequent and exclusive to the topic.
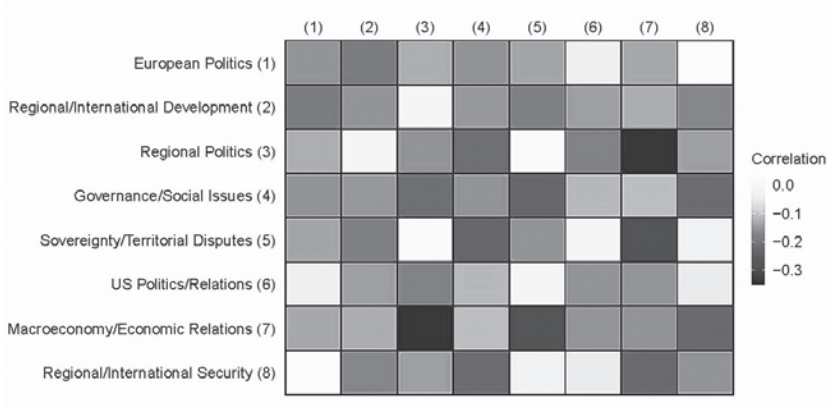
Figure 4.2. Pearson Correlations between Topics.
Note: Pearson correlations between topics. A more negative correlation (and darker shading) indicates a lack of topic co-occurence in the same document.
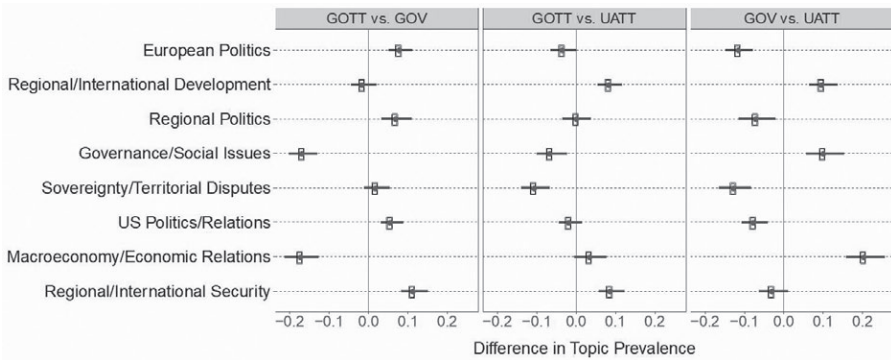
Figure 4.3. Differences in Topic Proportion by Think Tank Type
Note: Estimates further to the right indicate that the think tank type discusses a given topic with greater frequency.

think tanks outlined above: GOVs, GOTTs, and UATTs. Figure 4.3 presents the results, with coefficients further to the right indicating that the first type expends more attention to the topic than the type listed second.

The comparison of policy topics among Chinese foreign policy think tanks allows for inferences about patterns of competition and cooperation among this interest community; it also provides a useful static snapshot of foreign policy thought in the early years of the Xi Jinping administration. Specifically, it suggests that think tanks engage in niche seeking if and when the policy space is crowded by competitors, a behavior one can
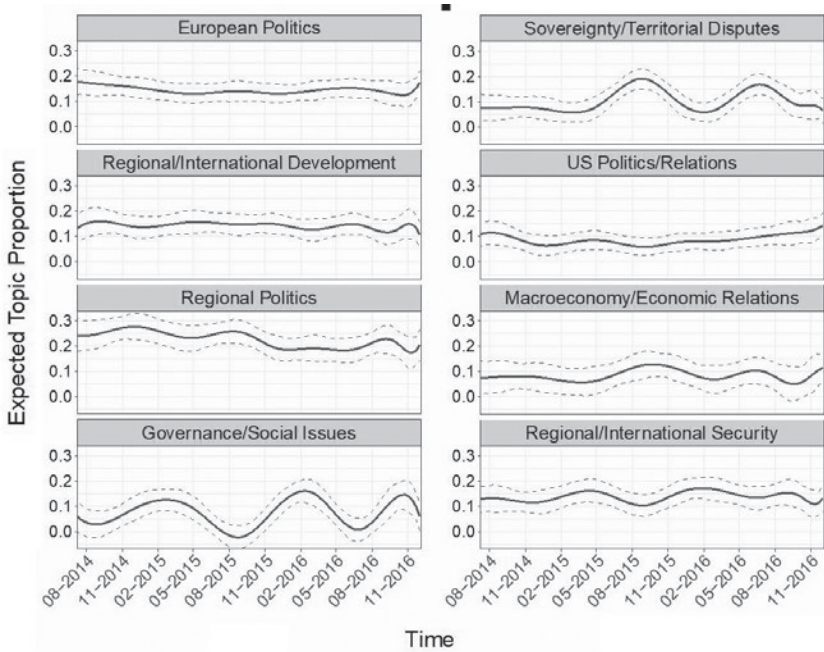
Figure 4.4. Changes in Topic Proportions over Time
Note: Changes in expected topic proportions over time. Higher values indicate that a greater proportion of the corpus is devoted to a given topic.

observe in democratic contexts. This happens, however, only in more "permissible" policy areas, whereas the more sensitive policy topics see convergence; here, think tanks do not aim to distinguish themselves from competitors but rather want to blend in.

In the final set of analyses, I examine the extent to which attention to these topics changes over time and whether think tanks converged in textual content similarity in their policy documents. Foremost, I consider how topic proportions change over time in order to identify the most sensitive and responsive policy issues. Figure 4.4 presents changes in expected topic proportions over time for each of the topics in the corpus. In general, there are greater variation in topic proportions for governance and social issues, sovereignty and territorial disputes, macroeconomic and economic relations issues, and regional and international security issues. In contrast, steadier attention is devoted to European politics, regional and international development, and US politics and relations.

Consider topic 5, sovereignty and territorial disputes. Two clear bumps

in policy attention occurred in September–October 2015 and July 2016. The former period was a tense time when Xi Jinping visited the White House in the United States. China's activities in the Spratlys was a priority topic for discussion when the US Navy conducted sailing operations close to the artificial islands, and the Hague's tribunal ruled that it had jurisdiction over the submissions filed by the Philippines against China related to its nine-dotted line claim. The latter period, July 2016, was the month of the actual ruling by the Hague tribunal regarding the case of the Philippines and China ("philippin-" and "tribun-" are terms that also appear in table 4.2 under topic 5, above). These variations over time suggest that the foreign policy research output of think tanks is quite responsive to pertinent events, particularly events that are relevant to China's core interests.

Finally, I consider changes in text (dis)similarities for topics over time as a way to assess potential convergence (or divergence) in textual content under the Xi Jinping administration. Figure 4.5 displays the results. An increase on the Y-axis associates with an increase in term similarity between the think tank types used to discuss each topic. Seemingly, a consistent trend emerges. On each policy topic, GOV-GOTT and GOV-UATT similarities increase through 2015, and then level out or decrease slightly through 2016. These results are broadly consistent with findings of (re-) centralization under Xi Jinping.

The starkest decreases during this period relate to the European politics and US politics topics, with university-affiliated think tanks expressing quite dissimilar topics relative to government think tanks. Surprisingly, UATT-GOTTs consistently decrease in similarity throughout the date range of the corpus. This result indicates that think tanks that are not government think tanks are perhaps carving out unique policy topics relative to each other. This result could emerge as a function of increased competition for resources and elite attention as discussed earlier. Here, to the extent that text similarities capture differences in policy topics, then GOTTs and UATTs may be attempting to stake out unique positions to garner attention. Taken together, these results add nuance to the debate surrounding (re-)centralization under the Xi administration from a foreign policy perspective.

Conclusion

This chapter considered the content of foreign policy texts produced by Chinese think tanks during the early period of Xi Jinping's administra-
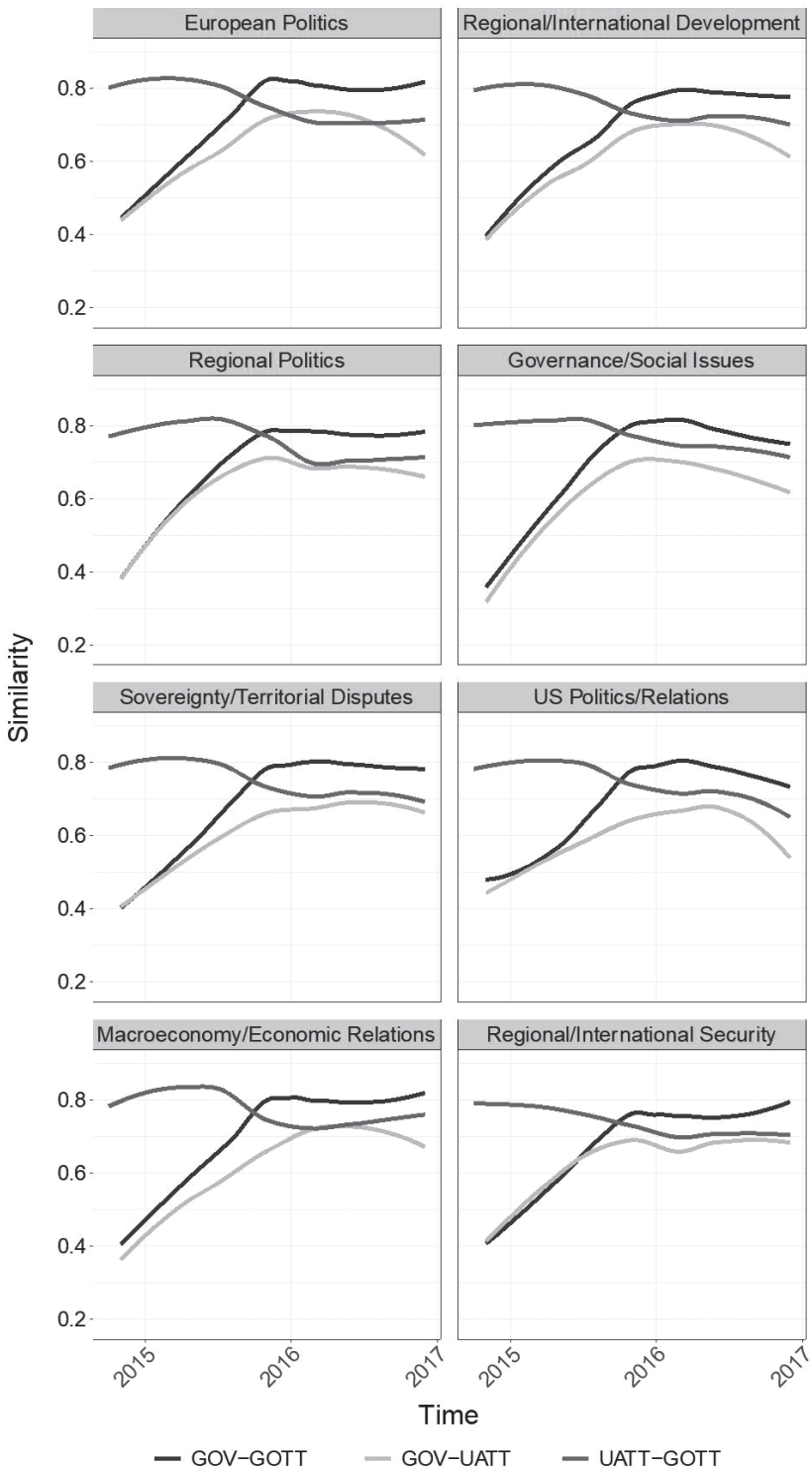
Figure 4.5. Topic-Term Similarity over Time
Note: Similarities in words used to describe different policy topics over time, with a fitted Loess curve to ease trend visualization. An increase on the *y*-axis indicates an increase in pairwise similarity in texts.

tion, including the correlations between different foreign policy topics and shifts in topic attention and words used to discuss those topics over time. Think tanks exhibited increasing similarity relative to the positions of government think tanks from 2014 through 2015, but more divergence is expressed during 2016. University-affiliated think tanks appear to position themselves proximately vis-à-vis government think tanks but to exhibit more textual differences relative to think tanks that are not directly government operated.

In addition, the policy topics of sovereignty, regional politics, and the Chinese economy account for nearly half of the content of the corpus, and think tanks are most responsive to events that concern sovereignty disputes, domestic governance, and social issues. These findings represent novel evidence of divergence on less-critical policy topics and relative conformity on the policy tenets relevant to China's core domestic and international interests. As discussed throughout this book, they suggest that there are tacit and overt permissible policy topics that think tank types undertake in an authoritarian institutional environment, while other policy topics are considered deviant or not permissible.

Overall, this speaks to the three cross-cutting factors affecting all stages of influence production under autocracy that are theorized in the conclusion of this book: access to policy making, information demands, and social control needs. Regarding the latter, this chapter suggests that policy red lines are key drivers of the diversity of interest communities, in that nonsensitive policy topics see more heterogeneity in groups' policy stances and frames. Consistent with theories from democratic contexts, such niche-seeking behavior may serve to distinguish advocacy groups in a crowded field. In contrast, sensitive topic areas are associated with less competition and stronger adherence to the government line, which ultimately reduces the diversity of policy information available from that group community. Policy red lines therefore increase the regime's information demands by narrowing societal channels for policy expertise in these areas.

The analysis presented in this chapter joins recent work that illustrates the ways in which text analytical methods can augment our current capacity to analyze the politics of authoritarian regimes. Textual data provide a high-resolution view of policy topics variation. The structural topic model recovers relatively coherent and reasonable policy content groupings and allows for inspection of variance across actor types. At the same time, there is room to further validate text analytic measures in the context of authoritarian politics. For example, the distinction between policy topics

(see, e.g., Laver, Benoit, and Garry 2003; Baturo, Dasandi, and Mikhaylov 2017) versus simple word similarities found in textual data might be blurrier in the context of Chinese foreign policy making, where measures to validate textual estimates (like roll call votes in the context of legislative politics) are less readily available.

Looking forward, as China's global role in political, economic, and military affairs expands, the Chinese government has encouraged a proliferation of think tanks. In fact, at the Third Plenum in 2013, Xi Jinping urged the creation of more think tanks—backed with significant capital (RMB100 million or ~US$13.91 million)—to improve decision making in policy formulation using "scientific decision making" (see Xue, Zhu, and Han 2018). The goal is to identify and approve fifty to one hundred "new type" think tanks by the early 2020s, which will receive special recognition by the CPC's Central Committee (see Hayward 2018). Three important considerations should be highlighted in this regard.

First, the underlying goal for Xi Jinping is to have a new wave of think tanks to support his viewpoints and policies, and possibly to temper the influence of think tanks backed by prominent political figures. For instance, Zeng Peiyan (former member of the Politburo of the CCP, and former vice premier of the PRC), Zeng Qinghong (former member of the Politburo Standing Committee, China's highest leadership council, top-ranked member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and former vice president of the PRC) and Jiang Zemin's (former president of the PRC) son Jiang Mianheng have either established or have been patrons of their own think tanks.

Second, an increased number of think tanks should not be interpreted as the government's relaxation of control over the ideological and intellectual domain and the political development of civil society. While many Western think tanks typically strive for independent and critical analysis, such goals are difficult to achieve in China when think tanks are generally called upon to support policy decisions already finalized or enacted by political elites.

Third, there are cautionary tales about overestimating think tanks' influence in the opaque and often ideologically driven Xi Jinping administration (see, e.g., Eaton and Hasmath 2021; Hasmath 2021; MacDonald and Hasmath 2018, 2020). In the current environment of increasing (re-) centralization and reduced appetite for risk by policy makers (see, e.g., Teets, Hasmath, and Lewis 2017; Teets and Hasmath 2020), one must be mindful that the influence of policy entrepreneurs is tacitly sanctioned by the state and can be removed at the state's request.

We are thus at a stage in contemporary China where "10,000 horses are all not muted," but neither are "a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thoughts contending." The administrative relationship between think tanks and the government is the most important resource to help think tanks exert policy influence. Radical political views are discouraged through regulation, guidelines, and financial and material constraints. Their research agendas are not primarily driven by contemporary policy concerns, but rather by the needs of the Chinese elite political leadership. Chinese think tanks remain nested firmly within a hierarchical, centralized bureaucratic system, albeit operating in Xi Jinping's self-professed "new era."

NOTES

Note: The author is grateful to Caleb Pomeroy for his valuable research assistance.

1. "Type" refers to the number of distinct words in the corpus. "Token" refers to the total number of words in the corpus.

2. To assess the similarities between texts in the corpus, a cosine similarity is utilized, which is one of the most common measures in the natural language processing literature. Cosine similarity can be represented as $s(\mathbf{x},\mathbf{y}) = \mathbf{x}\cdot\mathbf{y}||\mathbf{x}||\cdot||\mathbf{y}||$, where $\mathbf{x}$ and $\mathbf{y}$ are vectors of term frequencies, and the angle between the vectors provides a measure of similarity between the two texts (see Acree et al. 2016).

3. A structural topic modeling (STM)—implemented in the STM package in the R statistical computing environment—was employed (see Roberts et al. 2014; Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley 2017). The STM is an extension of the popular latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) model (Blei 2012). In traditional LDA, topic mixing proportions or observed words are drawn from global priors. An attractive feature of the STM, however, is that it allows for the modeling of covariates that might affect topic prevalence and content. In this study, I expect prevalence to vary as a function of think tank type (GOV, GOTT, UATT), as well as other covariates like date (such as discussing a topic when the issue is prevalent in the news) and the organization itself (e.g., the Development Research Center of the State Council likely discusses economics more than other think tanks). Inclusion of these covariates helps to isolate the relationship between think tank type—our primary variable of theoretical interest—and topical output. The model presented contains prevalence as the outcome variable and the following predictors: think tank type (i.e., GOV, GOTT, or UATT), date (i.e., the day-month-year of text publication, estimated with a spline to control for nonlinearities), organization name (to control for individual think tank differences such as size and organizational mission), and a city indicator variable (represented by 1 if the think tank is in Beijing, and 0 otherwise).

4. To assess variance in topic prevalence, the STM model provides outputs to directly plot topic proportion over time. To assess textual (dis)similarities over time, I extract the three hundred most frequent and exclusive words for each topic in the STM. Then, for each month in the corpus, I extract these same words from the document-

frequency matrices for each think tank grouped by type. This provides a monthly sequence of vectors of word frequencies employed by different think tank types associated with each topic. I then calculate the cosine similarity between these vectors. If think tanks face increasing control from the CCP, one should observe an increase in similarity of topics over time and perhaps toward the positions of government think tanks.

5. These differences could result in part from the DRC's focus on domestic macroeconomic issues and IWEP's focus on the international political economy.

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5 | Transnational Activism under Autocracy

Environmental Advocacy Groups, Social Media, and Nationalism in Cambodia

Sokphea Young

Advocacy groups[1] in nondemocratic developing countries frequently interlink with "transnational advocacy networks" (TANs) (Keck and Sikkink 1999) to influence state and private actors. The democratization of smartphones, internet, and social media has enabled local groups to connect with international groups to respond to issues related to human rights and environmental protection (cf. Aday and Livingston 2008). This is often conceptualized as a "boomerang effect" in that local advocacy groups without access to the policy process connect to TANs to draw in international pressure on authoritarian governments (Keck and Sikkink 1999; Allendoerfer, Murdie, and Welch 2019; Bloodgood and Clough 2017). Yet little is known about how TANs may also adversely affect domestic advocacy groups in the autocracies of the Global South, whose political ideologies stand in contrast to those in Western democracies. Autocrats perceive the intervention and support of international actors as undermining national sovereignty or even as an attempt to democratize their regimes. Local interest communities with strong links to TANs may therefore face unique challenges to their viability and effectiveness. This chapter addresses this lacuna in scholarly works by asking how local advocacy groups, that is, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), in autocracies adapt to the tightening repression that comes with increased transnational networking, while still reaping the enhanced policy influence promised by the latter.

Drawing on interviews with key informants, case studies, and media data and observations, the chapter examines the overarching strategic

adaptation of local and international activists, in light of the case of an environmental movement that aims to influence policy decisions relating to dam construction in Cambodia.[2] The case of Cambodia illustrates how repressive measures are adopted by the ruling party to resist the influence of local-cum-international advocacy groups funded by Western democracies. These measures primarily target human rights groups and NGOs defending the environment. Consequently, interest communities in these issue spaces tend to be sparser and less diverse than those lobbying on more innocuous policy topics. The chapter argues that international activism undermines the effectiveness of local advocacy groups, as their support raises concern within the host authoritarian regime over national sovereignty. This, in turn, duly shapes the regime's view of the identity and autonomy of local advocacy groups vis-à-vis Western actors. To remain engaged and active, advocacy groups have decentralized from organizational-based groups to unstructured mass participation movements of citizens and youth; they have done so not only to survive and avoid the repressive measures, but also to reframe their advocacy in line with sovereignty and the national interest. Incentivized by social media as a means through which to mobilize the participation of citizens and youth, these "homegrown" types of citizen movements stimulate national interest in protecting the environment and delimiting the role of international actors in the eyes of the authoritarian rulers.

These findings echo some of those in the other chapters in this book section, in that niche seeking, competition, and other organizational behaviors are in part functions of ecological pressures such as group density, which is similar to organizational behavior in democracies. At the same time, the regime cleavage introduces unique pressures on advocacy groups under authoritarianism. Autonomous groups seek to evade repression by informalizing or shifting to online forms of advocacy or, conversely, by adopting regime-aligned frames and partnerships with more proregime actors. Cooperation with international actors is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it may sustain groups in a resource-poor ecology, but on the other hand, may also attract additional repression.

The chapter proceeds with a review of the existing literature; it also addresses concepts pertaining to the way local and international advocacy groups, movements, and NGOs operate under an authoritarian environment. It will discuss how these networks provoke the resistance of the authoritarian rulers and how the networks undermine the ruling regime's notions of national sovereignty. After exploring the nexus between Cambodian advocacy groups and Western intervention, the chapter examines

environmental advocacy in the Areng Valley of Cambodia before providing a concluding discussion on transnational activism, national sovereignty, and social media in an autocratic regime.

Transnational Activism and National Sovereignty Issues

North American scholarship on interest communities investigates how "population pressures" shape interest representation in a country in terms of (1) the density and diversity of groups, (2) membership and organizational survival and change in strategies, (3) collaboration and competition among groups, and (4) how patterns of the external environment facilitate entry and exit (Nownes and Lipinski 2005; Gray and Lowery 2000; Halpin and Jordan 2009). The ultimate aim these studies have in common, in spite of the different foci, is to investigate how interest communities as a whole—rather than individual groups—develop over time and what repercussions this has on public policy outcomes. Meanwhile, in the Global South, studies of civil society advocacy highlight how advocacy groups, NGOs, and other actors are often induced by Western organizations and donors (Dietrich and Wright 2015). Other than influencing policies in the Global South, these advocates, in some cases, have sought to democratize authoritarian regimes (Ottaway and Carothers 2000). Consequently, group populations likely face a very different set of environmental pressures under authoritarianism than they do in democracies.

Advocacy groups that seek to influence policies in autocratic regimes often maneuver and traverse their own strategies between antagonism and cooptation to remain alive (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Young 2016a, 2016b). In so doing, they have to (1) maintain financial support, (2) adjust influencing strategies, (3) rebrand thematic areas of focus, and (4) maintain international networks (cf. Toepler et al. 2020; Dai and Spires 2017). Financially, resource-poor advocacy groups in authoritarian regimes rely heavily on the financial support of (Western) democratic and foreign donors, be they governmental or nongovernmental in nature (AbouAssi 2013; Toepler et al. 2020). Strategically, an adaption from confrontation (hard approach) to dialogue (soft approach) is among many examples of how advocacy groups seek to remain engaged under autocracy (Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2016; Gary 1996; Salmenniemi 2007). Thematically, groups have often readjusted and rebranded their areas of focus to remain legitimate (Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2015; Schröder and Young 2019). Some advocacy NGOs, for example, have refrained from working on

politically sensitive or politicized issues, including human rights, preferring to collaborate with the government for service delivery, especially in China and Russia (Teets 2013; Toepler et al. 2020; Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015). These coping strategies, however, may undermine the identity and autonomy of advocacy groups vis-à-vis their donors and in the eyes of the host authoritarian countries. Apart from these strategies, others seek international alliances through various means, including social media.

Engaging with international allies is necessary not only for the survival of advocates and activists in financial hardship, but also to leverage pressure from above (cf. Bloodgood and Clough 2017). Digital media has eased the formation of international alliances and networks between domestic and international actors. Building on Keck and Sikkink's (1999) boomerang approach, Livingston (2016) proposes a spiral model of advocacy using "digital affordances" of news media, that is, collecting and analyzing scientifically grounded information and evidence to pressure the noncompliant state. News media becomes "publicity as a weapon for the weak" (Berkhout 2013) that leverages public interest in expanding policy conflict to larger publics (Thrall 2006; Berkhout 2013). While media plays a spiraling role in rapidly amplifying networks and the participation of international actors to assist local advocacy groups, the effectiveness of this media-mediated network is questionable, as it possesses three possibly undermining factors.

First, the TAN-media-mediated boomerang approach increases reliance of domestic advocacy groups on Western funding, generating not only ideological dependency but also creating an identity problem when the authoritarian state scrutinizes them. In China, and parts of Africa, local advocacy groups are often accused of being Western puppets (Vanderhill 2017; Hearn 2000). Second, it is hard to claim that Western aid is still as effective as in the 1990s, given the rise of non-Western aid (e.g., from China), which is more supportive of authoritarianism and not tied to democratic progress (Knack 2004; Sharshenova and Crawford 2017). Cambodia is one of the examples of how Western aid and actors buttress the durability of the ruling regime (Ear 2013; Young 2016a; Young 2021c). Third, while many scholars have documented the conditions under which transnational advocacies fail or succeed (Andia and Chorev 2017; Carpenter 2007; Young, 2020, 2021c), little attention has been paid to how the effort of transnational actors is undermined by the notion of national sovereignty common to authoritarian regimes. China, for example, is reactive to international intervention (Tang 2016).

It is apparent that if local advocacy groups lean toward Western international actors to influence policy change, they are framed by the authoritarian government as undermining national sovereignty. Sovereignty consists of power, internally and externally, employed to govern the state (Bartelson 1995). Internally, sovereignty means ultimate control over the defined territory and the people residing within it. Externally, it is the freedom from outside intervention or interference. Provided these conditions exist, sovereignty is powerful and state-centric, whereas nationalism embodies cultural and psychological aspects and political ideology and movements within the nation-state (Ichijo 2009). The relationship between the two notions is that sovereignty is the tool with which to achieve nationalism. Given this notion of national sovereignty, any attempts by local advocacy groups to invite international influence violates and interferes with the policy of domestic authoritarian governments, China and Russia being the above-mentioned examples. While authoritarian national sovereignty is an obstacle to transnational activism, an opportunity may prevail depending on the extent to which local advocacy groups can frame themselves as "homegrown" advocacy groups. I will explicate this point further by looking into the strategic maneuvers of local and international advocacy groups involved in environmental policy advocacy and lobbying in Cambodia, a Southeast Asian country under hegemonic authoritarian rule and with high aid dependency.

Environmental Advocacy in Cambodia

Cambodia's sociopolitical, digital communicational, and economic development present both opportunities and challenges for local and international advocacy groups working on several important policy-related issues. Politically, Cambodia had been enjoying multiparty electoral contestation from 1993—before the final defeat of the Khmer Rouge in 1998—and this electoral arrangement lasted until the late 2010s. Since then, in order to maintain their grip on power, the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP), has increased its suppression of opposition parties, NGOs, and activists. In the 2013 general election, the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) claimed almost 50 percent of the national assembly seats, which posed a critical threat to CPP's power (Young 2021c). In the run-up to the subsequent 2018 polls, the CNRP was banned outright, enshrining the CPP's hegemonic political dominance (Croissant 2019). Cambodia represents a case of autocratization in an already author-

itarian regime, resulting in escalating pressures on the ability of many domestic and international advocacy organizations to survive.

Digitally, internet access and the growing number of Cambodian youth voters were among other factors that facilitated the CNRP's electoral gains of 2013. After the conflict in the late 1990s, Cambodia's access to the internet and digital communication was poorly developed. As the infrastructure was restored, fiber-optic cables were connected to Cambodia from neighboring countries and internet access improved significantly, rising from 1.26 percent in the early 2010s to around 34 percent and 47 percent of the population in 2017 and 2020, respectively.[3] The number of mobile cellular phone subscriptions increased exponentially, from around eight million phones in the early 2010s to twenty million phones in 2018, surpassing the total population of Cambodia in the same year (about fifteen million), a larger proportion of which were youth (Young 2021b). Post-Khmer youths (between eighteen and thirty-six years old) are now better educated and equipped to access and use social media as a platform of news exchange. While the ruling party controls mainstream television and newspapers (Young 2021b), news on social, environmental, and human rights issues is widely circulated by citizen journalists and alternative media outlets. Social media are increasingly used as a platform to mobilize public opinions to tackle social, environmental, and public administration issues (Vong and Hok 2018; Young 2019, 2021a). Public attention to environmental and social problems correlates with the trend of increased access to internet and social media.

Cambodia's economy, as well as its civil society, is heavily dependent on foreign assistance. From 2011 to 2019, about US$13.37 billion of official development assistance (including NGOs funding) has flowed into Cambodia (RGC 2020). Among several donors, the EU funded about 14 percent and China 26 percent of the total aid budget, and the latter is by far the largest development partner of Cambodia (RGC 2020). Sixteen percent of the total amount was funded by and through (local and international) NGOs. Aid funneled through NGOs increased significantly from US$200 million in 2011 to US$250 million in 2019 (RGC 2020); it was distributed among approximately 1,500 active NGOs (of 5,659 registered with the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) as of 2020[4]) working in several sectors. The emergence and survival of Cambodian advocacy groups, especially NGOs, are thus almost the byproduct of Western aid. The ability to influence the policies of these local advocacy groups has relied heavily on foreign aid and assistance. These local groups can be classified as (1) service delivery, (2) advocacy and empowerment (human rights-based

approach), and (3) human rights, governance, and democracy.[5] The last two categories have played a critical role in sociopolitical, economic, and environmental policies in the country. Since the early 2000s, there has been a considerable shift in NGO activities from service delivery to empowerment, advocacy, and rights-based approaches, evincing the belief that rights are at the center of sustainable development (Young 2016c); in contrast, these activities are perceived by the ruling government as a threat. This shift was one of the factors that contributed to the electoral support of the opposition party in 2013.

Economically, Cambodia's public institutions are designed to extract rents from both public goods and natural resources to ensure the ruling party's grip on power (Young 2016a). Both domestic and foreign investments have targeted locations where natural resources are abundant (Young 2019). In many places, the protests staged by local communities (with a certain degree of support from local and international NGOs), which attempted to reclaim their natural resources lost through land grabbing, received mixed results; some succeeded, while others failed (Young 2017, 2020). One of their achievements was to influence the state to issue a moratorium on economic land concession policy in 2012. The concession policy had, since its introduction in 2005, caused tremendous impacts—such as forest clearing and evicting communities from land and preventing their access to natural resources—that eventually degraded the environment in general. The moratorium was perceived as the successful outcome of the joint efforts of local and international groups who have, based on research and documentation of the impacts, petitioned the ruling government and also staged collective actions, such as both nonviolent and violent protests. If the impacts had not been addressed by the 2012 moratorium, the ruling party might not have been elected in 2013, thus possibly provoking the ruling government to take repressive measures.

Passed in 2015, the law on associations and nongovernmental organizations (LANGOs) was seen as a tool to regulate and suppress many local and international NGOs. The ongoing harassment and arrests of human rights and environmental defenders (Schröder and Young 2019) caused the latter to resort to various approaches, including the use of social media, which about 67 percent of Cambodians subscribe to as of September 2020.[6] The ubiquity of access to internet and social media has transformed not only the tactics of grassroots advocacy groups and NGOs working on environmental issues, but also the expansion of these advocacy groups beyond organizational structures (Young 2020). It has also facilitated faster information exchange between local and international advocacy groups (activ-

ists, NGOs). Mobile phone companies have increased network coverage up to 90 percent of the area of the country, including urban and some more remote regions, apart from mountainous areas (Young 2020).

The following sections illustrate a case of strategic mobilization of advocacy groups, whose central aim is to curb the repressive measures of Cambodia's autocratic government and to eventually influence the latter's decision making on environmental protection in the Areng Valley. The success of the Areng campaign illustrates how advocacy groups use social media to mobilize the mass participation of ordinary citizens to influence policy, to leverage national interests, and to influence the decision-making process of the ruling government.

Maneuvering through Suppression: Environmental Advocacy in the Areng Valley

Located in Koh Kong Province, southwestern Cambodia, Stung Cheay Areng Valley is known as a biodiversity jewel of Southeast Asia.[7] In early 2014, the government of Cambodia granted a concession for hydropower development to a Chinese company, Sinhydro, to explore the feasibility of building a dam. This project would have forced more than 1,300 indigenous Chhong people to abandon their ancestral lands and would have flooded a 9,500-hectare area that is home to some thirty globally endangered animal species.[8] The dam would have blocked the flow of the river and destroyed the downstream habitat for wild fish that is crucial to the local economy.[9] With these foreseen unfavorable impacts, and without proper consultation with the host communities, the Chhong communities in the Areng Valley called on the government to abandon the dam project. Eventually, the prime minister decided not to proceed with the dam construction.

Many advocacy groups lobbied against the dam in the Areng Valley, as depicted in figure 5.1. These groups consisted of a variety of nonstate actors targeting autocratic policy-making institutions: ministries and the government. In comparison to other issue areas, the interest community lobbying the Areng Valley issue is relatively sparse and populated by relatively small groups. Only some of them focus exclusively on this issue, whereas others pursue more public interest agendas. This is partly because of the highly sensitive nature of environmental policy making in Cambodia. As noted above, rent extraction from natural resources is an economic pillar of regime maintenance (Young 2021c). Interest communities in this

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┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────┐
│ Individual donations │                    │  International    │
│     Domestic         │                    │     donors        │
│     Diaspora         │                    │                   │
└─────────────────────┘                    └──────────────────┘
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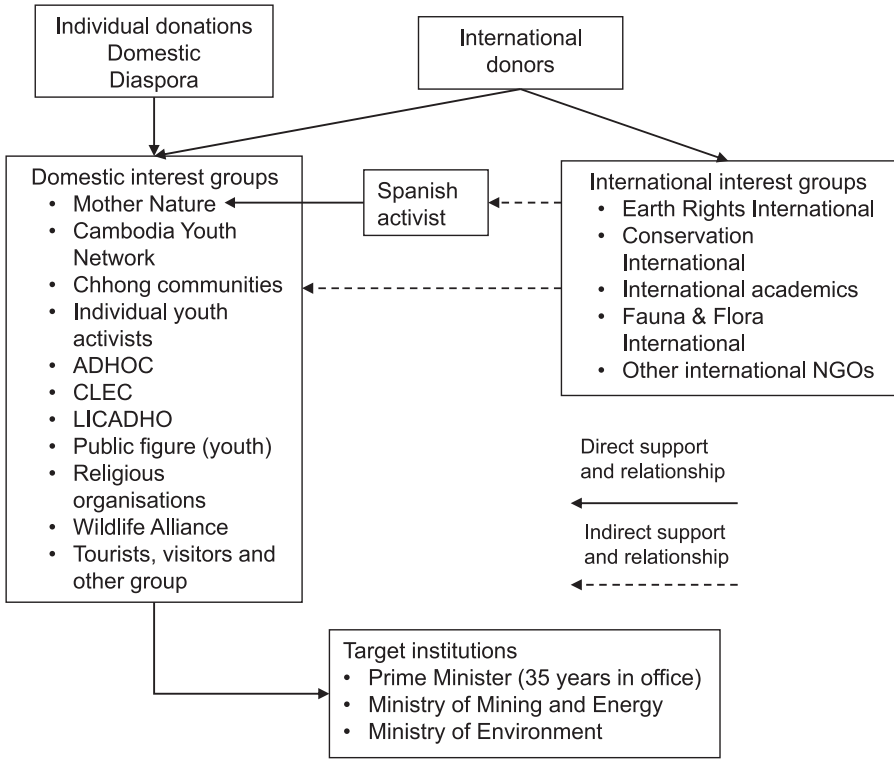
Figure 5.1. Ecology of Advocacy Groups, and the Target Institutions
Source: Author.

issue space therefore come under increased pressure, more so than in some other, more innocuous, areas.

Although domestic and international groups employed direct and indirect tactics, they complemented each other to achieve the common purpose. The indirect support included scientific research to collect evidence, technical assistance to communities and youth groups, and joint statements to prevent dam construction (mostly by international organizations). On the other hand, direct support includes financial support, protests, and ritual activities.[10] Domestic advocacy groups[11] that are formally registered have, based on their formal project proposals, mobilized financial support mostly from many international NGOs and donors[12] from North America and Europe. These groups include the Cambodian Youth Network (CYN), Mother Nature Cambodia,[13] Independent Monk's Network for Social Justice (IMNSJ), Wildlife Alliance, ADHOC,

LICADHO,[14] and Community Legal Education Cambodia (CLEC). Meanwhile, the informal groups—such as youth activists (from both the ruling and opposition parties and independent activists), Chhong community representatives, and monks—have raised financial support from Cambodians within and outside the country. Mother Nature Cambodia has mobilized financial support from charities, from individual donors within Cambodia and abroad, and from formal donors based on project proposals (but these donors are not disclosed publicly).[15]

Advocacy actions, such as petitions, roadblock protests, ritual celebrations (e.g., animistic ancestral events, tree ordinations), were initially organized by a group of Chhong communities in response to a plan for hydropower electricity construction in the valley. The protest campaign was later joined by youth activist groups, specifically Mother Nature Cambodia, CLEC, ADHOC, LICADHO, CYN, and IMNSJ. While the duration of these NGOs support actions was based on their funding, CYN, Mother Nature Cambodia, and youth activists have stood alongside the Chhong communities until the present. Youth activists of Mother Nature Cambodia and other groups initially supported the peaceful roadblock protests before the communities resorted to social media to amplify the Areng Valley case. Videos and narratives of the aesthetic beauty of the valley and the abundance of natural resources depict the area as one possessing spectacular eco-tourism potential and important cultural heritage sites.[16] Not only did this raise awareness of the issues confronted by the Chhong communities, but it also drew the attention of other actors, youth activists, and tourists. The scientific research conducted by local-cum-international academic research institutions, made possible by support from within the country (e.g., Royal University of Phnom Penh) and abroad, was later used by the youth and NGOs, Earth Right International, Conservation International, and media outlets to expose the evidence of how the dam project would destroy the rich biodiversity and wildlife, including the endangered Siam crocodile. This data formed the basis for what is called "evidence-based advocacy" employed by the local youth and Chhong communities to advocate their position and oppose the decision of the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and Ministry of Mining and Energy (MNE).

Social Media as Cross-Boundary Exposure

To frame the environmental degradation of the Areng Valley to a broader audience of potential allies, the core coalition of youth groups ramped up

their mobilization effort via social media. The logic behind this was the view that fewer members meant higher susceptibility to intimidation by the authorities. At the initial stage of lobbying, they indeed encountered numerous instances of threats and harassment by local (commune and district) and provincial authorities, who accused them of inciting villagers to obstruct a government plan that benefits the nation.

Youth activists' skills in image making and video production were key in their mobilization strategy. They helped reach a number of different audiences. Among them were ordinary tourists from within the country who served as multipliers. Kanha,[17] a female activist with Mother Nature, said, "when they visited Areng, they helped promote Areng, like one person (would) tell another one, and then promote another ten through social media network."[18] As the issue expanded, members of the youth wings of both the ruling CPP and the opposition CNRP aligned with the cause to support the local groups. For instance, Thy Sovantha, social media figure and a then-CNRP affiliate, mobilized youth to visit and camp in the valley to showcase, through social media, the area's scenery to other youth. On some visits, hundreds of youths, be they ordinary citizens or members of the parties, joined the expedition on the dirt road to the Areng Valley. Given this participation, Cambodians in the country beyond the advocacy groups and the diaspora heard about the Areng Valley and the plan to construct a hydropower dam. The Cambodian diaspora, who all condemned the dam plan, were also a source of financial support for the advocacy efforts of the youth groups, including Thy Sovantha and Mother Nature.

While major formal media outlets (both local and international ones) reported on the campaign, it was citizen-made news images and videos that shaped public perception. The youth activist-cum-citizen journalists could report on issues at the Areng Valley at any time, despite the local authority's barring media access to the physical protests, marching, and road blockages; the use of social media meant that the activists could reach out to a larger population. The venerable But Buntench, leader of IMNSJ, who joined hands with the local community, CYN, and Mother Nature to protect the Areng Valley environment, highlighted this strategy in a speech: "[A]nd another work that I have to go further, I keep using social media and producing clips and try to publish, as you may have seen a lot from *Phnom Penh Post*, *Cambodia Daily*, *New York Times*, Bloomberg, we have done a lot with them [Areng communities], so we continue to do that."[19]

The monks and IMNSJ used social media to educate the public about

the rights of indigenous communities to the environment and natural resources. Together with other youth activists, the campaign aimed to disseminate news and images about the communities to a local and international audience. It was part of the movement's outside lobbying strategy to provide evidence that exposed the crime of natural resource destruction by the country's kleptocratic elites; through these means, they wanted to convince the public and other advocacy groups to help protect the forest and influence decision makers. The strategy was clearly articulated on the Mother Nature website: "Exposure of these crimes on mainstream and social media and any other means is a vital tool we must make good use of. This informs and engages the public, puts pressure on decision-makers and helps inspire others to become activists."[20]

Through social media, especially Facebook, they envisioned that each reader would serve as an eyewitness to the intended crime and would reproduce and recirculate the (photographic) evidence to their networks. The evidence demanded responses from the spectator (Young 2021a). The more news, images, and videos were created and recirculated on social media, the stronger the issue resonated on the public agenda. The Mother Nature Cambodia Facebook page—with more than 351,632 likes and 403,164 followers—posted numerous photos and videos questioning the irregularities of the state-sponsored project in the Areng Valley. In addition to bringing to light proof of the state's nontransparency in natural resource extraction that can only lead to depletion, all posts on the Facebook page attracted cumulatively up to twenty-two million views (more than the total population of Cambodia, i.e., sixteen million) and more than a million timeshares[21] (as of June 2020). The youth activists of Mother Nature Cambodia also trained the Chhong communities on how to use social media and digital messenger apps that connect them to other local and international media outlets. Kanha described this self-broadcasting strategy: "[W]e can teach the community to take photos and videos and share the information when they receive information or have any new information they have to upload them into the group without calling to the media outlets."[22]

Figure 5.2 provides an indication of the intensity of the movement's social media engagement. It shows the results of a Google Image search and Facebook public image search using the keywords "Areng Cambodia." The graph suggests that Areng began to emerge on social network sites in early 2013, while its presence beforehand had been limited. Both images posted on Facebook and appearing on Google Images increased rapidly from 2013 to 2015. During this period, images of the indigenous Chhong
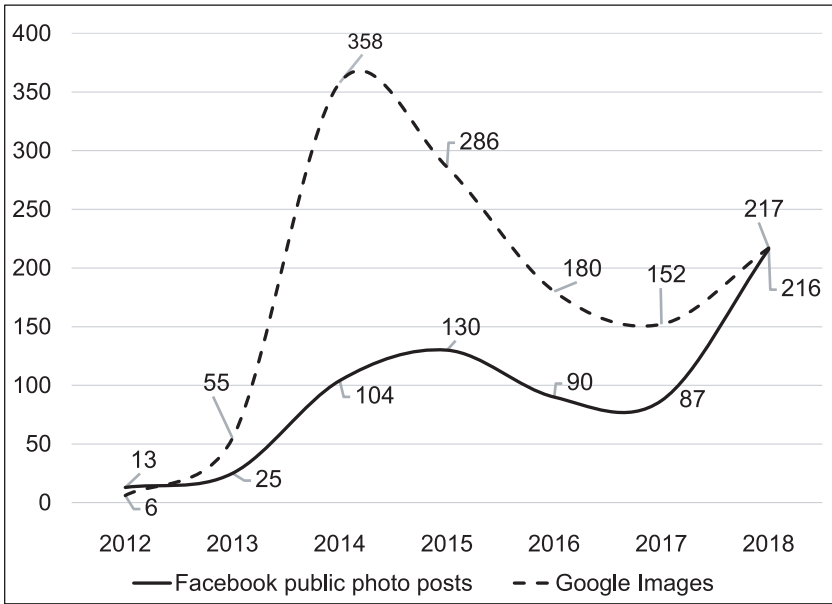
Figure 5.2. Shared Images of Areng Cambodia on Google and Facebook
Source: Author.

community and activists' activities designed to protect the valley were shared. The boom of imagery during this period was due to the involvement and mobilization of youths from both political parties to protect the area's landscape, especially after the 2013 elections.

Annually from 2014, at least one hundred Facebook users have posted photographs using the public setting. News images of Areng appearing on Google jumped to around 350 images. The decline of images in Google and on Facebook from the end of 2015 to early 2017 was due to the intense political environment between the opposition, CNRP, and CPP. Celebrity activist Thy Sovantha defected to the ruling party in June 2017, and Areng became politicized. After the general elections of mid-2018, the number of people posting photographs on Facebook about Areng again increased significantly, from 87 persons in 2017 to 216 persons in 2018. Likewise, Google images of Areng also increased during the same period.

Repressing Foreign Support and Activism

Despite the movement's expectation that mobilizing followers and drawing media attention would provide them with some protection, the gov-

ernment, in fact, ramped up its suppression efforts. The gradual decline of media attention to the Areng Valley issue after 2015 is a result of crackdowns and tightening repression, including the arrest of opposition party members and NGOs working on environmental and human rights issues and the expulsion from Cambodia of Spanish environmental activist and cofounder of Mother Nature Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson (see figure 5.1). The enforcement of LANGOs (2015) restricted and compelled NGOs to reregister and comply with all requirements set in the law and by the Ministry of Interior (MoI) (Curley 2018). In addition to providing details of their bank accounts, NGOs are required to report regularly to the MoI and provincial offices where they are operating.[23] After 2017, NGOs were warned not to carry out protests without permission from local and provincial authorities (Schröder and Young 2019). Although the MoI lifted the restrictions in 2020, the provincial authorities remain vigilant in keeping NGOs' activities in check by, for instance, prohibiting them from organizing public events.[24]

The crackdown on advocate groups was accompanied by tightening the space available for the political opposition. Khem Sokha, deputy leader of the oppositional CNRP, was accused of conspiring with foreign countries to topple the ruling government and arrested in September 2017, ahead of the 2018 general elections. In November 2017, the Supreme Court ruled to dissolve the CNRP, removing the only existing electoral threat to the ruling party. Together with other opposition politicians, human rights and environmental defenders, and journalists, they were convicted of criminal offenses and are either in exile or held in detention. The repressive measures undertaken by the ruling government from early 2015 to 2018 created a threatening environment that dispersed the unity of the environmentalist movement. The movement leader, celebrity activist Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson, was arrested and deported on February 23, 2015, after allegedly overstaying his visa.[25] The deportation was instigated by Prime Minister Hun Sen's speech at a graduation ceremony addressing the activist by name and calling for his deportation. Later, Mother Nature was threatened with the revocation of their organizational registration with MoI if it continued to be led by Gonzalez-Davidson. The close alliance of a foreign activist like Gonzalez-Davidson with Mother Nature provoked a lack of autonomy and nontransparent identity for the NGO.

In response to such repressive measures, Mother Nature chose to deregister itself from MoI's system and transformed itself into "a movement of concerned citizens." Mother Nature activist Thun Ratha said that instead of acting as a formal organization, "we will use our rights on behalf

of Cambodian citizens."[26] Mother Nature activists have since operated as citizen activists who use their rights to protect the environment and to question the government's nontransparent activities.

From Organizations' Interests to Citizens' Interests: Leveraging Nationalism in an Autocracy

Cambodia's environmental movement has adapted to the increased suppression by utilizing strategies similar to those of advocacy groups in other authoritarian contexts (Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2015). This includes the use of a different language and terminology when advocating and lobbying the rulers. For example, NGOs have rephrased "corruption" to "awareness-raising about the issues," and they avoid using sensitive terms such as "human rights, advocacy, empowerment, land rights" (Schröder and Young 2019). These adaptations have pushed some NGOs to use language resembling that of "service delivery" NGOs of the 1990s (Young 2016c).

In the case of the Areng Valley, the leading advocacy groups, such as Mother Nature, have reorganized their strategies in an entirely different way. They have voluntarily dissolved their organizational structures and have operated as "citizen movements" that are based on constituents' or citizens' rights as defined in the Cambodian constitution. While these citizen-focused movements are still linked to international support from international activists, such as the Spanish activist, their tactics have decentralized to focus on civil rights, the right to advocate and report government irregularities. This enactment of citizen activism has created a kind of "homegrown activism," in contrast to importing the tactics and approaches of Western donors, whose financial support to Cambodia has declined. Western support has been replaced by emerging donors such as China, a leading and strategic development partner. With the intention of suppressing the influence from international activists, especially figures such as Gonzalez-Davidson, who has financially and tactically supported local activists from abroad, the prime minister commented, "[L]et the Ministry of Interior take measures. It's not just foreigners, and it's also Khmers that will be sentenced, and other NGOs shouldn't express much."[27] The comment does indicate that being a foreign national undertaking activism in Cambodia could undermine Cambodia's national sovereignty; the country is free from interference based on its constitution. The tension between "foreigners" and "Cambodians" illustrates the prime minister's rhetorical approach of cultivating nationalism and national interests.

Another example of how leveraging national interests has aided the movement—in the sense of the ruling party's interests in protecting the Areng Valley—is the defection of Thy Sovantha, the aforementioned social media celebrity and former youth leader of CNRP. Sovantha, with 2.2 million followers on Facebook as well as her adventurous activities—including off-road expeditions and climbing mountains to capture the spectacular view of the valley—was eventually praised and supported, not only by ordinary Cambodian citizens and diasporas but also by political leaders.[28] The epic view and scenery of the valuable landscape was circulated on Facebook to invoke national interest in protecting the valley (figure 5.2). Prime Minister Hun Sen personally said, "Thy Sovantha, known as a Facebook user, used to lead groups to the Areng area, [as part of] a protection movement, and I would encourage her to continue because there is nothing wrong with protecting the forest . . . all the people love the forest and [Sovantha] also hates the timber traders and loggers as well."[29]

The participation of Sovantha can be considered part of the process of sidelining foreign-sponsored activists from Cambodia's national affairs. Taking ownership of the Areng Valley issue, the prime minister turned the issue into one of national interest. When the prime minister later confirmed that there would be no hydropower dam at Areng Valley, what might have been perceived as a success of foreign NGOs was turned into the success of homegrown activists, supporting rather than undermining the national interest. The notion of national interest has been brought to light for two reasons. First, the ruling government wishes to hijack the mass participation of Cambodian youth, who joined together in protecting the Areng Valley through either local NGOs and their own groups, or through Thy Sovantha. This participation has reframed the Areng Valley as a shared natural resource of not only the Chhong communities but also the entire Cambodian population, as in protection of the Prey Lang forest (Young 2020). Hun Sen sees this as an opportunity to mobilize future political support by using nationalistic and sovereignty-building approaches, shying away from foreign support and activism. Second, when Sovantha defected to Hun Sen's ruling CPP, the PM readily claimed credit for characterizing her as a brave young woman who helped protect the forest and the Areng Valley of the country, mirroring the ruling party's commitment to the Areng. The move aimed to demonstrate how the prime minister's activities and decision to stop or postpone the dam construction served his and Cambodian interests, rather than that of the foreign activists. The decision was to appropriate environmental protection as his national populist approach vis-à-vis the international NGOs and foreigners. The often-

circulated populist message on social media was "please be clear that no foreigner loves the Khmer more than the Khmer love themselves." Concerning Areng Valley and the foreign activists, he furthermore reiterated that "Khmers know how to handle it, we do not have to sit and wait for recommendations and ideas provided by foreigners."[30] These messages were widely broadcast by media outlets and social media as his nationalistic approach to cultivate popularity. He often claims that because Cambodians followed and believed in foreigners, like in the 1970s, the country was thrown into the genocidal Pol Pot regime (1975–1979) and rampant civil war. While Areng appears to be safe from the dam construction, the groups, especially youth organizations and Chhong communities, remain vigilant, since the ruling government may change its decision.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the "boomerang" model of transnational advocacy (Keck and Sikkink 1998) has limits in explaining the success of advocacy groups in influencing environmental policy under authoritarianism. In autocratic contexts where resistance to Western hegemony underpins the regime's legitimation discourse, international support may undermine the effectiveness of advocacy because (1) it invokes national sovereignty concerns of the authoritarian regime that eventually instigate repressive measures, and (2) it jeopardizes the identity and autonomy of local advocacy groups in the eyes of the ruling system. Rather than being purely beneficial, transnational networks may inadvertently induce local groups to adapt by changing their organizational forms and agenda, by addressing a common cause with the ruling regime's interests, and by reframing the environmental and related issues to invoke the national interest, hence delimiting the role of Western international actors.

To unpack this proposition, I have drawn on a case of the Areng Valley environmental movement in Cambodia, where foreign activists and international organizations, together with local advocacy groups and youth activists, actively engaged in confronting and influencing the decision of the government to abandon the plan to construct a dam in the area. The success of the Areng case illustrates that while social media may play a central role in mobilizing and diversifying advocacy groups to leverage pressure, it also increases the resistance of the ruling government. These advocacy groups have to strategically maneuver through the repressive measures orchestrated by the government.

Existing scholarship drawing on the boomerang model expects that local interest communities resort to international support to resist such repression (Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2015; Livingston 2016; Young 2017). Alliances with TANs may also substitute for lacking resources and members in the local group ecology. Instead of heavily relying on international networks, however, the Areng Valley advocacy groups adapted their strategies in response to repressive measures imposed by the ruling government against foreign intervention. This adaptation involves the decentralization of advocacy groups, from formal organizations to structure-free citizens' and youth's mobilizations based on the enactment of individuals' rights toward a common cause: protecting the environment. Not only does this adjustment expand policy conflict to wider publics of interested individuals and citizens, but it also eludes the ruling government's repressive measures. This can be achieved by the ubiquity of social media that mediates and amplifies the collective participation of interested citizens, such as visitors and tourists, to pay attention to protecting the environment for the nation rather than for the benefit of the small community in the Areng Valley. These "homegrown interested citizens," including the joined hands of ruling party activists, spark the "national interest" in protecting the environment rather than being perceived by the authoritarian rulers as the intervention of the foreign actors.

This feeds into the notion of certain "dismal conditions" for lobbying in autocracies, which are further discussed in the concluding chapter. Specifically, the implications of my study of environmental advocacy in Cambodia are twofold. First, group entry and survival as well as organizational forms are subject to different ecological pressures in contexts where foreign funding is a major or even the only source of income. Access to the policy-making process is limited, which explains the appeal of international alliances with the potential to bring foreign pressure to bear. But at the same time, a regime's need for social control leads to repressive measures on those more internationally networked groups that diminish available niches and heighten incentives for competitive behavior among them. This is seldom the case in democracies. Interest communities under authoritarianism are thus subject to conflicting pressure to both *cooperate* with international networks and outside sources of funding and to *distance* themselves from them at the same time.

Second, since advocacy groups aligned with and supported by Western democratic countries are more often than not questioned, suppressed, or otherwise coopted by the ruling regimes, they face pressures to reframe and rebrand their strategies to align with the notion of national sover-

eignty. Groups without such foreign ties or groups closer to the regime operate in a very different ecology without those pressures, something that is also explored in the following chapter. The plausibility of policy influence under autocracy is therefore contingent on advocacy groups' prowess in framing a policy issue to be in line with national legitimation narratives, and also their ability to informalize their organizational structures and at least appear autonomous from foreign influences.

NOTES

1. I use the term synonymous with interest groups (see chapter 1) as groups organizing, articulating, and mediating societal interests in order to influence policies (Beyers, Eising, and Maloney 2008).

2. The case analysis of this chapter covers the period from the early 2010s to 2018, when environmental advocacy groups were quite active in Cambodia.

3. https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm#asia.

4. An official with the Ministry of Interior (MoI), interview, June 15, 2020.

5. These have been categorized by my observations and interactions with several key informants over the past decade.

6. According to Napoleoncat: https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-ca mbodia/2020/09.

7. According to International River: https://www.internationalrivers.org/campaig ns/cheay-areng-dam.

8. Zsombor Peter and Narim Khun. 2015. "Hun Sen Defends Proposed Areng Valley Dam." *Cambodia Daily*, February 4. https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/hun-sen -defends-proposed-areng-valley-dam-77352/.

9. NGO youth officer, interview, February 18, 2019.

10. Youth activist, interview, August 25, 2019.

11. According to the interview with an officer of an NGO (June 15, 2020), there are many more advocacy groups that cannot be identified since they work indirectly for the Areng communities.

12. Youth NGO officer, interview, September 5, 2020. There are many donors to list; please refer to individual organizations' websites for the lists of their donors.

13. NGOs registered with Ministry of Interior (MoI) led by the Spanish activist who speaks Khmer fluently.

14. Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights.

15. Youth NGO officer, interview, September 5, 2020.

16. Youth activist, interview, February 2, 2020, suggesting that there is a thousand-year-old cave cemetery of Chhong communities that serves not only as a place of worship but also for cultural preservation and tourism.

17. A pseudonym.

18. Khanha, interview, August 1, 2017.

19. Venerable But Buntenh's Facebook live on July 31, 2017.

20. One among many other strategies stated on the Mother Nature website: http:// www.mothernaturecambodia.org/about-us.html.

21. https://www.mothernaturecambodia.org/our-videos.html.

22. Khanha, interview, August 1, 2017.

23. A director of NGO, interview, June 18, 2020.

24. An executive director of NGO, interview, June 22, 2020.

25. Sean Teehan and Kevin Ponniah. 2015. "'I Will Come Back' Says Deported Activist." *Phnom Penh Post*, February 25. http://www.phnompenhpost.com/i-will-come-back-says-deported-activist.

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29. Sotheary Pech. 2016. "PM Praises Sovantha's Environmental Activism." *Phnom Penh Post*, July 4. http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/pm-praises-sovanthas-environmental-activism.

30. Chanveasna Ros. 2015. "PM Bashes Enviro, but Freeze Dam." *Khmer Times*, February 24. https://www.khmertimeskh.com/54724/pm-bashes-enviro-but-freezes-dam/.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

6 | Acts of Compliance and Tactful Contention

The Polarized Terrain of Women's Organizations in Turkey under Authoritarian Pressure

Bilge Yabancı

The Third Wave democratic transitions in central and eastern Europe and Latin America have created high expectations among the scholarly community and international donors alike about the democratizing potential of civil society in authoritarian regimes (Rosenblum and Post 2002; Diamond 1999) .[1] This perspective, however, is not unchallenged. Critical studies caution that civil society is not essentially a democratizing force. Autocrats often "extend their tentacles" to coopt various groups in civil society and "fine-tune" societal demands by silencing organized grassroots dissent (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1292).

In this chapter, I examine how the societal and political conditions of competitive authoritarian regimes (CA)[2] shape interest group ecologies.[3] The chapter demonstrates that civil society and the mobilization of interest groups therein is different in CA regimes compared to both consolidated autocracies and liberal democracies. There is a unique set of conditions affecting interest communities in these regimes. Pockets of civic resistance, relative competitiveness of the oppositional groups, political pressure in the form of cooptation and selective repression contour interest groups' organizational forms and entry and exit terms. I examine Turkey under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) (2002–present) as an illustrative case.[4] Specifically, I focus on advocacy in the area of gender politics by highlighting the role of women's organizations that legitimize or challenge the AKP's authoritarian gender politics.

In contrast to the other chapters in this section, I find a surprisingly dense interest community. This is due to the more competitive nature of

Turkey's variety of authoritarianism. Like the preceding chapters, however, I note that interest communities are on average less diverse under authoritarian conditions and that group competition and cooperation varies depending on groups' stance vis-à-vis the regime. Similar to the Cambodian case, I also observe virtual organizing and informalization as adaptive responses to selective repression.

Specifically, the case of women's organizations in Turkey reveals three lessons concerning interest communities in CA regimes, lessons that suggest CA regimes are not simply mid-points between consolidated autocracies and liberal democracies. First, contrary to expectations outlined in the book's introduction, the ecology of interest groups is dense, with high numbers of organizations and protests mobilized for politically and socially salient issues. This is mostly because civil society is highly polarized along partisan/ideological lines between government-oriented and oppositional groups. This stark polarization shapes interest groups' organizational morphology, action repertoires, and their relations with the government and the grassroots. The ability to affect governments' public discourses and policies depends on the goals and resources of interest groups, which are commensurate with their organic links and ideological proximity to the incumbents. Organizations with such links or allegiance to the government engage in "inside lobbying"[5] and can communicate with ministries and public authorities directly. They also have access to state resources and other favors to expand their organizational presence. In return, they take a compliant position or at best display only "consentful contention," taking a public stance that seems subtly contentious but remains consensual in motivation (Cheskin and March 2015).

Second, quite different from consolidated autocracies, interest groups in CA regimes have more options than just cooptation or atomized scattered contention. The street remains a "natural habitat" for oppositional groups, unlike in full autocracies (White 2015). They can turn to mobilizing public opinion through what I term "tactful contention." This encompasses (a) outside lobbying repertoires such as mass protests, disruptive actions, legal activism, or public awareness campaigns, spanning local, regional, national, and online arenas, and (b) the informalization of organizational structures. Tactful contention is a survival strategy adopted by oppositional groups. While the regime's nature allows a certain degree of openness to oppositional activities and contention, CA regimes are also highly unpredictable and arbitrary in terms of the repression targeting such activity. Repression can be selective, aiming only at some groups considered to be exceedingly visible or vocal at one

time. Moreover, this repression ebbs and flows, shifts to new groups depending on political developments (e.g., upcoming elections, the international context, the political opposition, etc.) and the priorities of the incumbents (Yabancı 2019).

As the empirical discussion shows, tactful contention may provide an effective antidote to the selective repression targeting formally organized interest groups (NGOs, associations, etc.), especially in the aftermath of the 2016 botched coup. Women's organizations in Turkey have turned away from the formal and professionalized morphology to informal, decentralized, or less professionalized structures, such as local groups and loose networks of a civic nature. This organizational form allows them to maneuver within the authoritarian structures by adopting the tactful contention repertoire and seeking broader grassroots cooperation. This argument mirrors findings presented in the preceding chapter on Cambodia, in the sense that informalization creates opportunities to maintain organizational relevance through outside lobbying. As a result, in CA regimes, drawing boundaries between organized interest groups and social movement organizations can be difficult.

Finally, polarization creates unique patterns of cooperation and competition between interest groups, effectively dividing policy space into two separate group ecologies. The case of women's organizations in Turkey shows that partisan polarization often cuts across previous cleavages, such as the religious versus secular divide in Turkey. It initiates new cooperation that did not exist prior to the AKP rule. Also, however, polarization has created an intensive competition between the government-oriented and oppositional groups over how to shape public opinion.

The findings are based on original fieldwork and twenty in-depth semistructured interviews conducted with activists and representatives of ten women's organizations in Istanbul and Ankara and participant observation in the events organized by both government-oriented and autonomous organizations. Data collection took place during three field trips in 2018 and 2019. Interviews and observations are supported by documentary analysis of various publications by women's organizations as well as social media posts from their official accounts and news coverage. The chapter proceeds with a theoretic breakdown of the role of civil society and interest groups in nondemocratic contexts. Then the empirical section focuses on the wide panoply of organized women's groups in Turkey, all of which have diverse and sometimes conflicting aims and roles, some legitimizing the regime, others promoting resistance or voicing and organizing dissent. The conclu-

sion reflects on the wider relevance of these findings for our understanding of interest group ecologies in nondemocracies.

Nondemocratic Regimes and Interest Group Communities

Authoritarian regimes oftentimes resort to nominally democratic institutions. They organize elections, create legislatures, and allow "loyal" opposition parties to stabilize the regime (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). This "culture of control" also extends beyond the formal institutions and "penetrat[es] [into] the associational sphere" (Riley 2005, 289). They can also tolerate surprisingly high numbers of interest groups as long as they are coopted and put under strict control to serve the regime's legitimation needs (Gerschewski 2013). Loyal interest groups prevent potential mass mobilization by channeling grievances and providing preferred venues to articulate demands before they reach a critical level of dissent that could threaten the regime (Lewis 2013, 328). Women's organizations in authoritarian regimes are a good example. Government-organized[6] women's associations are particularly adept at securing women's loyalty through mobilizing their votes during elections (Donno and Kreft 2019; Lorch and Bunk 2017). They also communicate the regime's ideological goals to women and distribute services or patronage only to "deserving" women (Tripp 2013; Zheng 2005).

Several studies have shed light on the reasons behind the widespread cooptation and capture of civil society in nondemocracies. Most often, interest groups do not have the resources to remain viable if they challenge the regime. They can only survive through close collaboration with the incumbents (Teets 2014). Therefore they seek to maximize their gains and adapt to the regime's rules knowing that antisystemic attitudes would not work (Aarts and Cavatorta 2013; Mertha 2009). Second, the top echelons of organizations often have a vested interest in the perseverance of corrupt regime structures, so they align their goals with the regime (Rivetti 2017; Wischermann et al. 2018). Third, resisting cooptation and maintaining an oppositional stance would mean institutional death for interest groups. Authoritarian incumbents repress "horizontal voices" that are able to produce counterdiscourses to the regime (Lewis 2013) and potential spaces where citizens can express "their grievances about the authorities to each other" (Glasius 2018, 185). Those who are able to resist cooptation "mobilize without masses" or without large-scale contention by channeling discontent into atomized individual action to minimize risks

(Fu 2017; Bayat 2009). Since cooptation and repression are so ubiquitous under fully consolidated autocracies, some authors have depicted a grim and static picture of interest group mobilization in nondemocratic systems (e.g., Chaichian 2016).

However, nondemocracies appear in many shades. Interest communities in CA regimes remain understudied compared to consolidated autocracies. Competitive authoritarian (CA) regimes have distinct characteristics. They are not faulty democracies or fully consolidated autocracies in the making, but they present a unique regime type (Levitsky and Way 2010). Nominally democratic institutions—such as elections—are in place and regulate access to power to some extent, but fair elections and other democratic procedures are violated extensively. Still, the opposition has the occasional chance of being elected, but only if they mobilize the grassroots effectively. Moreover, CA regimes still need a consolidated majority and require public approval for their policies to retain the seal of democratic legitimacy. This feature of CA regimes drives their distinct strategies toward civil society with the goal of keeping the society mobilized on their side.

On the one hand, only certain interest groups are empowered financially and politically, which encourages voluntary cooptation as a means to access benefits. Through empowered government-oriented interest groups, CA regimes convert contention "into the less threatening realm of social or officially sanctioned contention" (Cheskin and March 2015, 262). A good case in point are government-oriented youth organizations in Russia and Turkey. They are cultivated to serve the incumbents by absorbing dissatisfied youngsters, indoctrinating them with nationalism, and preventing them from joining antigovernment groups (Hemment 2012; Yabancı 2021a). These interest groups also act as policy entrepreneurs and brokers between the government and the group they seek to rally (Kulmala and Tarasenko 2016). They deliver services in areas where the neoliberal state has withdrawn, which improves the regime's performance legitimacy (Yabancı 2021a). Oftentimes, due to their links to social groups, they also offer "feedback mechanisms" that provide the incumbents with information about any emerging social demands and sources of discontent (Giersdorf and Croissant 2011).

On the other hand, CA regimes do not (or cannot) totally eliminate horizontal voices and organized dissent. As they seek to coopt civil society for their own purposes, they make themselves exposed to "a civil society dilemma" (Yabancı 2019). Namely, they avoid eliminating the civic space totally as they also benefit from it; but they cannot eliminate the chance

that oppositional forces might well utilize civic space. In fact, with no meaningful access to the monopolized executive and legislative, oppositional activism is concentrated in civil society and seeks to mobilize the grassroots for alternative participation and cooperation across political and ideological divides (Ortmann 2012). Yet CA regimes continue to target oppositional activity in civil society through selective repression that tends to be more violent than consolidated autocracies (Fein 1995, Pierskalla 2010). As Hegre et.al. (2002: 33) argue, these regimes "are partly open yet somewhat repressive, a combination that invites protest, rebellion, and other forms of civil violence."

In short, CA regimes are expected to host a dense and variegated interest group ecology and witness more protests in the form of public and large-scale contention than both consolidated autocracies and liberal democracies. Yet civil society is also likely to become segregated and polarized alongside the "recognized" and "criminal" ones due to the regime's capacity to impose selective repression on oppositional groups while careening government-oriented groups simultaneously. The next section assesses these hypotheses by examining interest group ecology and mobilizational dynamics of different women's organizations in Turkey, with a special focus on their relations with the regime.

Turkey's Government-Oriented Women's Organizations

During the early stages of AKP rule, several women's organizations successfully lobbied for gender policy reform or prevented legislation against gender equality (Aldikacti-Marshall 2009). There were even gains in women's rights thanks to some legal changes and Turkey's prompt approval of the Istanbul Convention in 2012.[7] Since the AKP's authoritarian practices have escalated in the aftermath of the 2013 Gezi demonstrations,[8] gender policy has been increasingly shaped by a nationalist-conservative approach. Like in many nondemocratic regimes where gender relations are frequently enshrined in "authoritarian legitimation strategies" (Lorch and Bunk 2016), in Turkey too, official political discourse promotes traditional gender hierarchies between men and women and marginalizes LGBTQ community (Doğangün 2020). Public policies conceive women and gender relations through family and social policy perspectives, encouraging women to prioritize caretaking and parenting roles (Güneş-Ayata and Doğangün 2017). The AKP's revivalist and populist discourse depicts motherhood as a service to "the glorious nation in the making."

Women are expected to maintain the social unity and educate healthy future generations with traditional values and national pride (Yabancı 2021c; Doğangün 2020). Several top-level government representatives, including President Erdoğan, have openly endorsed traditional social roles for women, promoting certain appearances and behaviors that align with the image of "sacred and chaste mothers and wives." On several occasions, government officials called "birth control a 'conspiracy against the nation', condemned abortion, encouraged marriage at a younger age, and stigmatized divorce," labeling women engaging in these unapproved acts as indecent and outsiders (Yabancı 2021c).

In order to strengthen and spread this nationalist-conservative gender discourse, the AKP has supported a group of government-oriented women's organizations. The most renowned organization is the Women and Democracy Association (KADEM). It was established in 2013 by a group of women close to the AKP. Erdoğan's daughter serves as the deputy chair of the organization and has extensive involvement in the day-to-day activities of the organization. It is a membership-based civil society organization engaged in advocacy, lobbying, projects, and training events on women's rights. Within a few years, KADEM opened forty-seven offices across the country and was granted "public benefit status" by the Council of Ministers in 2016, allowing the association to collect tax-free private and anonymous donations (KADEM 2017d). Although KADEM dominates the sector of government-oriented women's organizations, it often teams up with other similar-minded interest groups, such as Istanbul Women's Organizations Platform (GIKAP/IKADDER) that incorporates fifty-one women's NGOs, Hazar Education and Culture Association, Association for Women's Right against Discrimination (AK-DER), Family Platform, and now defunct Foundation for the Education and Solidarity of Female Health Professionals (KASAV). These organizations were established in the 1980s and 1990s by networks of conservative women who objected to the legislation known as "headscarf ban" in Turkey. With the AKP and the annulment of the headscarf ban, they have redefined their goals and aligned behind KADEM.

Government-oriented women's organizations pursue several goals and operate on multiple scales. Since KADEM was established, it has sought to strengthen the AKP's traditionalist gender discourse. To this end, KADEM and partner organizations fiercely criticize feminism and gender equality as "Western" concepts alien to "the unique" Turkish-Islamic traditions (Çağatay 2019). Accordingly, feminism and gender equality should be abandoned for rejecting natural differences between men and women and

for "masculinizing" women (Yabancı 2016). KADEM has coined the term "gender justice" as an allegedly superior alternative. KADEM's gender justice principle promotes the "God-given" and "different liabilities between men and women" and rejects the existence of sexual minorities (Aydın Yılmaz 2015, 108–13; KADEM 2020b). In practice, the gender justice concept haphazardly brings Islamic principles and themes from the Quran together with cherry-picked features of postcolonial feminist theory, and it has been widely criticized due to its inconsistencies and ambiguities (Yabancı 2016; Diner 2018).

Yet KADEM has employed a range of advocacy strategies to popularize the gender justice concept. For instance, it seeks to create a body of literature on "gender justice" through its own academic journal and expert reports. It has also organized six international conferences on gender justice that have been extensively covered in the pro-AKP media. Additionally, government-oriented women's organizations have sought to mobilize public opinion in line with the AKP's gender discourse. They often form a counter-bloc to feminist women's organizations to promote the AKP's controversial public policies regarding gender equality and women's rights. One case in point is the legislative change giving religious authorities (muftis) the right to perform marriages. In Turkey, civil law does not recognize religious marriages, which is considered a legal protection for women against abusive marriages. In 2017, the AKP introduced a legislative change giving religious authorities the right to perform civil marriages, while maintaining the nonrecognition of religious marriages on paper (Arat 2021). The proposal received backlash from feminist organizations that considered the proposal a cynical twist to allow and encourage religious marriages through the back door. The legislative change was also criticized for being against the constitutional principle of secularism that could potentially lead to misuse by allowing multiple marriages or forced/underage marriages in rural areas (author's interview, Respondent 1).

On the contrary, KADEM and partner organizations took an affirmative stance. Through press statements, government-oriented women's organizations argued that the legislative change would promote individual freedoms by giving them the right to choose and would eventually increase the number of civil marriages in rural areas (KADEM 2017a). Twitter and Instagram have also been actively utilized by KADEM to compete with critical arguments to shape the public opinion. Eventually, what is known as mufti marriages law was accepted in Parliament. For other controversial legislation, similar campaigns were undertaken to "warm up the public" to the proposed changes. One interviewee from an oppositional wom-

en's organization claimed that the process of drafting and passing laws concerning women is completely artificial. No decision at the Ministry of Family and Social Policy is taken without the involvement and approval of KADEM, which is "often aware of an upcoming draft law and start[s] campaigns to mold the public opinion in advance" (author's interview, Respondent 20). This statement has been confirmed by several other women's organizations. While it was difficult for them to give concrete details to what extent KADEM can change the government's position during the proposal stage, they have argued that KADEM and other organizations have access to inside lobbying to negotiate behind the scenes.

Government-oriented women's organizations do not always unconditionally support the AKP's public policies, especially if the issue is highly controversial. Instead, they seek to mollify the stiff public opinion by distorting the facts in order to divert public attention to minor issues. The draft law on sexual assault is such an example. Since 2016, the AKP has introduced three different versions of a draft that grants acquittals from charges of sexual assault of underage in cases where the perpetrator marries the victim (Karaca 2018). In practice, the proposal stands little chance to gain widespread public support. Sexual assault of minors remains a taboo topic even among the AKP's conservative-religious constituency. Feminist organizations also argue that the draft law would force underage women to marry rapists to dispel the societal shame in rural areas. For this reason, government-oriented women's organizations have avoided supporting the proposals openly. Instead, they have drawn public attention to the "unjust suffering of some married couples" under the existing act. Under the current law, courts order a prison sentence for the adult partner (always a man) for marrying an underage woman, considering it without qualification or excuse as sexual assault of a minor. KADEM has claimed that marriages that include a minor partner can take place consensually. In such cases, the organization claimed, traditional family union is threatened due to the imprisonment of men. KADEM has argued that the government actually seeks to prevent unfair imprisonments and protect the traditional family values, not to allow or encourage sexual assault of minors (KADEM 2020a). But the facts differ from what KADEM promotes in its public campaigns. The Turkish Federation of Women's Associations has noted that the total number of such consensual marriages that includes one minor party is merely 264. In contrast, according to the Ministry of Justice statistics, between 2010 and 2018 there were more than 150,000 court cases about the sexual assault and harassment of minors (Evrensel 2019).

KADEM's restrained engagement with controversial legislative proposals that are directly related to women's rights and gender equality represent what Cheskin and March (2005) call "consentful contention." KADEM's consentful contention presents a subtle criticism of the government, while seeking to ease the potential public reaction by offering a justificatory coating and even gradually preparing the grounds for legal changes. Consentful contention is mostly employed when the policy at hand is highly controversial for society in general and when autonomous and oppositional women's organizations have an organized reaction and have managed to rally public opposition. In such cases, government-oriented women's organizations would often seek to divide public opinion by presenting a reserved warning to the government and drawing attention to minor issues to ease mass public reaction, at least from the AKP's support base.

When asked about the importance of a common position and cooperation among women's organizations to protect the gains and rights of women, the head of a government-oriented organization responded that disagreement is normal among interest groups and that they themselves seek "an ideology-free approach" from their partners. When I demanded a clarification about what an ideology-free approach would be, she stated that "women's problems should not be used as a political tool to attack the government" (author's interview, Respondent 13). Clear from this statement is that a criticism of the government's initiatives is considered ideologically loaded and rejected by government-oriented women's organizations.

Exceptionally, KADEM initially played a role in saving the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention in behind-the-closed-door dealings with the government. In 2020, the AKP launched a discussion about the convention indicating an intent to withdraw and implement alternative national legislation in its place. By summer, social media was inundated by misleading information about the Istanbul Convention that it aims to "dissolve the family and normalize homosexuality." Conservative intellectuals, some AKP lawmakers, and progovernment newspapers joined the campaign against the Convention. In the midst of feminist organizations' protests, KADEM followed a silent strategy of negotiating with the government and on a few occasions gave interviews and released public statements to correct distorted information about the convention. KADEM's supportive stance on the Istanbul Convention, albeit its firm rejection of LGBTQ rights, eventually played a large role in shelving the AKP's plans to withdraw from the convention. It is important to note, however, that

KADEM did not collaborate with other women's organizations that held an oppositional stance or organized public protests. It pursued an alternative strategy of direct lobbying and avoided criticizing the government's plan in public, practicing again a strategy of consentful contention and behind-the-closed-door persuasion. Eventually, this strategy was insufficient to save the convention. In 2021, Erdoğan issued a presidential decree, without any consultation or due procedure, announcing Turkey's withdrawal from an international convention, making Turkey both the first country to sign the Istanbul Convention in 2012, thanks to the lobbying work of women's organizations, and also the first country to withdraw from it in 2021. Although KADEM had denied false allegations about the Istanbul Convention earlier, following the government's decision to withdraw, it acquiesced to blame the Council of Europe for not addressing "the increasing concerns and confusion that the Convention created". It promoted the argument circulated by Islamist-conservative organizations that the Convention was instrumentalized by 'gender ideologists' to "encourage LGBT among teens and children", and supported the AKP's promise of a national campaign to fight violence against women and preserve the family.

Government-oriented women's organizations also directly engage with women through country-wide projects, promoting parenting and familial roles for women such as vocational training, support for parents with drug-addicted children, integration programs for women refugees, and aid for people living in poverty (author's interviews, Respondent 13 and 14 KADEM 2017e, 2017c). Fieldwork interviews revealed that these organizations have vast financial resources. Personal contacts are often used to raise funds and secure authorizations for projects (author's interviews, Respondent 13 and 14). These projects are financed by ministries, AKP municipalities, and state institutions such as AFAD (Presidency Disaster and Emergency Management) and İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency) (KADEM 2017b, 2017f). Thanks to these projects, government-oriented groups have been able to establish grassroots presence. This active presence across the country has been praised by all interviewees, who claim that they represent not the well-off, educated, urban feminists, but the majority of women with traditional values and daily concerns in rural Turkey.

Even more striking is the financial support that some government-oriented women's organizations have received from the EU. For instance, KADEM's two largest projects to date, "Women on the move project" (KADEM 2016) and "Women's Civil Network in Politics" (KADEM 2014),

were financed as a part of the EU-Turkey Civil Society Dialogue. The EU funding has allowed the organization to establish partnerships in EU member states. The representative of the EU delegation in Ankara argued that when evaluating funding applications, the European Commission "does not classify interest groups as government-oriented and other in Turkey." Instead, it chooses projects with measurable and feasible goals (author's interview Respondent 15). Surprisingly, during the interview, the EU representative was reluctant to discuss whether such a technocratic approach would ignore the organic links between some interest groups and the AKP and might undermine the EU's own principles. Given that the EU is the largest international donor for Turkey's civil society, this attitude—if it continues—might also force repressed and deprived oppositional interest groups to compete with well-resourced government-oriented organizations for international funding in the long run.

Resistance and Coalition Building among Oppositional Women's Organizations

Following the 2016 failed coup, formal interest groups took a large blow. Hundreds of associations were closed through executive decrees, and their representatives and activists were put under pretrial detention (for a review, see Yabancı 2019). Despite repression, the AKP's attempts to control women's lives and bodies have been challenged by dissenting civil networks. These networks have emerged out of young, educated, and urban women's efforts. Unlike government-oriented organizations, they value independence from both political authorities and international donors. Their agenda is quite the opposite of the groups close to the AKP. They seek to prevent legislative changes or new policies that would undermine women's rights, while promoting gender equality and awareness about discrimination and violence at the public level.

Women's Councils (Kadın Meclisleri) and "We will stop femicides" (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu: KCDP) are the two most prominent groups in terms of their organizational reach and membership. They place the surging violence targeting women and impunity surrounding gender-based crimes at the heart of their organizational goals (author's interview, Respondent 12). In recent years, young Muslim feminists have also mobilized against the AKP's gender politics. "Initiative for Muslims Against Violence Targeting Women (KŞKMİ)" is a loose network established by women who openly identify as Muslims. In 2018, a group of

Muslim feminists also decided to establish an official association named "Havle." Together with secular feminist groups, Muslim feminists mobilize against the nationalist and patriarchal gender politics of the AKP. They argue that there is also a need for support from conservative/Islamist circles in order to address the AKP's core constituency directly (author's interview, Respondent 10). Moreover, Muslim feminists also challenge the widespread utilization of Islamic references to justify violence and discrimination against women. They argue that Islam does not create an ontological gender hierarchy. Instead, it is the centuries-long masculine interpretation of religious texts that has created gendered social codes and justified the secondary role of women in dominantly Muslim societies (author's interviews, Respondents 4, 9, and 10). In this sense, Muslim feminist groups agree with the secular feminists on the roots of violence. Yet their framing is different, with explicit references to religion. As one representative argued, "the problem is entirely related to masculinity". Yet they are familiar with how the conservatives and Islamists utilize religious references to justify masculinity and patriarchy, and strive to counter masculinity also with references from Islam (KŞKMİ 2016).

These autonomous women's organizations have achieved an impressive resonance and visibility among women in recent years, even though they are excluded by the government from the policy-making processes. Their choice for tactful contention plays a considerable role in building internal strength and resilience. There are two discrete factors behind tactful contention: the choice of organizational form and the ensuing action repertoire.

Organizational form refers to their grassroots, flexible, and horizontal networks. During the interviews, respondents frequently referred to their autonomy from the government by emphasizing their connectedness to the grassroots. This organizational strategy is also considered a panacea to "NGOization," which is often perceived as cooptation by incumbents or international donors and means losing touch with the core support base. A representative stated that "we do not call ourselves simply an NGO. Registering as a formal association was only for legal reasons so that we can get involved in court cases to support the victims of domestic and gender-based violence." This statement was meant to counter a possible mistaken belief that the organization registered as an NGO only to get donor funds for projects (author's interview, Respondent 11). Other activists emphasized that to be able to remain autonomous from governmental pressure and determine their own agendas, their organization remains a loose network and relies on crowdfunding. Financial independence allows

them to be accountable only to women who collectively contribute to the organization (author's interviews, Respondents 9 and 19). This way, they claim, they "can engage in public truth-telling" (author's interview, Respondents 4). This strategy of loose organizational form has become a wise choice as many NGOs faced closure and confiscation of property in the post-2016 coup period.

The second factor of tactful contention allows autonomous women's organizations to pursue a flexible and multidimensional action repertoire as an alternative to advocacy and direct lobbying and allows them to mobilize in large numbers. The following sections analyze this tactful contention repertoire.

Grassroots Mobilization: Forums and Street Protests

Women's Councils have initiated an exemplary case of effective grassroots mobilization of multiple spatiality, despite the restrictions on the freedoms of assembly and association. Local assemblies have been set in nineteen districts in Istanbul and twenty-five cities across Turkey (author's interview, Respondent 16). These forums aim to bring women from various educational and socioeconomic backgrounds to discuss issues related to gender discrimination and violence. Through localized gatherings, women converse about diverse issues from a particular case of discrimination in payment at a specific workplace to a case of sexual abuse at a university. As one activist mentioned, women participate in forums regardless of their partisan or ideological affiliations and focus solely on finding resilient solutions to specific problems (author's interview, Respondent 12). These forums have created an unprecedented form of grassroots direct participation in Turkey and encouraged more women to voice their demands, learn about their legal rights, and discuss long-term solutions for inequality and forms of violence targeting women.

Another major form of collective action that the autonomous women's groups have successfully mobilized is street demonstrations despite police violence and protest bans in the aftermath of 2016 coup attempt. Besides the annual feminist night demonstration on every International Women's Day (March 8), protests and street campaigns have mobilized thousands of participants against the government's controversial legal initiatives, impunity concerning particular cases of femicides, and even against the 2017 constitutional referendum that marked Turkey's regime change from parliamentary to uncontrolled presidential system (Yuksel 2017). Although secular and Muslim women choose to mobilize under separate organiza-

tions, they have built networks of solidarity and trust across the religious versus secular cleavage through collective street protests. During these protests and marches, Muslim feminists used distinct banners tactfully avoiding the use of feminist jargon and addressing conservative/religious audiences, such as "Prophet never harmed a woman," "Praise God, I am against domestic violence," "Instead of keeping silent, I take refuge in God and speak up against harassment, rape and violence." They often appeared next to LGBTQ-friendly and feminist banners that challenge patriarchy and "slut-shaming."

Women's persistence in maintaining street action even under the state of emergency and in light of protest bans has transformed contemporary advocacy in Turkey. Historically, protests and contentious action are often associated with the Kurdish movement, especially since street politics was brutally crushed after the 1980 coup. Interest groups became highly professionalized, technocratic, and project-driven, and run by a few connected individuals following the 1980s. Widespread use of protests by this new generation of women's organizations has widened the societal base of contentious politics in Turkey beyond the Kurdish movement. As one activist put it, "women's protests and press statements in public places have become an area of resistance on its own that the government cannot crush" (author's interview, Respondent 18). Women's protests have also assumed a symbolic meaning of cherishing and extending the pluralist spirit of Gezi demonstrations (see footnote 8).

Legal Activism and Public Awareness Campaigns

In addition to street action, women's organizations also engage in legal activism to ensure the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention and the ensuing Law 6284 that was issued in 2012 to criminalize all forms of gender-based violence. But the implementation suffers from widespread discretion by judges and prosecutors, who often grant remission during trials based on "good conduct" or "unjust provocation" by victims. To prevent remissions, volunteer activist-lawyers organize through the KCDP to offer legal assistance to victims or their families during the trials. When women have legal backing from these organizations, the security forces, prosecutors, and judges feel increased pressure to implement Law 6284, and the perpetrators often end up receiving the full penalty set out in Law 6284 (author's interview, Respondent 11).

Women's organizations support legal activism with public campaigns

about femicides. KCDP has been documenting and mapping femicides across the country since 2008. The organization relies on open digital sources to list country-wide femicide cases. Lately, their documentation has become the only reliable source on the number of femicides in the country, which is not only essential for legal redress but also to publicize impunity and the AKP's failure to implement the Istanbul Convention, and to create a collective memory for women's movement. KCDP also publicizes all the upcoming court hearings on its web page to increase public awareness for individual cases. According to one activist from the group, when people hear stories of murdered women, they become visible to the public conscience. Another activist argues that such actions make feminism a social and everyday phenomenon. They do not necessarily label these actions as feminism. By appealing to the grassroots and public conscience, their efforts seek to rally social support even from conservative segments by following or participating in the court hearings (author's interview, Respondent 11).

One of the visible gains of legal activism and public awareness campaigns has been the change in the perception of gender-based crimes in the media. Up until a few years ago, femicides in Turkey were covered with biased language in the media, which whitewashed murders through stories of jealousy or economic or mental issues (author's interview, Respondent 18). The term femicide has now been adopted thanks to the efforts of women's organizations. During the fieldwork interviews, I was told that this is exactly what these women's organizations seek, indicating a strong element of tactfulness in their contentious action given that they do not have access to direct lobbying to change policy outcomes. When they rally the public against violence and femicide cases, they seek justice for the victims, but they also hope to change the media and public perceptions about violence and discrimination and, ergo, increase the number of women who actively claim their rights from authorities.

Digital Activism

In addition to street mobilizations, legal activism, and public awareness campaigns, a distinct form of contention has emerged in the digital space. Communication technology and social media have helped women to build an impressive online mobilization capacity. A case in point is when the government issued proposals for laws regarding sexual assault 2016, women's organizations quickly publicized the proposal by labeling it "the

rape law" in Twitter hashtags. The framing was successful in creating a widespread public outcry and putting pressure on the government to withdraw the proposal.

The use of online mobilization is considered to be an effective form of pressure on authorities when combined with actual protests. As one activist succinctly noted, when thousands of women tweet the same hashtag, the authorities cannot hide a particular case of femicide or sexual abuse (author's interview, Respondent 19). Indeed, active online public awareness campaigns often precede demonstrations. For instance, in 2012, the "Say No to Abortion Ban" campaign combined online mobilization with protest events and successfully pressured the government to withdraw proposals to criminalize abortion. For instance, in the case of the brutal murder of Pınar Gültekin, the Women's Councils used social media to quickly organize protests across multiple cities. Eventually, the widespread use of social media and protests for Pınar forced President Erdoğan to take a personal stance by declaring he would personally follow the trial to ensure the murderer would get the utmost penalty under the law. This case is an example of how autonomous women's organizations can generate influence. Often this means mobilization through multiple channels including digital platforms, litigation, and protests to create public outcry and force authorities to take decisive action.

Women have also created digital informal networks through blogging. Women's blogs (some of the most known ones are Reçel, Çatlak Zemin, and 5Harfliler) have initially been created to share women's daily and intimate experiences (Goker 2019). One of them, Reçel, publishes pieces by self-identified Muslim women. According to the editor, the idea of blogging has emerged "naturally" out of a search to "understand each other's experience" with imposed social roles like sacred motherhood or the [partisan] meaning attached to wearing a headscarf (author's interview, Respondent 4). Similarly, Çatlak Zemin claims they have started the blog "to create a public space free from male violence where everyday issues can be discussed" (Cantek and Bora 2015). Bloggers often touch on personal or family-related experiences in their writings. Their style is generally humorous, with references to popular culture, and sometimes sarcastically questioning the patriarchal society and religion. Blog contributions, however, often trigger deeper discussions in the comments section, creating virtual public spaces of women's solidarity. In several ways, blogging has turned everyday concerns into wider discussions on patriarchy, political violence, and discrimination for women. Over time, topics covered in these blogs have also become more political, covering dismissed academ-

ics, conscientious objection, refugees, the Kurdish issue, the changing perceptions of Islam, and hate speech. Even Reçel has overcome early reservations and started to openly discuss issues regarded as taboo by religious communities, such as women's sexuality, birth control, and abortion.

In order to attract a widespread audience, these blogs do not always openly claim or engage with feminism as a part of their tactful contention. Yet it would not be wrong to claim that blogs have indirectly put feminism within the reach of "ordinary" women and men (Amargi 2013). Most importantly, blogging has revealed what had not been previously clear even to women: digital communities have revealed that regardless of being Muslim or secular, being a woman in Turkey means facing shared hardships brought on by gender hierarchies and discrimination under an increasingly nationalist and authoritarian regime.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked into the interest group ecology in competitive authoritarian (CA) regimes by using women's organizations in Turkey as a case study. Due to their unique characteristics, CA regimes have a distinct stance toward interest groups. As these regimes still seek to mobilize society and get public approval for their policies, they do not shut down civil society. Instead, incumbents aim to closely control the patterns of entry and exit into this space. To achieve that, they cultivate government-oriented interest groups, either by supporting the creation of new organizations with organic links or by coopting the existing ones. Meanwhile, they try to limit autonomous groups through selective repression and restrictions on freedoms of speech, association, and assembly. Yet the means of control, what is "allowed" and what is persecuted, tend to often shift due to the volatile political climate. Eventually, CA regimes cannot prevent the oppositional voices from turning to civil society.

In fact, the discussion on women's organizations in Turkey has demonstrated a surprising density of interest communities in CA regimes. Oppositional voices turn to civil society when an issue is considered significant, such as the exponential increase in gender violence and the perceived attack on women's rights in Turkey. Protests as well as other forms of disruptive action are not only within the reach of the oppositional groups but can also be maintained in the long term, despite repression and the risk of physical harm or detention during protests. The competitiveness of civic opposition and the continuing existence of pockets of democratic resis-

tance beyond formal institutions allows for what I term tactful contention. Tactful contention is a response of civic oppositional groups to the volatile political climate. It allows them to sail the shifting political conditions through an effective mixture of various organizational forms, multiple repertoires, and spaces of contention for resilience and for mobilization in the long term.

During the AKP era, some studies argued that women's movement has been weakened vis-à-vis the state (Negron-Gonzales 2016). Yet the discussion has shown that women's organizations have achieved an unprecedented internal strength thanks to tactful contention connected to the grassroots. First, selective repression increases the cost of remaining autonomous or in opposition for interest groups. This spurred the birth of network- or social-movement-like organizational forms, a part of the tactful contention strategy, to evade discretionary closure that hundreds of formal associations faced in the post-2016-coup era. Given the lack of access to policy making and direct lobbying, this strategy also helps to reach out to a wider array of audiences. The composition of these groups, joined by young, urban, and educated women, has also facilitated the network-like organizations.

Second, tactful contention is strategic, but not reserved, clandestine, or atomized in terms of contentious action. Contrarily, autonomous women's organizations have invented multiple alternative paths to advocacy to influence the public through direct grassroots engagement. They have mastered "outside lobbying" even under hostile regime conditions. They regularly mobilize women on the streets of urban cities, run information campaigns in district markets, engage in court cases for every single femicide case, and actively utilize social media for their goals. Moreover, they have initiated new alliances that have deeper connotations for societal coexistence and sustained opposition in Turkey. Women's mobilization against the AKP's nationalist and conservative gender order also bridges deep historical societal cleavages, such as religious/conservative versus modern/secular. Their tactical choices (i.e., sometimes not mentioning feminism while engaging in feminist acts, the use of outside lobbying, blogging under pseudonyms, grassroots campaigns, etc.) challenge the binaries of women's subordination and emancipation, antifeminism and feminism.

CA regimes, however, are also inventive. Another reason for the dense ecology of interest groups is the impressive increase in government-oriented organizations mobilizing for the same salient issues. In Turkey, women's groups close to the government display formal and professional-

ized structures and have access to direct lobbying through personal links with ministries and local governments. They seek "consentful contention," that is, presenting subtle, nonirritating criticism and at other times seeking to legitimize and disperse the government's gender policies by reaching out to women and international audiences.

In CA regimes, the "modes of wielding power are [periodically] reconfigured" when faced with effective bottom-up organizations (Froissart 2014, 220). To reiterate, CA regimes are not midpoints between democracies and autocracies. They have power to build a status quo that contributes to their resilience. This status quo is built partially on their capacity to utilize civil society through a pro-government sector that engages in "consentful contention", and partially their strategy that calibrates repression selectively to target certain interest groups. Under this status quo, women's organizations in Turkey find themselves under constant pressure to adapt to the changing conditions of repression for the sake of survival. They divide their limited resources between survival, community building, and influencing public opinion. Moreover, the dense interest group community is polarized between government-oriented and autonomous/oppositional interest groups that compete to shape public opinion.

The book's concluding chapter theorizes that three factors—access to policy making, the regime's information demands, and the regime's need for social control—shape all stages of influence production under autocracy. My study of women's advocacy in Turkey suggests that variation in policy-making access and social control drives the structure of interest communities. Government-aligned groups enjoy preferential access and are exempt from overt repression. Autonomous ones need to create access through pressure politics and constantly navigate policy red lines and restrictions. Conventional theories of density dependence may not explain group cooperation and competition in such bifurcated interest communities, as groups on either side of the regime cleavage effectively operate in different ecologies. While this chapter has utilized women's organizations as an in-depth case study of such dynamics, these observations can be extended to other interest groups, such as organizations working on youth, refugees, trade unions, and even diaspora organizations in Turkey. Autonomous/oppositional groups might be pushed to the margins of civil society in the long run as the government-oriented ones grow in terms of financial resources, organizational reach across the country, and even international visibility. Worse, they might be confined to the act of 'firefighters' for a very long time, addressing the urgent issues and crises as they keep appearing, rather than mobilizing for a widespread anti-systemic

change to put out 'the actual fire'. Still, continuous grassroots mobilization and efforts not to give up on tactical contention are the only ways to challenge the status quo that benefits the incumbents. This point also differentiates interest group mobilization in CA regimes from interest group mobilization in long-term consolidated autocracies.

NOTES

1. I use the term civil society to refer to "the social spheres of activism and interaction between the state/rulers and organized societal forces where power relations and 'hegemony', i.e. consent and legitimacy, is produced by regime-holders and challenged by counter groups" (Yabancı 2019, 289). This sphere is populated by interest groups that engage in activities of advocacy and lobbying to influence public policies as well as horizontally organized networks and social movements in "varying degrees of formality, autonomy and power" that aim to form public opinion, create salience and mobilize on specific issues (Centre for Civil Society 2004).

2. In CA regimes, political opposition and basic democratic practices exist. Yet "electoral manipulation, unfair media access, abuse of state resources, and varying degrees of harassment and violence skew the playing field in favour of incumbents" (Levitsky and Way 2010, 3).

3. I use the term "interest groups" throughout the chapter to denote voluntary non-profit actors that seek to influence policy outcomes but do not contest elections. See chapter 1 for a discussion of different group labels.

4. In the early 2000s, Turkey was considered as a democratizing country under the impact of EU candidacy. Especially since 2010, autocratic tendencies have progressively escalated, curbing the independence of the media and the judiciary and civil society.

5. Inside lobbying strategies rely on direct interactions with policy makers, whereas outside lobbying is aimed at mobilizing public opinion via news media and public actions. See also the three chapters in the next section of this volume.

6. Government-oriented organizations, known also as GONGOs, are a widespread phenomenon. These organizations are often semiautonomous in terms of membership and activities but highly reliant on the ruling parties or leaders in terms of political goals, ideology, organizational visibility, and resources. For a detailed discussion, see Yabancı 2021a, 2021b.

7. The Istanbul Convention is the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. https://rm.coe.int/168008482e.

8. Gezi protests were trigged by the AKP's demolishing a green area at the heart of Istanbul, and they quickly escalated into country-wide protests with hundreds of thousands of participants against the government's authoritarian practices. Many scholars agree that after violently crushing the protests, the AKP has turned to more undemocratic governance.

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Part IV

Strategies

7 | Going Public

When Do Human Rights Advocates Pursue Media Strategies?

Max Grömping

Advocacy groups combine different strategies of influence in complementary ways to achieve their goals. Most often, the pursuit of direct interactions with policy makers ("inside lobbying") is juxtaposed with the mobilization of public opinion via news media and public actions ("outside lobbying") (Beyers 2004; Kollman 1998). For human rights groups—those lobbying on behalf of international norms and marginalized constituents—outside strategies are of particular importance, as they expand conflict to wider audiences and possibly draw in potent international allies (Keck and Sikkink 1998). In that regard, human rights advocates are similar to other "citizen" or "cause" groups that lack power or connections through usual channels, who seek media attention to broaden their base of support and put pressure on policy elites (De Bruycker 2018; Dür and Mateo 2013; Tresch and Fischer 2015). Yet, as demonstrated amply by other chapters in this volume, advocacy groups operating under authoritarianism face constraints unknown to their democratic cousins, from no-go issues and subtle cooptation to overt repression and censorship. Not least, the very arenas they seek access to—such as media, legislature, or bureaucracy—may function quite differently under autocracy so that access does not necessarily translate into influence. This is all the more salient for human rights groups, who, by their very nature, are prone to antagonize autocratic rulers. Why and when do these groups nevertheless choose to go public with their advocacy?

In this chapter, I seek to determine the factors associated with human rights groups' decision to engage in outside lobbying. A number of influ-

ential studies have examined this very question among the broader popu-
lation of interest groups in Western democracies. Here scholars disagree
on whether the outside strategy is spurred chiefly by issue salience (Junk
2016; Kollman 1998), group type (De Bruycker 2018; Hanegraaff, Beyers,
and De Bruycker 2016; Dür and Mateo 2013; Weiler and Brändli 2015), or
organizational maintenance goals (Binderkrantz, Christiansen, and Ped-
ersen 2015; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2017). Importantly, though, this litera-
ture limits itself to group- and issue-level explanations, while ignoring
varying institutional constraints groups may face outside of liberal democ-
racies. Studies of civil-society–media relations in autocracies, on the other
hand, are mostly institutionalist, focusing on unilateral information con-
trol by the state, while giving less thought to societal actors' repertoires
(Lorentzen 2014; Huang, Boranbay-Akan, and Huang 2019).

I test the merit of these claims through a case study of electoral reform
In this chapter, I develop a two-fold argument. First, when broadening
the scope of inquiry beyond liberal democracies, the strategic alignment
of advocacy groups may play an outsized role. Groups more closely aligned
with the political opposition may be more involved in outside lobbying
than those closer to the government, because their key allies rely on public
attention as a resource to pressure the government. Second, however,
opposition alignment may become a liability where political institutions
are closed to outside voices in the policy process. Specifically, we should
expect stronger incentives for outside lobbying in countries where free
and fair elections motivate politicians to care about public opinion and
where media pluralism provides space for a variety of voices, including
those critical of the government. In other words, going public promises
higher cost-benefit payoffs in democracies than in autocracies, and—
regardless of regime type—in open rather than closed media environ-
ments. This should therefore make outside lobbying a more attractive
strategy for opposition-aligned groups only in such open contexts, but not
in closed ones.

I test the merit of these claims through a case study of electoral reform
advocacy organizations,[1] a subclass of human rights groups who focus on
the public interest issue of electoral integrity.[2] I draw on a cross-national
dataset of 291 organizations across 85 countries, measuring group strate-
gies, orientations toward the opposition, and other organizational charac-
teristics through a bespoke organizational survey (Grömping 2019). Mac-
roinstitutional constraints are tracked by data from the Varieties of
Democracy (V-Dem) project (Coppedge et al. 2021) and the Reporters
Sans Frontières (RSF) World Press Freedom Index.

The results are surprising and lend only partial support to the above

argument. Specifically, the extent of outside lobbying does *not* differ significantly between groups in democracies and those in autocracies. Neither are media pluralism or opposition alignment in themselves significant predictors of media strategies. When both factors are considered simultaneously, however, opposition-aligned groups tend to engage more, not less, in outside lobbying under authoritarianism. At the same time, a free press also increases the importance of opposition alignment. These results hold when subsetting the data for autocracies.

These findings shed light on the dynamics of policy advocacy in nondemocracies. Outside lobbying is equally present under authoritarianism as under democracy, and, against expectations, it is unrelated to the level of media pluralism. This echoes Li's findings in chapter 8 on China, where the outside strategy is also surprisingly prevalent. However, the closer advocacy groups are to the opposition, the more important a free media becomes for them, as also found in the case of Malaysia in chapter 9. This speaks to the importance of the "regime cleavage" in authoritarian advocacy systems, where antagonizing the government and cozying up to the opposition often results in marginalization. The chapter also contributes more generally to studies of interest groups by highlighting the need for a joint appreciation of structural opportunities and group-level orientations. Overall, the statistical models have only modest explanatory power, despite controlling for other potential drivers of media strategies suggested in the literature. Some common wisdom about group strategies may travel to different contexts better than other. This calls for a much broader comparative approach to interest group studies. Finally, the findings have ramifications for research into the impacts of human rights advocacy, by specifying media work as an important yet thorny vector of influence.

The chapter proceeds with a section discussing different theories of outside lobbying. Section 3 develops the theoretical model of institutional constraints and strategic alignment. Section 4 presents data and methods, while section 5 discusses the empirical results. The chapter concludes by drawing out wider implications of the findings.

Theories Explaining Outside Lobbying

While the aim of inside lobbying is to persuade policy makers directly and nudge them toward adopting a policy preferred by the advocacy group, outside lobbying is a more indirect strategy, expanding the conflict over policy problems and solutions to a larger audience, which in turn puts

pressure on policy makers to achieve the same result (Beyers 2004; Kollman 1998). This typically entails seeking out media attention via press conferences, publicity stunts, public mobilizations, pitching stories to journalists, or running a social media campaign (Dür and Mateo 2013; Weiler and Brändli 2015).[3] To be sure, inside and outside strategies are complements rather than substitutes, as groups may involve themselves with equal intensity in both or neither (Trapp and Laursen 2017). But how do groups calibrate their lobbying efforts? How do they choose the degree of outside lobbying that they deem most beneficial?

The literature on democratic interest representation explores different explanations. On the one hand, issue characteristics may motivate the choice to pursue outside lobbying. In this view, going public serves the dual purpose of showing policy makers that an issue enjoys widespread public support—as policy makers infer salience from the effort groups expend on outside lobbying—and simultaneously expanding the scope of the conflict to larger publics (Kollman 1998, 10). Groups may also factor the salience of an issue into their decision to outside lobby because it enhances their own prominence as important players in the discussion (Junk 2016). This view therefore holds that groups advocating for publicly salient issues will expend more effort on outside lobbying.

On the other hand, groups advocating on behalf of public rather than private interests may have an intrinsic affinity to outside tactics (Hanegraaff, Beyers, and De Bruycker 2016; Dür and Mateo 2013; Weiler and Brändli 2015). Public interest groups stand to gain from an expansion of the scope of the conflict, because it increases the core resource of their pressure politics: favorable public opinion. For them, media attention may facilitate preference attainment, while private interest advocates, such as business associations, may be better off eschewing the media's limelight (De Bruycker 2018). This second view therefore holds that groups advocating for public interest issues will more readily go public.

A third approach focuses upon organizational maintenance as an overarching goal of all advocacy groups. Specifically, member-funded pressure groups face different incentives than groups funded by outside donors or through providing services, in that they always need to keep in mind the consolidation and, if possible, expansion of their member base (Dellmuth and Tallberg 2017). Going public aids in this endeavor, as it increases the chances of attracting new recruits who only learn about the organization through the media. This may even be at the expense of gaining influence, which has often been found to be facilitated rather by direct contacts with policy makers (Mahoney 2008). This view therefore holds that more member-oriented groups should employ outside lobbying more readily.

These contributions provide some important baseline expectations. But how plausible is it that advocacy groups follow the same tactical logic in nondemocratic settings, where the press is often curtailed, politicians are supposedly less responsive to citizen preferences, and the very associational regulation necessary for advocacy is by default minimal? Would outside lobbying even make sense in such an environment? Indeed, studies of authoritarian regimes highlight the role of media in maintaining political control via censorship or propaganda (Lorentzen 2014; Stier 2015). Media are seen as yet another institution the regime can manipulate to divert public attention to regime-congruent issue areas (Alrababa'h and Blaydes 2021), suppress collective action while harvesting information on social preferences and policy problems (Huang, Boranbay-Akan, and Huang 2019; King, Pan, and Roberts 2013), or signal invincibility (Huang 2018). Organized civil society is seen as a more or less passive recipient of such management strategies. Outside lobbying, according to this view, will occur only to the extent that the regime benefits from it in some form.

Strategic Alignment, Institutional Constraints, and Outside Lobbying

As other chapters in this volume demonstrate, outside lobbying *does* occur under authoritarianism. Despite censorship and repression, media attention to issues makes autocratic legislators more responsive to public preferences, even in dictatorships (Schuler 2020), making outside lobbying a high-risk, high-reward strategy. Yet to date we know little about whether or not similar logics of action explain going public under different regime types. There is a disconnect between comparative authoritarianism scholarship with its institutionalist angle, and literature on interest intermediation, which focuses on group orientations and issue characteristics. To bridge these perspectives, I argue that two layers of influences need to be taken into account to gain a fuller understanding of the drivers of outside lobbying across a range of political systems: the strategic alignment of groups and institutional constraints.

Strategic Alignment

Advocacy groups need to seek out allies to further their cause. This is especially true for human rights advocates, given their often antagonistic relationship with the government. The political opposition—if one exists—is a natural choice in that regard. Utility-maximizing pressure groups will cater to the demands of their allies in deciding about their

investment in a given lobbying strategy. Alignment with the opposition should provide incentives for outside lobbying for several reasons. First, their very ties with the opposition may cause groups to struggle to find inside access to government circles, leaving them with few options but to go public. Second, opposition parties are more responsive to media coverage than are government parties (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2016). Themselves facing an uphill struggle for public attention, they tend to wield media attention to issues as a weapon in legislative debate. Since media reporting tends to be driven by negativity and blame attribution (Baumgartner and Chaqués Bonafont 2015), it lends itself to such purposes. Advocacy groups who cultivate close ties with the opposition therefore gain from going public with their issue because it multiplies the arenas they get access to. Third, one of the government's most powerful ways to preserve status quo policies is to keep an issue off the political agenda altogether (Bachrach and Baratz 1962). Any proponents of changes to the status quo—likely those whose position is closer to the opposition's—will therefore benefit disproportionally from media attention simply because this helps them set an issue onto the agenda in the first place. Importantly, this argument does not imply that opposition alignment automatically puts groups at odds with the government. It is indeed possible that they foster close relationships with both sides in order to hedge their bets (Statsch and Berkhout 2020). In electoral autocracies, too, not all opposition is devoted to overthrowing the regime (Helms 2021), and coalitional choices of groups may focus on opposition parties, regime parties, or both. Yet the political logic of the opposition demands media attention as a key variable, absent many other power resources. For the government, media attention is often optional. The incentives for advocacy groups are therefore such that all else being equal *advocacy groups more closely aligned with the political opposition are more likely to engage in outside lobbying* (H1).

Institutional Constraints

In a naïve pluralist world, outside lobbying may shore up public pressure on politicians who are then compelled to act. This rests on two critical assumptions: first that the media system transmits diverse societal voices, and second that inside actors in the policy process, such as legislators or bureaucrats, are amenable to information provided by outside sources, either information about constituent interests or expert knowledge about policy issues. In liberal democracies, where press freedom is guaranteed

and electoral mechanisms motivate and constrain policy makers, these assumptions are met. But where elections are either severely curtailed or no multiparty competition takes place at all, and where liberal practices such as freedom of the press are disregarded, these basic assumptions may not hold.

There are therefore some important institutional prerequisites to make outside lobbying a viable strategy. The first is a functioning electoral link between citizens and politicians. The logic of outside lobbying is one of expanding the scope of conflict from a group's core supporters to "bystanding" publics. The calculus is that these publics then pressure policy makers to adjust their position; ideally, their sheer number will provide electoral leverage that may threaten incumbent politicians. This logic, however, holds only if the electoral link is intact, meaning that policy makers face the prospect of losing office if they do not comply with public preferences. We know, of course, that the electoral playing field is severely skewed under authoritarianism and that incumbents are ensured or at least disproportionately more likely to return to office (Levitsky and Way 2010; Schedler 2006). This makes outside lobbying much less attractive, since it may entail the misallocation of a group's limited resources on the uncertain gamble that politicians actually care about public opinion. Instead, they may be better off leveraging personal connections or inside access to get what they want. I therefore expect that all else being equal, *advocacy groups are more likely to engage in outside lobbying in democracies than in autocracies* (H2a).

A second prerequisite is a pluralistic media ecology that facilitates widespread access and the free flow of information (Norris and Odugbemi 2009). The media's gatekeeping role is particularly pertinent for human rights groups, as they depend on the provision of an open arena for diverse societal voices. Yet authoritarian regimes curtail this arena function of the media through libel laws, censorship, or sometimes violent repression (Lorentzen 2014; Stier 2015). In many democracies, too, the press has come under pressure, and media freedom varies greatly across both authoritarian and democratic regimes (Whitten-Woodring and van Belle 2017). When the prerequisite of a pluralistic communicative arena is not fulfilled, it makes little sense for groups to appeal to the public via the media. They would have to expect their voice to be distorted or completely ignored and might be better off appealing directly to policy makers rather than engage in the uphill struggle for media attention. This logic holds that the functioning of the media as a permeable public sphere is likely related to groups' tactical choices, so that all else being equal *media plural-*

ism is positively associated with advocacy groups' involvement in outside lobbying (H2b).

Finally, the role of groups' strategic alignment may vary depending on the degree of institutional constraints. A number of contemporaneous cases demonstrate surprising successes of citizen groups in diverse policy issues, despite a media landscape nominally not conducive to outside advocacy. Consider, for instance, the Malaysian case discussed in chapter 9, where electoral reform groups relied on media strategies and close relationship with the political opposition to incrementally set electoral reform on the political agenda (see chapter 9). Advocacy groups' reliance on allies among the opposition may be greater in autocracies compared to democracies. But at the same time, their ability to garner media attention likely decreases. As chapters 5 and 6 in this volume demonstrate, opposition-aligned groups often risk ostracization and marginalization. Furthermore, media attention to groups is adversely affected by restrictions on press freedom (Grömping 2019), possibly counteracting the logic of strategic alignment. Group-level and institutional incentives for outside lobbying are therefore inversely related to each other, so that one should expect an interaction such that *the positive effect of opposition alignment on outside lobbying is reduced in autocracies* (H3a) and *where media pluralism is restricted* (H3b).

Data

I test these propositions by taking a globally comparative look at advocacy groups in a specific human rights issue industry: electoral integrity. Empirically, I draw on a dataset of domestic election monitoring initiatives (DEMIs).[4] This data is based on a comprehensive mapping of 1,176 citizen-based electoral observation and reform groups in all countries around the world. Organizational variables are measured through a survey of these groups (response rate 41 percent), and country-level variables are monitored through data from V-Dem (Coppedge et al. 2021).

The dependent variable, *involvement in outside lobbying*, is measured from nine survey items asking responding groups how frequently they engaged in certain activities (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, or Always) during the last election in their country. I conducted a principal component analysis on the nine items with oblique rotation (oblimin). The items clustering on the second component fit theoretical expecta-

tions for outside lobbying strategies and encompass contacting journalists, writing op-eds, initiating litigation, organizing demonstrations, and contacting political parties. The factor score of this second component is then extracted to create the continuous dependent variable "outside lobbying."[5]

The extent of *strategic alignment* can be gleaned from two items in the DEMI survey instrument asking respondent organizations "In general, how would you describe your organization's relationship with . . . the current opposition?" and ". . . the government?" Answer options ranged on a 5-point scale from "very conflictual" (1) to "very cooperative" (5). For opposition alignment the mean is 3.54 and the median is 4, indicating that a plurality of groups have good relationships with the opposition. The results are almost identical regarding groups' stance vis-à-vis the government, with a mean of 3.49 and a median of 4. The pairwise correlation coefficient of these two variables is 0.41 (p < .001), indicating that there are indeed some groups fostering close cooperation with both the opposition *and* the government. The independent variable strategic alignment is calculated as the difference between these two indicators, ranging from −3 (very close to the government and very conflictual with the opposition) to 4 (very close to opposition, very conflictual with government). The variable is roughly normally distributed, with about 60 percent of groups being equally cooperative with both camps, and pro-government and pro-opposition alignment tailing off at both ends.

The role of *regime type* is measured via V-Dem's Regimes of the World indicator. Most groups (88 percent) operate in either electoral autocracies or electoral democracies. I therefore dichotomize this measure, subsuming those organizations operating under democracy (either electoral or liberal democracy) in one category (144 groups) and those in closed or electoral autocracies in the other (147).

I track *media pluralism* via the Reporters sans frontières (RSF) Press Freedom Index.[6] This captures restrictions to media pluralism due to legal frameworks, abuses and harassment, or lacking infrastructures. For the analysis here it is reversed and normalized to a scale of zero to 100. For the countries under observation, media reporting is most restricted in Sudan (press freedom score of 27), and most free in Austria (87).

In addition, I control for some alternative explanations of outside lobbying. To start with, being beholden to its members may incentivize a group to use outside lobbying for organizational maintenance. The logic

here is that media attention also increases the likelihood of attracting new (paying) members. This is controlled for through an indicator of *member orientation* measured as the percentage of a group's budget derived from membership fees. Next, I control for a group's *resources* with an ordinal index constructed from the group's annual budget in an election year, the number of paid full-time staff employed, and the number of volunteers working for the group (see Grömping 2019). Furthermore, I account for groups' *international linkage*. Human rights advocates may leverage transnational advocacy networks (TANs) to exert pressure on noncompliant governments (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Those opting for this strategy have further incentives to engage in outside lobbying to draw in international media. Furthermore, international donors may want to see returns on their investment, something that can be usefully demonstrated by appearing in the press. I control for this possibility with an indicator counting the international organizations and international NGOs that a group has thus far collaborated with. I adjust for skewness in the count by logging raw values, adding a value of one to those organizations with zero links before taking the log.

Beyond organizational characteristics, *issue salience* may push groups into the outside strategy (Kollman 1998). It could simply be more efficient to seek media attention in issue areas that the media already focuses on. I measure salience as the extent of news coverage of elections as a proportion of the total news agenda in that country. This variable is constructed from news content analysis conducted in the context of another related project (see Grömping 2019). In addition, outside lobbying may be a function of *competition* in the advocacy group ecology, as this may drive groups toward media-centric strategies to stand out against their competitors both in terms of securing influence and attracting members and funds (Hanegraaff, Beyers, and De Bruycker 2016). I therefore record the logged count of advocacy groups that occupy the same issue space (electoral reform), standardized by population. Furthermore, the extent to which opposition alignment may or may not drive outside lobbying is likely dependent on the degree of *autonomy of opposition parties*. Where opposition parties are merely coopted proxies for a ruling party, the logic of opposition alignment falls flat. I control for this possibility via the V-Dem indicator on opposition autonomy, ranging from 1 (no autonomous opposition parties) to 4 (all opposition parties are autonomous). Finally, I control for logged *population* on the assumption that larger countries have much larger media markets with the potential to activate bystanding publics.

Results

The analysis proceeds in four steps: First, I describe the distribution of the dependent variable at group and regime level. Next, I look at the association between explanatory factors and outside lobbying individually, third at how institutional constraints condition the relationship between alignment and outside lobbying, and fourth, I subset the data to look only at authoritarian regimes. I use OLS regression models throughout.[7]

First, the indicator for outside lobbying is normally distributed and ranges from −2.72 (lowest outside lobbying) to 3.21 (highest). The first and most surprising finding is that there is little difference in the prevalence of outside lobbying across different political regime types. Although, on average, groups based in autocracies engage in outside lobbying slightly *more* (m = 0.033, SD = 0.96), when compared to democracies (m = −0.033, SD = 1.04), this difference in group means is not statistically significant, (t(286) = 0.56, p = 0.58). This presents a startling puzzle and stands in stark contrast to hypothesis H2a. On first glance, it appears that electoral linkage is hardly related to groups' decision to privilege public lobbying tactics over inside access.

Second, neither strategic alignment by itself nor institutional constraints explain variation in outside lobbying choice. Table 7.1 shows the coefficient estimates for independent variables of interest as well as group-level control variables for four models. Model M1 is a "baseline" model with only control variables included. As we see, the fit is not very good, with an R² of only 0.09. Furthermore, several alternative explanations repeatedly cited in the literature on outside lobbying do not seem to explain variation, at least in this specific issue area of electoral reform advocacy. What the model *does* show is that groups' resources, their international linkage, and the autonomy of opposition parties are all positively correlated with involvement in outside lobbying. Model M2 introduces the independent variables of interest. Neither alignment, nor regime type, nor media pluralism explain variation in outside lobbying. This second surprising result might be due to the dual nature of groups' strategic calculations when deciding to go public. On the one hand, media strategies are frequently seen as a weapon of the weak, of those groups that lack inside access (Kollman 1998, 107). On its face, this sems to describe oppositional groups in diverse institutional settings. But there is also a tendency among all advocacy groups toward "complementary lobbying," in which they lobby both supporters and opponents of a given policy, especially on high-salience issues (Statsch and Berkhout 2020). Groups with

TABLE 7.1. Explaining Outside Lobbying

	Dependent Variable: Outside Lobbying			
	M1	M2	M3	M4
	Estimate (SE)			
(Intercept)	−1.85 (.96)*	−2.27 (1.23)*	−2.61 (1.20)*	-.80 (1.73)
Autocracy (1 = Yes)		.07 (.15)	.04 (.15)	
Media pluralism		.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Opp. Alignment		.06 (.07)	−1.41 (.41)***	-.94 (.42)*
Autocracy X Opp. Alignment			.38 (.15)*	
Media pluralism X Opp. Alignment			.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)*
Resources	1.00 (.39)*	1.04 (.40)**	.93 (.40)*	.88 (.54)
Member orientation	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)
Int'l linkage	.22 (.09)*	.21 (.09)*	.22 (.09)*	.13 (.12)
Salience	-.26 (.53)	-.35 (.56)	-.31 (.56)	-.23 (.66)
Competition	-.25 (.25)	-.22 (.26)	-.16 (.25)	1.22 (.59)*
Opposition autonomy	.37 (.12)**	.39 (.13)**	.39 (.12)**	.36 (.17)*
Population (log)	-.00 (.05)	.01 (.05)	.03 (.05)	-.07 (.08)
R2	.09	.09	.14	.18
Adj. R2	.06	.06	.10	.11
Num. obs.	267	267	267	133

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Note: Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. M1-M3 = all countries. M4 = only autocracies.

good relations with the opposition may therefore have equally good ties with the government that equal out in the operationalization of the variable used here. The effects of alignment on outside lobbying may thus be canceled out by complementary lobbying, due to the contradicting logics of influence production of opposition alignment and government alignment.

The lack of any association with media pluralism on its own is equally puzzling. Possibly, advocacy groups use outside lobbying to signal to donors that they are "doing something," that is, spending the money effectively. This is particularly pertinent for groups such as electoral reform NGOs who receive the bulk of their funding from international sources. This motivation is independent of media pluralism and may thus explain this unexpected result.

Third, however, when introducing interactions into the model (M3), there are some clear and surprising trends, and the fit of the model improves. It appears that the effect of strategic alignment is conditional on

institutional constraints, but not entirely in ways expected. Both interaction terms of strategic alignment with regime type and with media pluralism predict outside lobbying to a statistically significant degree. This gives a more nuanced picture of when and why groups' alignments become important in their decision to outside lobby. To interpret these interactions, figure 7.1 plots the marginal effects of alignment on outside lobbying, conditional on the extent of media pluralism (left pane) and regime type (right pane). The dots in each pane represent point estimate for the conditional marginal effect, with 95 percent confidence intervals. For the left pane, the predictor was fixed at 40, representing low media pluralism (roughly the level of Azerbaijan) and 85 (high media pluralism, such as in Portugal). As the graph shows, the effect of alignment differs depending on macroinstitutional settings. Recall that increases on the alignment variable represent a move closer to the opposition than the government. Being close to the opposition is associated with less outside lobbying where media are repressed, with a conditional marginal effect (CME) of −0.40 (95% CIs[-0.68,-0.11]), and with more outside lobbying where media are free (CME = 0.53[0.20,0.86]). Substantively, this means that a move from "cooperative" to "very cooperative" in a group's relationship with the opposition is linked to an increased intensity of outside lobbying of 0.53 in a pluralistic media environment, and a decrease of 0.40 in a repressed media environment. As the maximum of relative outside lobbying is 3.2, this constitutes quite a significant impact.

The relationship is reversed for regime type (right pane). Here opposition alignment has a positive effect in autocracies (CME = 0.27[0.09, 0.45]), but a not statistically significant one in democracies (CME = −0.11[-0.33,0.11]). This is counter to expectations and is surprising, given that media pluralism is on average higher in democracies (m = 66 on RSF's 0–100 scale, SD = 8.2) than in autocracies (m = 59, SD = 10.5), t(273) = −6.53, p < 0.001. Having said that, there are a number of autocracies in the data set with free media environments, for instance Burkina Faso or Papua New Guinea (both with media pluralism = 77), and some democracies with very adverse media environments, for example Mexico (51) or the Philippines (56). It therefore makes sense that media pluralism conditions the effect of alignment regardless of regime type. Concerning the unexpected interaction of alignment and regime type, however, this may speak to the fact that autocracies, as other chapters in this volume also show, tend to shut inside routes of access to anyone seen as being too close to the opposition. Advocacy groups deciding how to lobby the autocrat are therefore pushed toward outside strategies as their primary option.
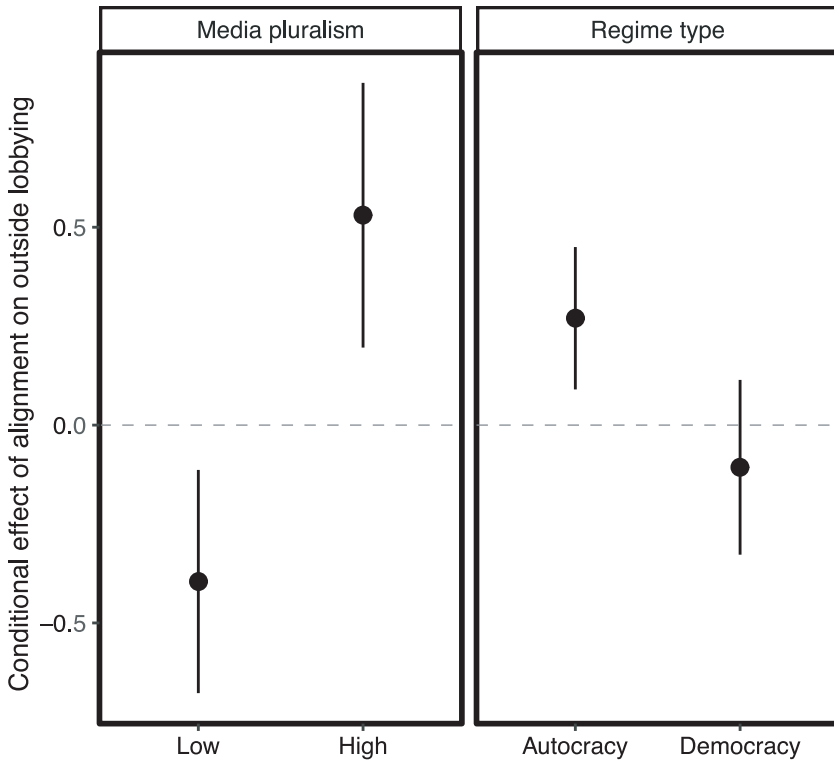
Figure 7.1. Conditional Effects of Alignment on Outside Lobbying
Note: Based on M3 (Table 7.1), other variables held constant at mean, 95% confidence interval.
N=267 groups

Fourth, to explore this last point further, model M4 subsets the data for authoritarian regimes only, reducing the observations to 133 and removing the interaction between alignment and regime type. There are a few interesting observations. The fit of the model is further increased, and opposition autonomy remains significant. Strikingly, international linkage and group resources do not predict outside lobbying in this subset of the data. Competition among advocacy groups, however, does become a significant predictor. This chimes with findings elsewhere in this volume that limited agenda space and funding sources foster competition among groups rather than cooperation (e.g., chapters 4 or 11). This competition drives groups toward media strategies as a way of attracting members and attention. In democracies, even in the face of stiff competition, groups may find other sources to maintain.

As model M4 shows, the interaction term of media pluralism and alignment remains significant. To interpret this interaction in substantive terms, figure 7.2 plots the predicted score of outside lobbying, depending on the degree of media pluralism in an autocracy and a group's alignment. The full line depicts the prediction for advocacy groups aligned more strongly with the government, with the "alignment" variable held at −2. The dashed line represents groups closer to the opposition (alignment = 2). The x-axis varies the degree of media pluralism. The graph shows that moving from low to high media pluralism is associated with an increase of outside lobbying from −0.36 to 0.89 for opposition-aligned groups, but a *decrease* from 0.07 to −1.01 for government-aligned ones. These are both quite dramatic predicted changes of more than one standard deviation. The substantive interpretation confirms the expectation of hypothesis H3b that advocacy groups in autocracies are more prone to lobby via the media where the media arena is more open and if they are aligned with the opposition. For government-aligned groups, the relationship is reversed. The freer the media, the less they use them. This predicted difference, however, is not significant, at the 95 percent level. In restricted media environments, having close allies among either the opposition or the government does not significantly correlate with lobbying strategy. Interpreted the other way around, a shift in the relationship between a group and the opposition from "very conflictual" to "very cooperative" is associated with an increase in outside lobbying of about two standard deviations in pluralistic media systems, but it makes no difference in closed ones.

Overall, the evidence is only consistent with hypothesis H3b. Hypotheses H1 and H2a and H2b could not be supported, while results go exactly counter to the expectations of hypothesis H3a. All these findings hold when controlling for common explanations of outside lobbying such as resources or international linkage. It is noteworthy, however, that both of these latter factors are significant in the models and show the "right" direction. On the other hand, other factors expected to correlate with outside lobbying, such as issue salience and member orientation, are not significant predictors. Beyond the argument presented in this chapter, this result draws into question the explanatory power of some well-established mechanisms connecting group and issue characteristics to the decision to use the media. It suggests that these factors may be important only in liberal democracies but not when one broadens the scope of inquiry.
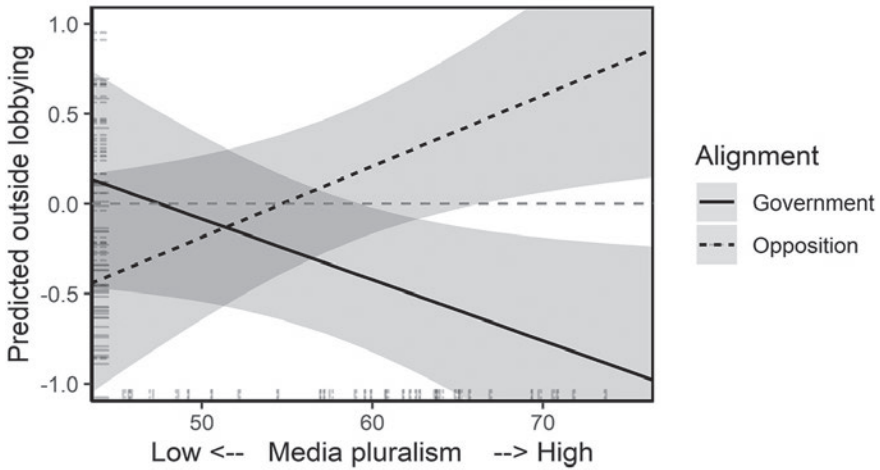
Figure 7.2. Predicting Outside Lobbying in Autocracies
Note: Based on M4 (Table 7.1), other variables held constant at mean, 95% prediction intervals. *N* = 133 groups.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I investigated the drivers of outside lobbying among human rights groups active in the issue space of electoral reform. Despite a wealth of research in interest group studies and in comparative authoritarianism, we know little about how groups calibrate their lobbying tactics under a range of political regimes and in different media systems. I argued that we need to take into account (a) the different demands advocacy groups face from important allies, namely the political opposition, and (b) macroinstitutional factors, specifically whether politicians are motivated to listen to public opinion through free and fair elections (i.e., a democratic regime) and whether media pluralism exist.

I tested the proposition that strategic alignment, democracy, and media pluralism bolster incentives to go public with data on electoral reform advocacy groups in eighty-five countries. The results revealed that outside lobbying, counter to expectations, is equally prevalent among human rights groups in autocracies and in democracies. The findings only partially supported a priori expectations derived from theoretical arguments of organizational maintenance and influence production. Close ties to the opposition predict stronger outside lobbying under authoritarian-

ism, but not in democracies, and only in pluralistic media environments, but not in closed ones. This seemingly contradictory finding suggests that there are push and pull factors nudging oppositional advocates toward media-centric strategies. Lack of inside access in authoritarian contexts pushes groups toward outside lobbying, whereas a more pluralistic media system pulls them in the same direction. While autocracies provide, on average, less media pluralism than democracies, the highest likelihood of outside strategies is therefore ironically in autocracies with a moderately free media. This confirms that smart autocrats may be well-advised to allow a degree of media pluralism, as this stimulates the funneling of societal information to the regime via the media arena (Lorentzen 2014).

There are some important limitations to this study. Results may not travel to other types of organized interests or other policy areas. As a subtype of human rights groups, electoral reform advocates routinely attribute blame to the government, and may even threaten the regime's legitimacy in more authoritarian contexts. Therefore, the high importance of opposition alignment may be unique to these groups. In addition, the proposed theory does not travel easily to one-party autocracies where a political opposition in form of a party or parties does not exist. In such circumstances, advocates' alignment with diverse intraregime factions may become more important, as Li finds in China (see chapter 8). Yet the results shown here are still representative for election advocacy groups at-large, precisely because they are least prevalent in closed autocracies (which the majority of single-party regimes are) as well as in liberal democracies. The sample thus depicts the actual distribution of such groups faithfully. And so, since election watchdogs predominantly lobby in the slightly more open context of electoral (rather than closed) autocracies—implying multiparty competition, albeit on an unfair playing field—the argument about opposition alignment remains salient. Finally, the analysis in this chapter does not say anything about the relative prevalence of outside lobbying compared to inside strategies directly targeted at lawmakers or bureaucrats. Further research should look into whether alignment also structures the choice to engage in inside lobbying, as Khoo and Leong explore in chapter 9.

Keeping in mind these limitations, the study contributes to several existing research programs, drawing strength from its globally comparative design. First, the findings shed light on lobbying in nondemocracies. The very fact that advocacy groups choose the outside strategy in seemingly adverse environments raises questions about our common understanding of autocratic responsiveness. In the absence of fair elections as

the conduit for responsiveness, these advocates at the very least think that media attention will not harm them, especially if they have allies among the political opposition. On the other hand, it may also be true that outside lobbying provides important informational signals to an autocratic ruler, who faces problems of monitoring both public sentiment and policy implementation. As discussed in the concluding chapter, we identify three factors that shape all stages of influence production under authoritarianism: access to policy making, information demands, and social control. In this analysis, I find that access to policy makers and information demands interact to create strategies that more closely match those found in democracies, such that groups without policy access rely more heavily on media strategies. But the data do not allow direct empirical analysis of social control factors, namely parsing out policy red lines or differential repression. The case studies in the following chapters facilitate such analysis of cost-benefit perception by advocacy groups.

Second, for studies of interest groups, the lesson that social-institutional variation matters is one of significance. Outside lobbying is more likely in countries where a relatively open media arena provides opportunity to mobilize bystanding publics, a factor taken for granted in existing interest group research. It is worth noting that such media "pluralism" may be a product of advocacy groups themselves altering their ecology by shifting communications to the online sphere. This is, for instance, suggested by the analyses of environmental advocacy in Cambodia (chapter 5) and women's rights groups in Turkey (chapter 6). Another important takeaway for the wider research program is that established explanations of outside lobbying—namely member orientation and issue salience—may not travel well beyond established democracies.

Third, there are ramifications for research into the diffusion of human rights norms. The findings add nuance to the "boomerang" model of norm diffusion, in which domestic groups circumvent repression by appealing to international allies and transnational advocates (Keck and Sikkink 1998). This chapter's findings raise questions about the workings of the boomerang model for advocates under authoritarianism, a theme also explored in chapter 5, since international linkages of groups predict outside lobbying in the sample at large but *not* in the subset of autocracies. This exemplifies the value of taking the methodological lens of interest group and agenda-setting studies and applying it to this subfield in international relations.

NOTES

1. These groups are nonstate, nonprofit, nonpartisan, and nonmedia organizations that witness and document electoral malpractice in their own country and/or advocate for legislative or procedural changes in the way elections are conducted (Grömping 2017). They are human rights groups in the sense that they make recourse to political rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Right, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and other global conventions (Davis-Roberts and Carroll 2010).

2. Defined here as electoral conduct adhering to international norms applying universally to all countries and throughout the whole electoral cycle (Norris 2013, 564).

3. In the human rights context, these tactics are also often discussed under the rubric "information politics" rather than outside lobbying (Ramos, Ron, and Thoms 2007; Thrall, Stecula, and Sweet 2014).

4. See Grömping 2019.

5. Table A.7.1 in the appendix shows results of the PCA and the factor loadings after rotation.

6. https://rsf.org/en/ranking.

7. Despite the nested nature of the data, simple OLS regression is suggested by an interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) of only 0.09. All models were replicated with country random effects, substantiating the same results.

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8 | Political Resources and NGO Policy Advocacy Strategies in China

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Globally, NGOs have been deeply engaged in the policy process, advocating policy positions on issues of direct interest to themselves, their clients, and the broader community (Grønbjerg and Prakash 2017). Advocacy and civic engagement are commonly regarded as one of the distinguishing features of NGOs (Anheier and Salamon 2006; Frumkin 2009). While many NGOs engage in policy advocacy, various pressures from their resource and political environments create challenges. Although much of the literature has focused on NGOs' advocacy activities in Western democracies, scholars are increasingly paying more attention to NGO advocacy in authoritarian regimes.

In this chapter, I expand the scope of the literature by addressing the following research questions: (1) What advocacy strategies do NGOs use?, and (2) How do political resources, such as legal registration, supervisory agency, prior government work experience, and government affiliation or funding, affect NGOs' use of different advocacy strategies?

The empirical analysis is based on policy advocacy of environmental NGOs (ENGOs) in the world's largest authoritarian country, China. In existing studies, NGOs formed around environmental issues constitute the most dynamic part of civil society in China (e.g., Hildebrandt 2012; Ho 2007). As most ENGOs overlap with Xi Jinping's environmental priorities, they are considered politically less harmful to government activities and, as a direct consequence, have been able to gain political space. In recent years, many ENGOs have worked on saving

endangered species, protecting air, water, and wetlands, fostering recycling, and promoting alternative energy. They have successfully advocated for broader public interests and influenced state and local policies in direct and indirect ways, such as public hearings, media campaigns, and public interest litigation.

Using a mixed-methods approach that combines data from an original nationwide survey of 267 ENGOs and thirty-nine in-depth interviews with government officials and ENGO leaders in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Chongqing, and Guangdong in 2014 and 2015, this study contributes to existing research in three ways. First, while there is a plethora of existing research on NGO advocacy, the focus remains on a few limited prominent advocacy strategies (e.g., Teets and Almen 2018; Dai and Spires 2017). The present study, instead, takes stock of the repertoire of ENGOs' advocacy strategies and shows that they use a variety of strategies, including legislative, legal, administrative, media, and mobilization approaches. Among this repertoire, media advocacy is the most prevalent and legislative advocacy the least prevalent strategy, as confirmed in chapters 7 and 9 in this section. Second, it examines various ways ENGOs are embedded with the state, including legal registration, having a supervisory agency, being affiliated with the government, having leaders with prior government work experience, and receiving government funding. The analysis further demonstrates that the varying aspects of government embeddedness shape NGOs' policy advocacy strategies in different ways, as also seen in the case of Turkey in chapter 6. Specifically, legal registration remains unimportant for policy influence, and the supervisory agency serves as an access point for ENGOs' legislative advocacy. Government-organized NGOs (GONGOs), those with strong affiliations to the government, participate more in legal advocacy than more independent NGOs, while ENGO leaders with government work experience often act as boundary spanners who help ENGOs access the policy process and the media. Government funding creates a new channel for NGOs to advocate for policy change.

These findings show that, similar to the situation in Western democracies, NGOs in China supply information and expertise in exchange for access to the policy process. In a government-dominated institutional environment, however, NGOs strategize to foster government embeddedness to enhance legitimacy and carve out meaningful political space for policy influence. NGOs' political resources shape their advocacy strategies.

NGO Policy Advocacy in Democratic and Authoritarian Regimes

NGO Advocacy in Democracy

In the Western literature, policy advocacy is broadly defined as NGOs' direct or indirect efforts to influence the government and have it respond to demands articulated or transmitted by NGOs (Suárez 2020; Baumgartner et al. 2009; Toepler and Fröhlich 2020). Such efforts can be channeled through various means, such as contacting the government, educating the public, and mobilizing at the grassroots level. Existing studies have distinguished advocacy strategies based on the institutional actors that NGOs target, such as legislators, administrators, courts, the media, and citizens (Boehmke, Gailmard, and Patty 2013; Buffardi, Pekkanen, and Smith 2015; Binderkrantz 2005; Gais and Walker 1991) (see table 8.1). Legislative advocacy refers to NGOs' engagement with legislators or legislative staff to produce and present research papers, testify in committees, and alert constituents (McCarthy and Castelli 2002; Abdel-Samad 2017). Administrative advocacy, or lobbying of the bureaucracy, means that NGOs participate in the formulation and implementation of bureaucratic rules (Nicholson-Crotty 2011). Legal advocacy, or advocacy through the court, involves developing, defining, or interpreting laws. For example, NGOs could engage in the litigation process, such as bringing forward a legal case in court, to advocate for certain positions (Casey 2011).

TABLE 8.1. Categorizing NGOs' Advocacy Strategies and Examples of Activities

Legislative Strategy	Administrative Strategy	Legal Strategy	Media Strategy	Mobilization Strategy
Contacting relevant legislators; Present research papers to legislative staff; Testify in committees	Contacting government officials at different levels of government; Serving on government-organized committees; Participate in the formulation and implementation of bureaucratic rules	Participate in public interest litigation; Provide legal services to victims; Contact attorneys for information and advice	Contacting reporters; Writing letters to the editor and columns; Issuing press releases and holding press conferences; Publicizing analyses and research reports	Arranging citizen meetings and gatherings; Organizing letter-writing campaigns; Arranging strikes, civil disobedience, direct action, and public demonstrations; Conducting petitions

Source: adapted from Binderkrantz (2005) and Andrews and Edwards (2005).

Media advocacy and mobilization occur outside the formal policy process and focus primarily on shaping the climate around policy making (Binderkrantz, Christiansen, and Pedersen 2015). Examples include disseminating policy information, writing letters or reports to the media, and engaging in politically disruptive activities. By shoring up popular support and communicating such support to policy makers, NGOs can often influence representative government between elections (Kollman 1998). Guo and Saxton (2013), for example, show how nonprofits in the United States use social-media-based advocacy to reach out to people, keep the flame alive, and step up to action. One should note that these advocacy strategies are not mutually exclusive; rather, an NGO can combine these activities in many ways. Research within the American and European context suggests that NGOs typically see different advocacy strategies as complementary rather than competing (Kollman 1998; e.g., Binderkrantz 2008; Dür and Mateo 2013).

NGOs choose different advocacy strategies to participate in the policy process, based on the characteristics of the institutional venues and their evaluation of political opportunities and organizational capacities (Pralle 2003; Buffardi, Pekkanen, and Smith 2015). Such venue shopping can be experimental or deliberate. The ultimate purpose is to advance substantive policy goals or reinforce organizational identities. Thus, when advocating, NGOs supply decision-makers with relevant resources, such as information, expertise, or voter support, in exchange for policy access and political influence (Berkhout 2013). Binderkrantz, Christiansen, and Pedersen (2015), for example, argue that interest group access to different political arenas in Denmark—the bureaucracy, the parliament, and the media—is largely determined by the match between the supply and demands of interest groups and gatekeepers: politicians, bureaucrats, and reporters. Marwell (2004) shows how community-based organizations in the United States create reliable voting constituencies for local elected officials in exchange for government human service contracts.

NGO Policy Advocacy in Authoritarian Regimes

NGOs in authoritarian regimes face a more constrained political space, as the government is concerned about their potential in challenging the authoritarian rule (Heurlin 2010; Spires 2011; Wiktorowicz 2002). NGOs are often seen as passive actors upon which the authoritarian governments act to stabilize the regime. Studies have shown, however, that NGOs do advocate to influence authoritarian governments. Ljubownikow and

Crotty (2016), for example, find that NGOs in Russia tend to use limited indirect and institutionalized insider advocacy tactics. Why do authoritarian governments like China, which typically do not tolerate civil society groups, then allow NGOs to advocate?

Some scholars argue that NGOs can help provide information and expertise needed by the government. Teets (2013), for instance, proposes consultative authoritarianism to explain how local governments collaborate with NGOs to help improve local governance. NGOs thus use their expertise and services in exchange for policy access. Lorentzen (2013) argues that permitting protests of limited scale and scope can provide information about local officials' actions and citizen discontent, "helping to limit corruption and to bring discontented communities out in the open rather than driving them underground." Other scholars argue that changing political opportunity structure or the fragmentation of the authoritarian regime may also allow NGOs to grow and influence the government. In the environmental field, for example, the conflicts between different levels of government and between different administrative divisions have created meaningful opportunities for ENGO advocacy (Zhan and Tang 2013).

When advocating, NGOs use a set of strategies. Dai and Spires (2017) identify three advocacy strategies, including working with the government, framing, and media advocacy, to influence local-level government policy. Teets and Almen (2018) argue that with the changing political opportunity structure under Xi's administration, NGOs have increasingly been using three strategies: legal advocacy, media framing, and establishing expert status.

Compared with the phenomenon in the West, NGO policy advocacy in authoritarian China has several defining features. First, it is fragmented, local, and nonconfrontational (Grano 2012; Tang and Zhan 2008). As Spires (2011) shows, grassroots NGOs can survive only insofar as they help promote the social welfare goals of the state and do not push the government too far. Li, Lo, and Tang (2017) show that NGOs in authoritarian China navigate resource dependencies and political uncertainties when deciding on their advocacy strategies. Confrontational approaches, however, are often out of the radar. Second, NGOs are deeply embedded within the government structures (Ru and Ortolano 2009; Zhan and Tang 2016). Zhan and Tang (2013) show that ENGOs with better financial resources and political connections to the party-state system are more capable of utilizing these opportunities to enhance their policy advocacy capacity. Yet party-state connections may, in turn,

constrain the types of policy advocacy pursued by these ENGOs. Hsu and Jiang (2015) identify NGOs' use of state alliance and state avoidance strategies and posit that NGO founders' party-state experience is directly related to NGOs' use of these strategies.

Given ENGOs' embeddedness with the government in authoritarian China, ENGO policy advocacy may play out differently, as opposed to the situation in democracies. For example, it is likely that ENGOs participate in legislative advocacy less often, given that the political system is closed to citizen participation. It is also likely that ENGOs that relate to the state in various ways are more privileged to use institutionalized advocacy channels. Although existing studies have begun to study NGO policy advocacy in China, few empirical studies have used quantitative data to systematically examine NGOs' engagement in various advocacy strategies. In the following, I show that similar to their counterparts in Western democracies, NGOs in authoritarian regimes like China provide information and expertise in exchange for access to the policy process. In a constrained political environment, however, NGOs must embed themselves with the state in various ways to strategically carve out political space for influence.

Data and Methods

The data for the study come from a larger project on ENGOs in the policy process, which collected two sources of data: a nationwide survey of Chinese ENGOs between 2014 and 2015 and in-depth interviews with ENGO leaders and government officials in the five major cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Chongqing, and Guangzhou before and after the survey. The draft questionnaire was developed and refined by consulting existing questionnaires, referencing prior literature on environmentalism and NGO studies, and piloting with twelve ENGO leaders. The finalized questionnaire consists of forty-seven questions relating to organizational characteristics, funding, and activities. Unlike the situation in the United States, where the government collects and publishes extensive data on NGOs, there was no official directory of NGOs in China at the time of our data collection. We thus developed a directory of ENGOs by reviewing, merging, and cleaning information from multiple sources, such as the China Development Brief. The directory consists of 1,215 ENGOs, including organizational names, leadership, and contact information. By taking the bottom-up mapping of NGOs, our team sought to cover the commu-

nity of ENGOs that were potentially active in the environmental field but were not necessarily engaged in actively seeking actual policy influence (Berkhout et al. 2018). Nonetheless, the list is by no means inclusive, and one should take caution when interpreting the findings.

We emailed ENGO leaders a link to the survey after contacting them by phone and introducing the purpose of the research project. With three follow-ups, we received responses from 267 ENGOs, for an overall response rate of 26 percent.[1] Respondents held a variety of positions in the organizations surveyed. More than half were executive directors or program directors, 26 percent held staff positions, and 8 percent were volunteers.

To mitigate the potential problems associated with survey research and to triangulate the data, we conducted thirty-nine semistructured interviews with ENGO leaders and government officials in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Chongqing, and Guangzhou, all major cities with active ENGOs. We asked questions about ENGOs' operations, funding sources, programs, policy advocacy approaches, and interactions with the government. The length of the interviews ranged from forty to one hundred minutes, and most interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded using a grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss 2014). Below, I first describe ENGOs' various aspects of government embeddedness and then explain how such embeddedness shapes their use of policy advocacy strategies.

Political Resources

NGOs are deeply embedded with the state. To examine such embeddedness and its associated political resources for ENGOs, I focus on five aspects: (1) registration status, (2) supervisory agency, (3) government affiliation, (4) government work experience, and (5) receipt of government funding. I draw on descriptive data to present ENGOs' government embeddedness (see table 8.2).

One aspect of government embeddedness is legal registration, through which the state constructs the notion of what an NGO is, defines its legitimate scope of activity, and limits its autonomy (Hildebrandt 2012). Before the implementation of the new Charity Law in 2016, NGOs were forced to have a supervisory institution within the government. Further, they had to ensure that no other NGOs focusing on similar issues existed within the same administrative jurisdiction. Through

TABLE 8.2. ENGOs' Multiple Embeddedness with the Government

Aspects of Embeddedness	Measurement (Yes=1; No=0)	# of ENGOs	% of ENGOs
Registration Status	0	60	22.47
	1	207	77.53
Supervisory Agency	0	102	38.2
	1	165	61.8
GONGO	0	117	43.82
	1	150	56.18
Government Work	0	218	81.65
Experience	1	49	18.35
Government Funding	0	55	20.6
	1	212	79.4

these registration rules, the government aimed to limit NGOs' capacity building and keep NGO alliances and mission creep to a minimum. Although the new Charity Law lifted the limit on the number of NGOs that can operate in any one area and removed the need to register with a supervisory agency for some NGOs, registration remains difficult for certain NGOs, especially for small groups working in sensitive areas (Teets and Almen 2018). Thus registration rates among NGOs are uneven. Registration confers a legal status, allowing NGOs to open a bank account, reduce operating risks, and fundraise openly. As Chen and Xu (2011) show, NGOs take advantage of their legal status to maximize resources drawn from both the state and the society and enhance autonomy. Thus registration status matters for policy advocacy.

The "dual-management system" of NGOs means that before NGOs register with a Civil Affairs Bureau, they must secure a government agency as a sponsor, which holds a wide range of responsibilities, including supervising the group's financial and personnel management, research activities, contacts with foreign organizations, and reception and use of donations from overseas. The supervisory agency takes full responsibility for the activities and finances of the registered groups, which creates a risk- and authority-sharing mechanism. Thus it is likely that the supervisory agencies tightly control and restrain NGOs' advocacy. A counterargument, however, is that some supervisory agency officials, who often have personal connections with NGOs and trust their work, can bring relevant policy makers and NGOs together to promote policy change. As Teets (2018) shows, NGOs use supervisory agencies as an access point to policy makers whom they otherwise could not reach. In the policy process,

NGOs provide information and expertise, and government officials can improve local governance, which serves as the performance credit that can advance officials' career goals (Newland 2018).

Another aspect of government embeddedness is government affiliation, the distinction between GONGOs and civic NGOs. Most GONGOs were originally set up by the government to channel international funding and expertise and to absorb retired government officials from the administrative reform in the 1990s (Wu 2003). As semigovernmental organizations, GONGOs have enjoyed various institutional benefits, such as extensive financial support and special personnel arrangements. In contrast, civic NGOs are mostly organized by individual citizens who are devoted to a specific social cause. They have been institutionally discriminated against in many ways, such as legal registration and a lack of government grants (Li, Lo, and Tang 2017). Due to differences in institutional privileges, GONGOs and civic NGOs may adopt vastly different advocacy strategies.

Many NGO leaders in China are former or current government officials (Zhan and Tang 2016). NGO leaders who have worked within the government usually know the nitty-gritty of the policy process and have access to various government agencies. When they need help from the government they can easily build contacts with the right government agency and communicate with the relevant officials (Teets and Almen 2018). Such communication allows the government to familiarize itself with NGOs' work, thus giving NGOs better survival chances. My data show that 18 percent of NGOs have leaders with government work experience. NGOs with leaders that have government work experience may adopt different advocacy strategies than those without such leaders.

In 2013, the government issued *A Guiding Opinion on Government Purchasing Services from Social Forces*, in which it specifies that NGOs should be among the entities from which government purchases social services. In recent years, as the government started working with ENGOs on some environmental campaigns and projects, government funding has become an important source of revenue for ENGOs (Zhan and Tang 2016). My data show that 79 percent of NGOs receive some sort of government funding. By obtaining government contracts and delivering social services, NGOs can interact with government agencies more frequently, creating a new channel for policy influence. As Guan (2015) finds, government purchase of services creates space for NGOs to embed themselves into the state. Therefore, NGOs that receive government funding may use different advocacy strategies than those without such funding.

Policy Advocacy Strategies

To take stock of NGOs' advocacy strategies, we asked ENGO leaders in the survey to report the extent to which they had used nine advocacy tactics 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 interacted with officials at People's Congress—the major legislative organ in China—and Political Consultative Conference—the advisory body for the legislative organ—at both national and local levels over the past three years. This is measured on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=seldom in contact, 2=yearly, 3=quarterly, 4=monthly, and 5=weekly.

We coded each activity into a binary form and calculated the percentage of ENGOs that had used the strategy fairly frequently and very frequently. As illustrated in figure 8.1, less than 5 percent of ENGOs had contact with the legislative bodies at the state level, and 20 percent had contacted local legislatures at least once a year over the past three years. Other than legislative advocacy, ENGOs had a wide range of methods in their action repertoire. Most activities were used by more than a quarter of the groups. The most commonly used strategy is submitting policy/research reports to the media (39 percent), followed by providing legal expertise in environmental protection (34 percent).

We then followed the typology of advocacy strategies in Western democracies as shown in table 8.1 and categorized the thirteen activities into five advocacy strategies (see table 8.3).[2] Legislative advocacy is the least prevalent strategy among ENGOs, probably due to their lack of access to the lawmaking process. One ENGO was able to submit policy proposals through representatives, but as their founder passed away, such advocacy died down. As the NGO executive said, "we used to pursue palace-style advocacy because of our founder's solid connections to the government, but we cannot do it anymore. Now we wanted to use those strategies that can be easily picked up by other NGOs."

Media advocacy is the most prevalent strategy. ENGOs had frequently submitted policy/research reports to the media and announced research and policy reports to the public. This indicates that ENGO leaders have strong efficacy in educating the public and raising citizens' environmental awareness. It also partly reflects that ENGO leaders are strongly connected with the media. As prior studies show, many ENGO leaders were journalists or have closely worked with the media, both online and offline (Yang and Calhoun 2007).
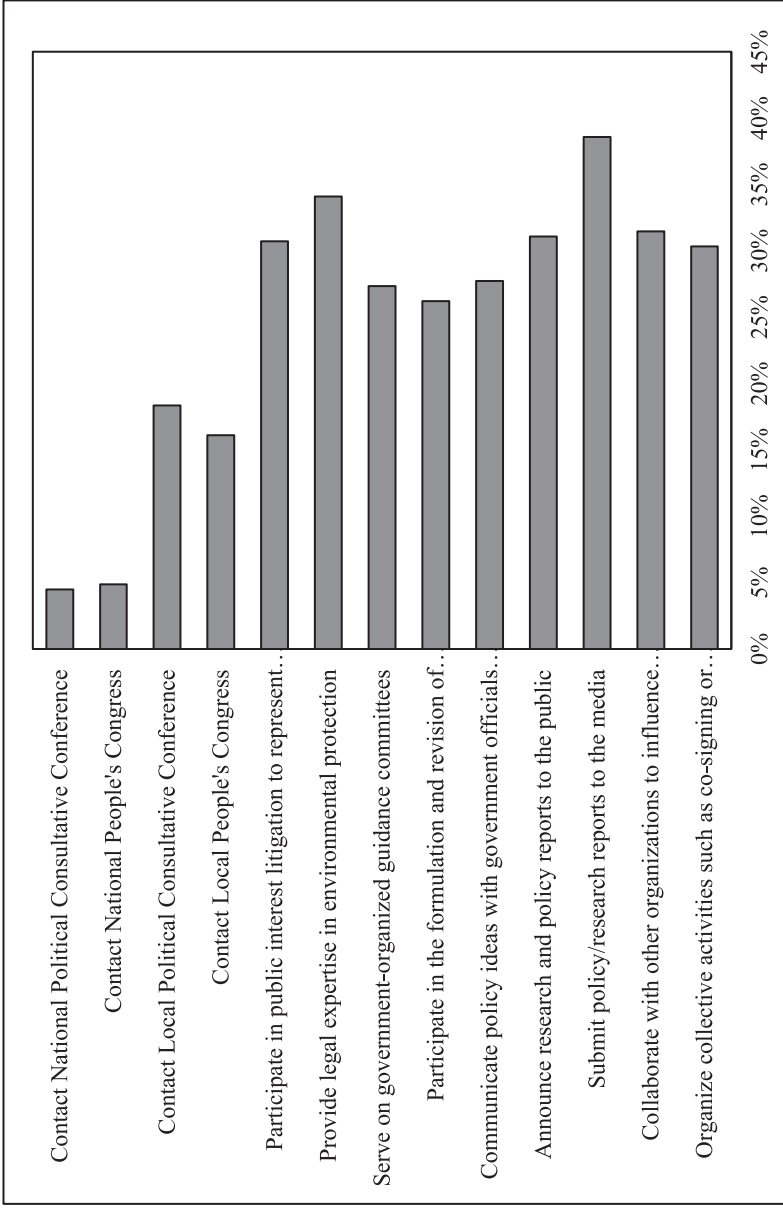
Figure 8.1. ENGOs' Engagement in Different Advocacy Tactics, Percentages

Note: ENGOs were asked how frequently they had contacted members of the People's Congress and Political Consultative Conference at both local and national levels. Those that were reported as barely were coded 0, and those that had contacted officials at the legislative organs at least once a year over the past three years were coded 1. For the rest of the advocacy activities, ENGOs that had engaged in the activities fairly often and very often were coded 1, and 0 otherwise. Percentages indicate the percentage of ENGOs that had engaged in the activities fairly often and very often.

TABLE 8.3. ENGOs' Engagement in Various Advocacy Strategies

Advocacy Strategies	Items	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max	Cronbach's Alpha
Legislative Advocacy	Contacting National People's Congress	1.04	0.19	1	2.25	0.62
	Contacting National Political Consultative Conference					
	Contacting Local People's Congress					
	Contacting Local Political Consultative Conference					
Legal Advocacy	Providing legal expertise in environmental protection	2.99	0.98	1	5	0.78
	Participating in public interest litigation to represent pollution victims					
Administrative advocacy	Communicating policy ideas with government officials privately	3.00	0.81	1	5	0.79
	Serving on government-organized guidance committees					
	Participating in the formulation and revision of bureaucratic rules over the past three years					
Media	Submitting policy/research reports to the media	3.23	0.85	1	5	0.77
	Announcing research and policy reports to the public					
Mobilization	Organizing collective activities such as cosigning or writing letters	3.09	0.91	1	5	0.73
	Collaborating with other organizations to influence public policy					

Note: All items are Likert scales from 1–5. The mean value of each advocacy strategy is calculated by averaging all items in the variable.

Following the media strategy, ENGOs used mobilization frequently, which involves building networks with other environmental groups through local organizing and local solutions. This orientation reflects a broadly held view that environmental objectives can be achieved through greater awareness, knowledge, and cooperation. As Popović (2020) finds, ENGOs consider public campaigns and public pressures as effective practices that can lead to government responsiveness. Operating in a restricted political environment, however, ENGOs must assess the political risks associated with mobilization. For example, one ENGO leader said,

> After assessing the potential political risk in participating in the broader environmental movement like organizing a bunch of ENGOs to stop the government from developing the coastal area, many ENGOs choose not to participate. There is so much risk involved. The government does not want to see you organized together. Once you are in, your organization may face survival problems: you may be shut down, or you may not be able to pass the annual government review.

Political Resources and ENGO Advocacy Strategies

To examine how the political resources presented above are associated with ENGOs' use of various policy advocacy strategies, a linear regression analysis (OLS) was conducted (see table 8.4). The coefficients for registration status across the five models are all statistically insignificant, indicating that registered ENGOs are not different from unregistered ones in their use of the various advocacy strategies. While some studies show that legal registration is the precondition for policy influence as it helps enhance NGO autonomy and legitimacy (Chen and Xu 2011; Teets and Almen 2018), this study demonstrates that the political opportunities afforded to NGOs, regardless of their registration status, seem to be similar. Therefore, their advocacy strategies are not necessarily different. This finding echoes Hildebrandt (2012), who shows that legal registration entails a complex relationship between the state and the society, where NGOs can engage in various policy advocacy venues regardless of their registration status. In legal advocacy, for example, unregistered NGOs can collaborate informally with registered ones to influence policy directly by providing information and support to registered NGOs (Teets and Almen 2018).

TABLE 8.4. Regression of Factors Associated with Various Advocacy Strategies

	Legislative Strategy	Legal Strategy	Administrative Strategy	Media Strategy	Mobilization Strategy
Organization age	0.00	0.01	0.00	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Organization size	0.00	0.16**[1]	0.08	0.11+	0.10+
	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Registration status	0.02	−0.13	0.01	0.02	0.14
	(0.03)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Supervisory agency	0.07*	−0.39**	−0.24*	−0.29*	−0.31*
	(0.03)	(0.14)	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.13)
GONGO	−0.07**	0.25*	0.00	−0.03	−0.13
	(0.03)	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Government work experience	0.03	−0.05	0.17	0.14	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Government funding	0.04	0.79***	0.87***	0.55***	0.79***
	(0.03)	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Constant	1.00***	2.18**	2.29***	2.87***	2.59***
	(0.04)	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.16)
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; + $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.
[1]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.

The findings show that ENGOs with a supervisory agency engage more in legislative advocacy. This finding is consistent with Teets (2018), who argues that in a closed policy process without meaningful channels for interest articulation, NGOs act as technical and policy experts, and supervisory agency officials are the "hinge" connecting NGOs to relevant policy makers, facilitating the creation of policy networks. From this perspective, I would expect that ENGOs with a supervisory agency engage more in legislative advocacy and administrative advocacy, both of which require inside access (although the regression result does not support the latter). In addition, the results show that supervisory agencies may discourage ENGOs' engagement in legal, media, and mobilization strategies, as these activities may cause trouble for officials within the agencies. Although some officials are motivated to support NGOs' work in exchange for performance and career benefits, as Newland (2018) shows, they are ultimately responsible for any risks brought by ENGOs.

The findings show that compared with NGOs, GONGOs engage less in legislative advocacy. Theoretically, we would expect that GONGOs, due to their institutional privileges, have more access to officials in the legislative bodies, resulting in more legislative advocacy. My interviews confirmed this. For example, a department chief in a GONGO in Beijing said,

> China is a government-led socialist state. Most of the work is done by the government. We as a GONGO are strongly connected to the government, and we can easily draw on many resources. Actually, when many local government agencies are dealing with civic organizations, they are a bit scrupled because they are not very familiar with civic NGOs, and thus are concerned about their motivations and goals. Hence, local governments would be reserved. However, we have a strong government background, and are considered as more trustworthy. This is obviously a great advantage for us.

From this perspective, the quantitative finding may be neglectable due to the measure of legislative advocacy and the low variance in the variable. After all, few NGOs engage in legislative advocacy, which signifies a closed lawmaking process. The results also show that GONGOs engage more in legal advocacy than civic NGOs do. This is likely because legal advocacy often involves significant social research, community organizing, and a prolonged litigation process, which civic ENGOs are usually unable to afford (Dai and Spires 2017). The new Environmental Protection Law (2014) specified that ENGOs that have been registered for five years are eligible to sue polluting companies in the name of public interest litigation. GONGOs are clearly more advantaged than grassroots NGOs, which are often small and young. In addition, we find that there is no substantial difference between GONGOs and civic NGOs in their use of administrative, media, and mobilization strategies. This suggests that grassroots NGOs, similar to GONGOs, can participate in bureaucratic decision making through formal and informal channels, whereas GONGOs are inclined to use media and mobilization strategies that many grassroots NGOs have already been using. Thus when it comes to policy advocacy, the line between grassroots NGOs and GONGOs is increasingly blurred. Both types of NGOs are learning from each other in using multiple and different advocacy strategies.

The quantitative findings show that ENGO leaders' prior government work experience is not directly related to their various advocacy strate-

gies. This is unexpected, as existing research and my interviews both indicate that NGO leaders' professional background matters. Specifically, as Hsu and Jiang (2015) show, NGO founders with party-state experience tend to build NGOs around alliances with government agencies. My interviews reveal that NGO leaders with government work experience are often boundary spanners who can bring to the organization substantial government support, insider policy information, and potential government subsidies or contracts. However, as Liu (2019) finds, due to the anticorruption campaigns and the emphasis of political discipline in the Party, officials may be extremely vigilant about personal ties, and the effects of prior government work experience and its associated personal connections may eventually fade. As Teets and Almen (2018) show, given the more constrained and centralized political system in the Xi era, personal connections to officials are still helpful, but they are often no longer enough to influence policy in isolation. Nonetheless, the unexpected quantitative finding may be substantiated by future research with a larger sample or refined measurement and model.

The coefficients for government funding are all significant across the five models, indicating that government funding increases ENGOs' advocacy activities. This finding speaks to existing literature in Western democracies, which shows that government funding creates new pathways for NGOs to advocate for policy change (Kelleher and Yackee 2009; Mosley 2011). By communicating with government officials on community needs and government programs, NGOs are better positioned to inform policy making and help with implementation. Besides, government funding enhances NGOs' financial stability and their capacity for advocacy. From this perspective, government purchase of social services, with its goal of improving social welfare and strengthening NGO capacity, may have produced some unintended political consequences: increased channels for NGOs to advocate for policy change. Nonetheless, existing studies show that government contracts have been favoring larger NGOs with a state background or existing government connections, putting small grassroots NGOs at a disadvantage (Guan 2015). The long-term implication for this is that access for policy influence will continue to be unequal among NGOs. As one NGO leader in Chongqing commented, "Grassroots NGOs have not been meaningfully involved in the process of government purchase of social services. For now, GONGOs receive most government grants. This creates an even more difficult situation for grassroots NGOs like us."

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter examined ENGOs' political resources and policy advocacy strategies in authoritarian China. The analysis shows that when advocating, ENGOs use a variety of strategies, including legislative, legal, administrative, media, and mobilization, among which media advocacy is the most prevalent and legislative advocacy the least prevalent. This finding has two implications. First, ENGOs have a strong belief in educating the public and raising citizens' environmental awareness. Although it is widely known that social media in authoritarian China is porously censored, meaning that it allows government criticism but silences collective action (King, Pan, and Roberts 2013), such media censorship may shape ENGO media advocacy toward a softer approach. ENGOs use social media for educating the public or criticizing government misbehavior, but censorship is used to simultaneously dampen efforts for collective action. This media strategy finding is supported by the other chapters in this section and represents a surprising finding given the higher levels of repression and social control in autocracies. Second, while ENGOs were able to influence the government in various ways, most cannot access the lawmaking process, which is a closed system without channels for meaningful interest articulation.

In addition, I operationalized ENGOs' political resources based on whether they are legally registered, have a supervisory agency, have leaders with prior government work experience, are affiliated with the government, or receive government funding. The analysis shows that political resources shape ENGOs' advocacy strategies in various ways. For example, legal registration does not matter much for policy influence, but the supervisory agency serves as an access point for ENGOs' legislative advocacy. Although the lawmaking process is closed, supervisory agencies can help ENGOs in participating within the policy networks. Since the new Charity Law was implemented, (some) NGOs are now able to register directly with the Civil Affairs Bureaus without supervisory agencies. Given the facilitating role of the supervisory agency in creating policy networks, such a policy may actually decrease NGOs' ability to advocate, further influencing strategic choice. Furthermore, GONGOs participate more in legal advocacy, and ENGO leaders with government work experience can often act as boundary spanners who can help access the policy process and the media. The government, however, recently implemented a rule that leading cadres or high-level officials should not take up leadership positions in social organizations. This policy may restrict the number

of NGO leaders with prior government work experience, closing the channel for using personal networks to access policy makers and form relationships with agencies. Similar to the situation in Western democracies, government purchase of social services may have produced some unintended political consequences, including increased channels for NGOs to advocate for policy change. Government funding, however, favors well-established, regime-supporting NGOs, which creates an uneven space for NGO development and advocacy. This bifurcation mirrors that described in Turkey in chapter 6.

Taken together, these findings enriched our understanding of NGO policy advocacy in an authoritarian setting. As theorized in the conclusion, three conditions of advocacy under authoritarianism shape all stages of influence production: access to policy making, information demands, and social control. In this analysis, we find that access to policy makers and information demands interact to create strategies that more closely match those found in democracies, such that groups without policy access heavily rely on media strategies. This study, however, builds on this similar finding in the previous chapter by examining in more detail the cost-benefit analysis of advocacy groups. Groups prefer to be able to gain access to policy making directly, but they also use media strategies when needed to educate citizens more broadly. As exemplified by this case of China, many authoritarian regimes in the contemporary world have adopted a softer approach: they allow for limited development of civil society, especially when groups provide needed information and services, 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 can help them carve out meaningful political space to engage in policy advocacy.

NOTES

1. Such a response rate is acceptable in social sciences, as the average response rate for organization-level studies was 35.7 percent with a standard deviation of 18.8 (Baruch and Holtom 2008).

2. One should be careful when transporting the advocacy strategies in Western democracies to autocratic settings. For example, social media in authoritarian regimes like China is porously censored, so NGOs in authoritarian China cannot use social media to utterly criticize governments' misbehavior. Legislatures in China are not filled via competitive elections, so most representatives are "tone deaf" and unrepresentative of the population at large.

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9 | Policy Advocacy Strategies of Malaysia's Electoral Reform Movement

Ying Hooi Khoo and Carmen Leong

Malaysia's 14th General Election (GE14) on May 9, 2018, marked a historical shift in the country's electoral balance of power. For the first time in sixty-one years, the long-dominant Barisan Nasional (BN), led by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), lost its hold on power to the Pakatan Harapan (PH).[1] For decades, political competition in Malaysia had been extensively manipulated to provide the incumbent government substantial advantages in elections (Wong 2018; Ong 2018). Rampant gerrymandering and lack of press freedom, among other things, helped entrench the political dominance of the BN in the past. Multiple factors account for BN's defeat in the GE14. One of the factors was the electoral reform movement, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih), which for years had lobbied for changes to electoral governance and raised political awareness about the power of the ballot.

Using the case of the Bersih movement, this chapter examines the constraints and opportunities of the repertoire of Bersih's advocacy strategies during its life cycle since its establishment in 2005. It uses these events to present three different phases in a nondemocratic political setting to ascertain how differing degrees of policy making access have impacted their advocacy strategies. As in the previous two chapters in this section, we find that access to policy making plays the dominant role in the selection of advocacy strategies, followed by regime needs for information and social control. The three phases are: (a) politicized opposition-aligned movement (2005–2010), (b) depoliticized but "marginalized" movement before GE14 (2010–2018), and (c) policy insider after GE14 (2018–present).

This chapter emphasizes—based on the importance that street protests organized by the Bersih movement in 2007, 2011, 2012, 2015, and 2016 held for pacifying the public's outrage with the conduct of elections—that a pragmatic approach is beneficial for all sides when accounting for the relationship between activists, policy makers and the public. In this chapter, we find that the Bersih movement made strategic choices in calibrating its lobbying strategy according to its resources and capacities. These choices were made to convince the public and policy makers that the electoral reform issue is important and should therefore be addressed. A similar exchange relationship can be identified with policy makers, albeit at different levels for publicly acceptable policy frames and constituents' support in the three different life cycles. In this context, the chapter intends to provide a better understanding of what determined Bersih's advocacy strategies and how these strategies affect the way the message is presented in advocating for electoral policy change.

Bersih was chosen as the case study for three distinct reasons. First, collective action as showcased during the five above-mentioned mass protests is in many ways extraordinary in a nondemocratic political setting. This chapter finds that despite the fear and intimidation, the five mass street protests drew sufficient attention and public pressure on the policy makers. Second is the significance of social media as Bersih's main communication strategy for policy influence. For instance, the movement saw the rise of more than seventy self-organizing communities on Facebook, including about forty community pages that were created by the Malaysian diaspora in ninety cities globally. The movement's widespread success in leveraging social media to mobilize supporters, and the extent to which support for the movement transcended both geographical boundaries and societal demographics such as race and religion, are among its defining features (Tye et al. 2018; Smeltzer and Paré 2015). Third, some forms of direct advocacy could be observed, which take place when policy makers see the benefits of such relationships as found in the previous two chapters.

The data in this chapter was collected from two main sources: primary data (interviews and social media data) and secondary data (e.g., news, reports, books, journal articles). The data collection occurred in four phases from 2015 to 2019. During the first phase, secondary data were collected in order to build a broad understanding of the movement, which later guided the research design and interviews. During the second phase, semistructured interviews were conducted. During the third phase, data on social media, including Facebook and YouTube, were screened to generate an in-depth contextual understanding of what transpired as the

movement took place. The fourth phase encompassed participant observation by the first author and the collection of secondary data. The various sources of data collected during different phases of research strengthen the validity of our findings as we triangulated our interview data with other (secondary) sources. The provided method thus ensures the consistency of the collected data (Dubé and Paré 2003).

During the second and third phases, thirty-one subjects were interviewed, including eight Global Bersih committee members, two Bersih 2.0 committee members, nine Facebook group administrators, seven activists, and five rally participants. The questions were mainly related to the respondents' views on multilevel collectives in terms of how different levels of collectives and social media can empower citizens by serving as organizing agents. We also reviewed Facebook and YouTube for relevant pages, groups, or videos identified by the interviewees, and in addition by search terms including "Bersih," or "Bersih+Malaysia." These data allowed us to "observe" not only the events that occurred after the fact (Stallings 2007), but also the details of individuals' participation in support of instances where they were quoted in the interviews. The data collection yielded 334 pages of transcripts and notes and 127 photographs. This step, taken as a social media strategy, is one of the main advocacy strategies employed by Bersih, hence the third phase of data collection allowed us to generate an in-depth contextual understanding of what transpired as the movement took place.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The next section elaborates on the choice of policy advocacy strategies in a nondemocratic political setting in general. Sections 3 and 4 present the findings of Bersih's policy advocacy strategies, before and after the GE14 and within the three different life cycles identified above. Section 4 offers some concluding remarks.

Choice of Policy Advocacy Strategies

The short-term or long-term outcomes of social movement activities need to consider the modification of three different domains—political, cultural, and biographical—as either intended or unintended goals (Bosi 2007). The political domain refers to changes in policies, legislation, political institutions and regimes, or the actions taken by political parties. The cultural domain, according to Earl (2004), refers to changes in the public's values and ideas, the formation of new cultural practices, collective identity, and subcultures. The biographical domain relates to the impact of

mobilization on the lives of participants in social movements (Giugni 2004). This chapter focuses on the political domain, specifically on policy change. In the discourse regarding factors that can impact the policy process, it is recognized that the rise of new social problems or mobilization by new actors can explain such dynamics (Rochefort and Cobb 1994).

This chapter intends to explain how and why interest groups within a nondemocratic political setting deploy a mix of strategies, as observed in the case of the Bersih movement. While the Bersih movement was categorized as a social movement in its early formation due to its loose network, over time it turned into a social movement organization (SMO) with some structures being put in place. In this chapter, the Bersih movement is also categorized as an interest group, with the main goal of pushing for electoral policy reform. The interest groups' perceptions about institutional opportunities and constraints shape their decisions on the direction of their policy venues. At the same time, we also need to consider both the objective incentives facing political actors, as well as their thoughts about politics (Jones 2001).

According to Mosley (2011), there are two different tactics to engage in advocacy. The first tactic he refers to is an indirect tactic. Indirect tactics are used when interest groups advocate without directly participating in the policy-making process. Having said that, indirect tactics are normally employed in relation to the public for the purpose of engaging and influencing certain perceptions. Such tactics are useful, especially when the issues that are being advocated are related to public benefits (Garrow and Hasenfeld 2014). Some of the indirect tactics are protests and network coalitions (Galaskiewicz, Bielefeld, and Dowell 2006), as well as social media channels (Guo and Saxton 2014).

As the media's patterns of receiving and prioritizing information form the discussions that can shape public opinion, several works (Baumgartner, De Boef, and Boydstun 2008; Russell, Dwidar, and Jones 2016) address the media-public policy nexus. There is plenty of opportunity in terms of addressing relations between media framing in different sources and how these influence public policy, even more so in a political environment that is not conducive to these types of activities, as the case of nondemocratic Malaysia shows. Various scholars (Bortree and Seltzer 2009; Petray 2011) have discussed how activists and advocacy groups utilize social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter for various purposes, for instance, to supplement traditional social networks and information channels, to facilitate dialogue, to supplement offline activism, and to promote virtual activism.

The second tactic, according to Mosley (2011), is insider advocacy, which is conducted through the network's own personal connections with the ruling elite, provided direct access to state institutions is available. This interaction can take place in either formal or informal settings such as through political connections (Beyers and Kerremans 2012) or through personal conversations. Whichever form it takes, the choice of policy advocacy strategy requires some sort of balance (Suárez and Hwang 2008). Generally, these tactics are assumed to be more effective in the democratic political setting, or at least in a more enabling environment, but interestingly in the context of Malaysia—long known for its nondemocratic political setting with a mixture of democratic and authoritarian features—both indirect tactics and insider advocacy have been employed by the Bersih electoral reform movement since its establishment in 2005.

Lobbying under Authoritarianism: The Case of Bersih 2.0

Malaysia provides an interesting setting within which to explore advocacy tactics. To provide some context, this section explores the political system in Malaysia and the emergence and development of the Bersih movement. In doing so, we draw on the political opportunity structures that have been proposed by McAdam (1996), whose work considers different dimensions that shape the environment where the movement is situated such as access, opportunities, and constrains. Malaysia has been an electoral authoritarian regime with semicompetitive elections since its independence in 1957. Its political system is characterized by strong ethnic cleavages, commonly known as communalism (Case 1993; Mandal 2004; Moten 2009). As a former British colony, Malaysia has an election system that follows the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system in single-member districts, and elections must be held at least once every five years. For decades, the extensively gerrymandered and malapportioned FPTP system guaranteed large parliamentary majorities for the ruling coalition (Ong 2018). The centralized system with control of enormous financial means, as well as the bureaucracy, judiciary, and media channels, allows the ruling coalition to suppress civil liberties (Ufen 2012), particularly the freedom of speech, association, and assembly, and to impose constraints on the opposition that prevent it from effectively channeling social grievances.

Conditions for societal interest representation are adverse in Malaysia. The institutional hindrance of electoral authoritarianism prevents discourse on social issues to be translated into party political and parliamen-

tary conflict (Ufen 2012). Media bias, for instance, has been identified as an important factor in the BN's electoral resilience, as the government traditionally controls the print media and has in effect become one of the major sources of information for Malaysia's voters. One of the main sources of media bias is the legal framework overseeing mass media in Malaysia. The Official Secrets Act 1972 (OSA), for instance, prohibits the publication of any information that the government deems as confidential or sensitive, unless explicitly authorized. It grants the government broad powers to criminalize dissenting voices, especially those of opposition politicians, human rights NGOs, and journalists. The Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 (PPPA) is another legal instrument that further selectively constrains media reporting that is critical of the government.

Bersih started out in July 2005, initially in the form of a Joint Action Committee for Electoral Reform (JACER). In September 2006, a joint communiqué was produced in an electoral reform workshop held in the capital city, Kuala Lumpur. The joint communiqué lists Bersih's long-term objectives and its immediate working goals, with members comprising political leaders from the then opposition parties, and civil society groups including representatives from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The first rally, which took place on November 10, 2007, witnessed Malaysians acting collectively, with cohesive interests and well-articulated demands as well as a surprising turnout.

In April 2010, the movement was renamed Bersih 2.0 as a nonpartisan movement free from political influences. The movement subsequently organized four other major rallies in 2011, 2012, 2015, and 2016. Although the mixed authoritarian and democratic nature of Malaysia (Case 1993; Weiss 2005) provides a challenging environment for the development of social movements, Bersih's presence is nevertheless supportive of the values of democracy and hence important in propagating some of the preconditions for democratization in the country. McAdam (1996) presents four dimensions of political opportunity that have been influential on the policy advocacy strategies of Bersih: open and closed access to the political system, the availability of allies, cleavages within and among elites, and the state's capacity or propensity for repression.

Findings

We have organized our findings into two sections: Bersih's policy advocacy strategies before and after GE14. This chapter examines the con-

straints and the opportunities of the repertoire of Bersih's advocacy strategies during its life cycle from its establishment in 2005 to the present within a nondemocratic political setting: (a) politicized opposition-aligned movement (2005–2010), (b) depoliticized but "marginalized" movement before GE14 (2010–2018), and (c) policy insider after GE14 (2018–middle of 2019). The purpose of the following discussion is to ascertain how differing degrees of inside access impact policy changes.

Strategies Prior to GE14

Mobilization, Network Building and Protest

One important feature about Bersih is that it was formed by a coalition of NGOs that were different in their degrees of centralization and ideological focus. Such characteristics could be either advantageous or disadvantageous to the movement. The nature of loose coalitions in Bersih has provided the movement with additional strength, and such dynamism has reflected the strength of Bersih because there has been no central command and therefore no element of control.

From its initial four demands—a clean electoral roll, the abolition of postal votes except for diplomats and other overseas voters, the use of indelible ink, and fair access to state-owned media—Bersih 2.0 subsequently increased its demands to eight. The first demand was to clean the electoral roll. The electoral roll was one of the key dispute matters in the electoral process. It was crucial because it represented an accurate reflection of the voting population. Some of the common irregularities reported included the records of deceased persons and multiple persons registered under a single address or nonexistent addresses, commonly known as "phantom voters."

The second demand was to reform the postal ballot, as a move to ensure that all citizens were able to exercise their right to vote. It emphasized that there was a need for transparency in the postal ballot. Apart from that, as an effort to keep the transparency, party agents should also be allowed to monitor the entire process of postal voting. This effort brought changes to the election regulations on January 15, 2013, that extended postal voting rights to certain overseas Malaysians, rights that had previously been available only to public servants, students, uniformed personnel, and their spouses. There were, however, shortcomings in the 13th General Election that took place on May 5, 2013.

The third demand was the use of indelible ink. Back in 2007, the Elec-

tion Commission (EC) had decided to use indelible ink, but within a few days leading up to the GE12, the EC withdrew the use of indelible ink, citing legal reasons and rumors of last-minute sabotage. Use of indelible ink was implemented in the GE13 amidst the controversies and was then used in the subsequent GE14.

The fourth demand was a campaign period of a minimum of twenty-one days. Bersih 2.0 stated that a longer campaign period would allow voters more time to gather information and deliberate on their choices. At the same time, it would also allow candidates more time to disseminate information to rural areas, particularly places that do not have advanced technology.

The fifth demand was free and fair access to media. Free access to media has been one of the most protracted issues in Malaysia. Media has been divided between the mainstream media and online media, with most mainstream media being friendly to the government. Therefore, Bersih 2.0 demanded that the EC place pressure on all media agencies to allocate proportionate and objective coverage for all political parties to ensure fair competition in elections.

The sixth demand was to strengthen public institutions such as the judiciary, Attorney General's Chambers, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), police, and the EC to ensure their independence and impartiality in the conduct of election-related matters. The seventh demand referred to the call for an end to all forms of corruption including the act of vote buying. The final demand was to stop dirty politics to foster a healthy environment for political competition.

When the idea of Bersih was conceived, the aim was to advocate for electoral reform through the education and to create awareness. The decision to organize street protests was not an easy one, but in view of the urgent situation and the need for public pressure, Bersih went ahead with the idea of street protest. The decision to organize a street protest came about only after the Bersih Steering Committee had exhausted all its avenues in engaging with the EC through meetings and dialogues. Bersih 2.0 also witnessed transnational activism by overseas Malaysians. This was the first time that Malaysians living in thirty-eight cities overseas rallied in solidarity with the Kuala Lumpur protestors, with 4,003 participants.[2] Bersih's third rally on April 28, 2012, was said to be the largest Malaysia has ever seen. It was held in seven states including Sabah and Sarawak. Overseas Malaysians in thirty-five countries and eighty-five cities around the world also held rallies in the spirit of solidarity for reforms under the auspices of Global Bersih.[3] Some reports estimated that as many as 300,000 protesters and supporters took part.

Bersih 2.0's third rally resulted in the formation of a public inquiry by the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM). A main objective of the inquiry, among others, was to determine whether there had been any violations of human rights of any person or party during and after the public assembly on April 28, 2012. In total, forty-nine witnesses comprising members of the public, media personnel, police personnel, and professionals testified before the panel of inquiry. The panel also invited representatives from the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM), the Malaysian Bar Council, and Bersih 2.0 to act as observers and to assist in various matters including questioning the witnesses and making oral and written submissions to the panel.

The government then set up another panel of inquiry followed up by the third Bersih rally. The Bar Council and Bersih 2.0, however, did not support the panel of inquiry because some of the panel members were former civil servants, including police officers, and were deemed not to be impartial. Forty-five witnesses—twenty-two police officers and members, eight media practitioners, four officials from the EC including its then chairman Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof, four Kuala Lumpur City Hall enforcement officers, two Prasarana staff, a PAS member from its Unit Amal, and five members of the public—testified at the inquiry. The report was completed after fifty meetings and handed over to the then home minister, Dato' Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

In 2015, the country was hit by the revelations of an alleged mismanagement of debt-ridden state investor 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) involving Prime Minister Najib Razak. Bersih issued another press statement calling for ten institutional reforms to stop corruption and called for clean and fair elections. As a result, Bersih 2.0 announced a fourth mass rally would be held for thirty-four hours on August 29–30, just a day before the celebration of Independence Day on the streets of Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, and Kota Kinabalu.

Despite the unfavorable political conditions and state repression of street protests, Bersih defied the norms and proceeded with five major street rallies from 2007 to 2016 that showcased the mobilization of the citizens. The May 2018 general elections that witnessed the fall of BN's hegemony after six decades brought about the dynamic discourses about the role and influence of the Bersih movement on the regime change. Bersih has shown that protests have the potential to cripple the political legitimacy of the state and that the ability of the citizenry to impose pressure on the government to consider their demands is viewed as a threat to government (Khoo 2016b).

Media Attention

Seeking media attention has been a key component of Bersih's advocacy repertoire, although the group has frequently encountered adverse framing in several news outlets. The movement tried to circumvent this by relying more heavily on direct communication with its followers and bystanding publics via social media. When the organizers of Bersih moved on to use the nonpartisan approach and solely be a civil-society-led movement, they found their best means of mobilizing supporters during the second rally in 2011 was through Facebook. New media then continued to channel the flow of information and updates on where to go, and where to avoid the heavy presence of riot police, through blogs, news sites, and Facebook, while Twitter tweeted that day about the rally (Weiss 2014). In the Centre of Independent Journalism (CIJ), media monitoring of mainstream newspapers such as *Utusan Malaysia*, *New Straits Times*, *The Star*, and *The Sun* during the Bersih rallies in 2011 and 2012 found that prior to the 2011 rally, there was huge coverage, particularly in *Utusan Malaysia*, on the planned demonstration but limited coverage of its eight demands. For the 2012 rally, however, the coverage percentage dropped. Coverage only increased after the rally partly because there were people injured and arrested. This finding may be explained by the term "publicity by accident" in which the wide negative coverage by the government-sponsored media has helped Bersih 2.0 to gain popularity and support because it created a reverse outcome. When progovernment media such as *Utusan Malaysia* "assault" the Bersih movement, it gives the movement free publicity.

The restriction in media freedom has laid down the foundation that has enabled the growth of online media that in turn provides increased access to alternative sources of information and opens up a space for the vibrant exchange of political views (Tapsell 2013). While online media is also subject to some of the same restrictions as the print media, online news portals such as Malaysiakini, established after the Reformasi movement, provide more options by enabling the Malaysian people to read about the other side of the story. For many, the mainstream media were no longer a trusted source of information due to their strong bias. Bersih 2.0 used the internet as an alternative platform to criticize government policies and wrongdoing on the part of the institutions and authorities. Over time, the internet has developed into a convenient and popular medium to publish alternative opinions and information due to its potential for horizontal communication, lower publication costs, and the omission of licensing (Radue 2012).

This has relevance for lobbying groups such as Bersih, as the internet connects them directly with other groups sharing the same interests, thereby fostering a collective identity and action. Consequently, the internet as an information platform provides political opportunities to policy advocates to build up political awareness and host discussions of political issues in the context of Malaysia's highly restrictive media regime. These developments have brought a new dimension to the pattern of social movements in Malaysia. These advancements signify the crucial role of social movements, with their potential to trigger the impressive growth of popular mobilization in the country and create a strong pressure for change. With the eruption of the Bersih protests, mass mobilization by social movements gained the potential to be the new cleavage because it could facilitate the democratization process and be a tool to influence policy.

Social media are crucial to Bersih 2.0's strategic repertoire and therefore need to be placed front and center in a discussion of the movement's advocacy (Tye et al. 2018). A growing literature has shown that the internet plays an important role in providing social movements with new and better opportunities to capture the public's mind on social and political action (Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). Through the internet, social movements get to disseminate information to and maintain discourse with supporters more easily and effectively. The development of the internet, with its distinctive capabilities, boundary-less but global form, scope, and openness to innovation, has been particularly valuable in extending space and capacity for communication and coordination, as revealed in our findings.

Since the beginning of Bersih's formation in 2005, social media has provided the movement with key opportunities. One significant example is Global Bersih. Facilitated by the widespread use of social media, the growing momentum that Bersih gathered in the lead-up to its second rally in 2011 gained the attention of the concerned Malaysian diaspora and the international media. For the first time, overseas Malaysians demonstrated their support for local Malaysians by organizing solidarity gatherings in more than thirty-two countries worldwide. The group's use of social media changed over the years. At the beginning of its development, Bersih made use of websites, blogging, and YouTube as its main tools for mobilization. Social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter were added later to disseminate information and for mobilization purposes, and ultimately also for policy advocacy. For instance, the first Facebook page of Bersih 2.0, "Bersih 2.0 [Official]," was created on June 22, 2011, seventeen days before the second rally, and within two weeks it attracted more than 190,000 fans (Lim 2016). More than seventy Facebook groups related to

Bersih have since been created, and blogs, YouTube, and WhatsApp have also been frequently used (Leong 2016). The incorporation of YouTube in 2006, Facebook in 2008, and Twitter in 2011 unsurprisingly followed the surfacing and popularity of these tools among Malaysians (Lim 2016). The effects of media actors' interaction within that process should not be ignored. While media has an unquestionable impact on the policy-making process, policy makers also try to influence the media. This chapter suggests that this is an illustrative example of how restrictions in a situation of democratic deficit with its inequalities of access, representation, and political power can be overcome through bottom-up movements of collective action in which the media were utilized and appropriated for policy advocacy purposes.

Direct Engagement with Policy Makers

Next we explore how the Bersih movement's strategies overcame these restrictions and enabled continuous advocacy for policy changes. Of particular interest is its engagement vis-à-vis the EC. Tasked with mandates for maintaining electoral rolls, establishing electoral boundaries, and administering the elections as stipulated in the federal constitution, the EC is meant to be a neutral body, nominally independent and nonpartisan (Lim 2002). Yet from the early 1960s onwards, the EC has been under constant pressure by the government of the day (Lim 2002), in practice undermining its neutrality.

Since the emergence of JACER, which later evolved into Bersih 1.0 in June 2006, the EC and Bersih 1.0 have had continuous engagement, mainly through meetings and dialogues. This was done for several reasons, one being the "friendly" policy makers who were more sympathetic to the cause, and another being the need for the EC to have engagement with NGOs. Despite these interactions, the EC did not introduce any substantial electoral reforms. The relationship changed when Bersih 1.0 turned into Bersih 2.0 in 2010 to become a nonpartisan movement with no association with the opposition parties. Since then, the relationship between Bersih 2.0 and the EC has deteriorated. Later it devolved into zero engagement where the possibility for any space to push for policy advocacy was closed. This happened as the relationship between civil society and the government was becoming contentious and lacking in trust. For instance, the EC did not allow Bersih 2.0 to be part of the PEMERHATI initiative for the GE13, which was made up of eleven EC-accredited NGOs. PEMERHATI is made up of four NGOs—Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS),

Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), Malaysia Confederation of the Disabled (MCD), Merdeka Center for Opinion Research (Merdeka Center)—appointed by the EC to monitor GE13.

The formation of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reform (PSC) occurred as part of the direct responses to public pressure. All concrete policy impacts came through street protests and not through inside access. The EC and the government succumbed to public pressure because they were worried about losing votes. Established in July 2011, the PSC was a bipartisan panel. The nine-member PSC consisted of five members from BN, three members from the opposition, the then People's Alliance (PR), and one independent member. The PSC was one of the direct consequences derived from Bersih's second rally in 2011. Other consequences were recommendations and suggestions from public hearing sessions, feedback from committee and subcommittee members, and on-the-ground observations. The report by the PSC, which included twenty-two recommended measures to improve the electoral system in Malaysia, was adopted in Parliament on April 3, 2012. The twenty-two recommendations touched on some of Bersih 2.0's eight demands, especially on the issues of electoral roll, postal voters, campaign period, free access to media, and the need to strengthen public institutions such as the EC. Based on one of the recommendations of the PSC, the EC for the first time conducted the polls without an objection period. But the opposition who did not agree with several recommendations in the report filed continuous protests (Carvalho, Meikeng, and Rahim 2012). The major shortcoming of the committee set up by the Parliament was the lack of a mechanism to follow up on the recommendations. Once the mandated period ended, the committee automatically dissolved, and the PSC had no more power to even question the EC for follow-up purposes. Several other changes to electoral governance have been initiated by the EC since the eruption of a series of Bersih protests. Among the changes have been the transparent ballot boxes, the availability of full electoral rolls for checking and verification purposes, the exclusion of serial numbers on ballot papers, polling agents during the casting of postal ballots, and the continuation of the system of counting ballots at the polling centers (Moten 2009).

Strategies after GE14

Despite widespread electoral malpractice and incumbent bias, the opposition PH led by Mahathir Mohamad recorded a historical win during the GE14 on May 9, 2018, which resulted in the fall of BN for the first time

since Malaysia achieved its independence in 1957. While the Mahathir factor cannot be ignored, the PH victory in GE14 was not an overnight phenomenon but the result of accumulated grievances built up from the 2008 and 2013 elections. The post-GE14 period witnessed some forms of institutionalization of Bersih 2.0, in which domestic structural conditions, after the change of government to PH, allowed their demands to be incorporated into substantive policy alternatives and promoted within a political process. The structure of political opportunities, particularly as perceived by movement activists, is important because it prescribes the choice of movement strategies and the types of movement gains (Ferree and Mueller 2004). The widened political space directly changed Bersih's advocacy strategies. Essentially, Bersih transformed from an outsider into an insider. For instance, the EC has made several improvements. The EC has acknowledged the existence of phantom voters and is in the midst of cleaning up the electoral roll. Independent observers, including Bersih 2.0 and SUHAKAM, finally received official accreditation and were allowed to monitor the recent by-elections.

As the political opportunity structure expanded with the change of government to PH, the relations between Bersih and the EC were re-established. For instance, dialogues and discussions were held between the two and other civil society groups to push for electoral reform. The unexpected result of the GE14 sped up the process of electoral reform policy. Three months after the change of government, a new Electoral Reform Committee (ERC), chaired by the former EC chairman, was formed to review Malaysia's election laws and electoral system. The ERC was tasked with the two-year mandate of developing concrete policy recommendations for the government to refine and implement. This chapter suggests that Bersih after the GE14 has more access to policy makers. But access is at the discretion of policy makers, for example the EC, not at the discretion of the movement. This was clear when the PH was replaced by another new political coalition, Perikatan Nasional (PN), in February 2020 due to the division within the PH coalition parties. This also suggests that the new strategy is to create cooperative links with policy makers and adopt a cooperative rather than oppositional stance. The relationship between movements and institutions is mostly thought of as a process in which movement demands are translated into policy change or institutional change within target organizations. Former Bersih 2.0 steering committee member and electoral expert Wong Chin Huat was also added as a member of the ERC. Essentially, Bersih transformed from an outsider into an insider: having their own man in the reform committee is the ulti-

mate access. A special youth committee at the ministry level was also established to further study the prospect of lowering the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen. These examples, to a certain extent, reflect the pressure from Bersih 2.0 and other electoral reform groups in their continuous struggle to challenge the traditional patronage and clientelist style of Malaysia's party system.

Conclusion

This chapter has used the case of Bersih, Malaysia's electoral reform movement, to illustrate how strategies changed over time due to the group's depoliticization and the electoral loss of the country's long-time incumbent BN government.

Bersih started as an opposition-aligned group, as it was formed by the opposition political parties and civil society. The policy advocacy strategies were a mixture of indirect tactics and direct advocacy through dialogues and meetings with policy makers. But no substantial electoral reforms were made at this stage. In the second life cycle before GE14, where it turned into a full nonaligned movement, it mobilized domestic supporters on social media channels and built advocacy networks. The second life cycle was the stage where Bersih managed to gather more support, as the movement also went beyond national borders with overseas Malaysians mobilizing through Global Bersih for the same cause. The movement organized protests to pressure the EC into policy concessions and drew mainstream media attention to the issue of electoral integrity. The third life cycle began after GE14, which enabled some forms of movement institutionalization, within which Bersih 2.0 built collaborative links to policy makers through direct advocacy.

In the definition provided by Mosley (2011) on indirect advocacy tactics, the mobilization of the public is a requirement, as showcased in Bersih's five mass street rallies. Street rallies and other indirect advocacy tactics also require collaboration with others, for example, in the form of advocacy coalitions (Balassiano and Chandler 2010), as reflected in Bersih. The experience of Bersih suggests that political opportunities, such as the resources provided by social media and alternative news portals, are available despite a nondemocratic political setting. Mosley (2012) considers access based on personal relationships as providing a crucial platform for insider advocacy. In the case of Bersih, it can be argued that some forms of engagement were made possible through such connections.

This chapter has illustrated several direct access opportunities to ruling and governing elites. Generally, insider advocacy is seen less as a way of influencing decision making by ruling and governing elites and more as an opportunity to promote ideas, although these do not often generate substantive reforms. Our evidence suggests that in a constricted civil society space, Bersih has adopted a pragmatic approach whereby available advocacy tactics have been adapted to the political context, and where access points are not primarily opportunities to influence but rather opportunities to build or maintain personal relationships that facilitate policy advocacy. This finding is similar to Li's case study of environmental groups in China in chapter 8. Interaction continues in two forms, confrontational and engagement, but this chapter suggests that the state was aware of Bersih's existence. This constitutes a positive development because in some cases, the ruling elites were altogether ignorant of the existence of movements. This also explains how Bersih had some forms of engagement with the ruling government despite its limitations; this attention might be leveraged by influencing public policy and government behavior, thus contributing to the expansion of public participation in political processes (Meyer 2004).

Social movement organizations need to work under specific conditions with different strategies and tactics, as collective mobilization can potentially intensify state repression or accelerate the collapse of weak democratic regimes (see also Young, chapter 5 this volume). Repertoires change under different conditions, as identified by Tarrow (2010). First, the choice of repertoires depends on the type of regime a movement performs within. In a stricter regime, some repertoires might be permitted and some might be constrained. Second, the history of contention constrains the choice of repertoires. Third, changes in political opportunity structure encourage some actions, discourage others, and give people the opportunity to innovate on the existing repertoires. Several studies on social movements (Oliver, Cadena-Roa, and Strawn 2003) agree that the elements of extra-institutional and institutional politics are intertwined and interdependent. Our results also suggest that the recently observed increased numbers of advocacy activities remain singular events and are not yet evidence of the development of an active advocacy culture among all types of Malaysian NGOs' advocacy.

Bersih's policy advocacy strategies highlight the importance of collective action, which is the most important aspect of protest. Malaysia's repertoire of protest is "special" in its own way, considering its political culture. In Malaysia, social networking channels such as Facebook, Twitter,

and blogs are among the most popular tools for mobilizing purposes. In the meantime, the involvement of prominent figures from different sections of society is also considered part of the creative repertoire of the Bersih movement. All these strategies are complemented by other activities, such as solidarity concerts, sit-in demonstrations, music events, photographic and cartoon exhibitions, among others. Apart from repertoires, it is equally important for a social movement to create its own symbol, be it a color or an image. Yellow is a symbol of Bersih's identity. Since the eruption of the first Bersih rally in 2007, the color yellow has become a symbol of protest. At the same time, the popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook has been made possible by the increase in the use of technology such as mobile phones, computers, and internet access. Similar to other studies of movement strategies, we have found that social media enable new forms of networks and actions to draw sympathetic support from wider publics (Boulianne 2009; Giugni 2004).

Unlike the often-deemed-negative consequences of cooptation of movements by the political elites that eventually end the protest momentum of a movement (Piven and Cloward 1977; Tarrow 1994), the institutionalization of a social movement can sometimes help the movement to achieve its goals or contribute to social and political changes that benefit the collective good (Stearns and Almeida 2004). In the case of Bersih 2.0, by gaining inside access to the political system, the group was able to achieve a more substantial and long-term impact on policy making.

In conclusion, this chapter affirms that the choice of policy advocacy strategy made by the Bersih movement is based on two main factors: external political opportunities or constraints and access to different resources. This chapter assesses how an electoral reform movement, Bersih, operated within an authoritarian system under the rule of a single dominant party, UMNO. It explores Bersih as a movement that later turned into an organization that emerged as a group identity representing the collective grievances of Malaysians in the early 2000s, after the failed attempt by the 1998 Reformasi movement. The findings of this chapter suggest that its effect on policy advocacy in the context of Malaysia relies on political access, as also highlighted by the two other chapters in this section. By taking advantage of the available institutional opportunities, Bersih contributed to the electoral reform discourse that was in line with its goals. That said, it should be emphasized that while Bersih 2.0 now has more opportunities to be involved in policy making on electoral reforms, the policies and implementation that would translate into substantive electoral reform remain part of a long journey. As discussed in the conclu-

sion, we identify three conditions of advocacy under authoritarianism that shape all stages of influence production: access to policy making, information demands, and social control. We find that groups without access to policy makers heavily rely on media strategies and public mobilization, as observed in democracies. In addition, analyzing changing strategies in response to varying amounts of policy access facilitates analysis of the cost-benefit perception of advocacy groups to see when mobilization might be worth the cost of potential repression, as we see in the case of Zimbabwe in the next section (chapter 11).

NOTES

Note: A portion of the data from this chapter derives from Michelle Tye, Carmen Leong, Felix Tan, Barney Tan, and Ying Hooi Khoo. 2018. "Social Media for Empowerment in Social Movements: The Case of Malaysia's Grassroots Activism." *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* 42, no. 15: 408–30; Ying Hooi Khoo. 2016a. "Malaysia's 13th General Elections and the Rise of Electoral Reform Movement." *Asian Politics & Policy* 8, no. 3: 418–35.

    1. In a political twist in February 2020, the PH was subsequently "ousted" by a new political coalition, the Perikatan Nasional (PN).

    2. Global Bersih website: https://www.globalbersih.org/.

    3. Global Bersih website: https://www.globalbersih.org/.

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Part V

Outcomes

10 | Post-Soviet Policy Entrepreneurs?

The Impact of Nonstate Actors on Social Service Reform in Russia and Belarus

Eleanor Bindman and Tatsiana Chulitskaya

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. Despite these differences, there were significant changes in national welfare systems in all cases. Since 2000, the Russian 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 nonstate actors such as NGOs and commercial enterprises in the provision of social services to vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, the disabled, and families living on low incomes. 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 recently there have been nascent attempts 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 nonstate actors working in this area may have some influence on social policy or its development.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) and how its concept of "policy entrepreneurs" is applied in the context of the nondemocratic regimes in Russia and Belarus. Next we explain the recent context of welfare reform in both countries and explore how and why processes of "outsourcing" social services to NGOs

and other providers became a viable option. We rely in our discussion on data gathered from interviews with NGOs in both countries between 2015 and 2018 and ask whether NGOs have the ability to act as policy entrepreneurs in framing social policy problems and presenting solutions in a way that has influenced national and local priorities in this area. We argue that despite the significant constraints NGOs face when 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 in this area and that they are capable of using their knowledge, expertise, and contacts to do so. Our findings mirror others in this section in that advocacy groups do achieve concrete policy outcomes and that it is made possible by the regimes' need for information and expertise that advocacy groups are able to provide. Regime-legitimation claims based on social welfare create opportunities for advocacy groups in both countries to provide "expert" information, as the study on Zimbabwe (chapter 11) and the large-N analysis in chapter 12 confirm. Furthermore, our findings have implications for both the study of how civil society operates in post-Soviet authoritarian regimes and our understanding of the policy-making process in these contexts.

NGOs as "Policy Entrepreneurs" in an Authoritarian Regime

NGOs and other nonstate actors such as think tanks or interest group lobbies have long acted as "partners" to 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). This has led to the development of so-called "network" governance, in which the traditional boundaries between the public, private, and voluntary sectors become blurred and policy networks involving formal and informal relationships and direct and indirect contacts between state and nonstate actors develop around shared areas of interest in policy making (Rhodes 2007; Mintrom and Vergari 1998). Kingdon (2014) argues that the process of setting the agenda for action in a particular policy area follows a "garbage can" model with three components: problems, policies, and politics. Within the "problem" stream of this model various problems capture the attention of policy makers 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 it could be prompted by a sudden "focusing event" such as a crisis or disaster (Kingdon 2014, 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 (Kingdon 2014, 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 policy issues will only get on the agenda when they are "coupled" and "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" (Kingdon 2014, 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 policy-making 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, team- and coalition-building, collecting evidence, and negotiating and networking (Mintrom 2019).

While Kingdon's work focused on the specific and highly fragmented context of policy making within the United States, the multiple-streams framework (MSF) has since been applied to a number of different political systems and units of analysis, with varying degrees of success (Herweg, Huß, and Zohlnhöfer 2015). What most of these studies have in common, however, is a focus on applying the MSF in the context of high-income countries and in democratic regimes, with some notable exceptions (cf. Ridde 2009). What is less clear is whether there are opportunities for potential policy entrepreneurs to have input in the policy-making process in electoral/competitive authoritarian regimes such as Russia and Belarus (Hale 2010; Levitsky and Way 2010; Bedford 2017). This type of regime is characterized by "electoral manipulation, unfair media access, abuse of state resources, and varying degrees of harassment and violence [that] skewed the playing field in favor of incumbents" (Levitsky and Way 2010).

To analyze the policy-making process in nondemocratic regimes, some scholars have explored the role of NGOs as policy entrepreneurs in China's authoritarian political system. Mertha (2009, 996) argues that those who were previously excluded from the policy-making process in China, such as NGOs, activists, and journalists, now play an active role in this process and its outcomes as they have learned to abide by the "rules of the game" and to operate within a system of "fragmented authoritarianism." Within such a system, policy change tends to take place incrementally and through bureaucratic bargaining. He and Thøgerson (2010, 675) argue that the Chinese government has been willing to open up some consultative space for NGOs and other civic groups in order to bolster the legitimacy of the state without jeopardizing the Chinese Communist Party's monopoly on political decision making (see Li, chapter 7 this volume). Teets (2018) argues that policy networks constructed by NGOs in China in fact operate in a manner comparable to those in democracies, despite the more constrained conditions in which they must operate and in the absence of major changes in the political power structure. While the Chinese political system remains more overtly authoritarian than the Russian and Belarusian systems, the three cases nevertheless have some parallels. Under the centralized, semiauthoritarian system that has developed during President 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. At first glance, Russia and Belarus may thus, like China, 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, 94) point out, policy making in any authoritarian state involves other actors aside from the top leaders and their supporting elite: "policy actors in authoritarian regimes are potentially just as susceptible as their counterparts in democracies to the influence of contingent external shocks and to the complex mix and flow of ideas around them."

Studies of policy entrepreneurs' attempts to push through reforms in various policy domains in Russia have highlighted their variable rates of success. Gel'man and Starodubtsev (2016, 114) argue that reforms in Russia can only be successful if "a certain reform is the top political priority of the strong and authoritative head of state, and if a team of reformers has the opportunity to be insulated from the major interest groups, and if it

implements policy changes quickly and they bring immediate positive results." This is borne out by analyses of recent reforms of the child welfare system in Russia, which indicate that child welfare became a priority for the state. This gave NGOs active in this field opportunities to have some input into the formulation of policy and legislation at the federal level (Bindman, Kulmala, and Bogdanova 2019) and the implementation of policy at the regional level (Bogdanova and Bindman 2016). In Russia, the federal government is responsible for setting the general principles and national standards for social policy, particularly the federal Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.[1] The president plays the key role in determining the direction of policy, particularly in areas with major budgetary implications such as social policy (Khmelnitskaya 2017). Policy implementation, however, is a responsibility of regional governments, which must pass the corresponding legislation and which have their own regional ministries for social protection, and municipal governments, which are responsible for the practical delivery of social services (Kulmala and Tarasenko 2016). In addition, Russia's extensive system of social services and benefits is largely financed by regional budgets (Remington et al. 2013). These factors ensure that when it comes to the implementation of social policy in Russia, it is the regional level that matters most, and that allows NGOs the greatest opportunities to operate as policy entrepreneurs and build relationships with policy makers in regional legislatures as well as regional and municipal administrations. In Belarus, which is a much smaller and less complex polity than Russia, this domain is much more centralized and dominated by the state, which acts as the main agent of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. On the level of policy design and decision making, the president and his administration play major roles, but the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the corresponding departments in the local administrations at different levels have major control over policy implementation. The whole system is hierarchical, subordinated, and standardized, and 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 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, the opportunities at the national level exist during both policy development and implementation. This means that outcomes in Russia are likely to be

more widespread and diffuse, whereas in Belarus they are likely to be more limited in both scope and number.

Welfare Reform in Russia and Belarus: The Policy Context

At present Russia's welfare state encompasses a mix of public and private health care 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 "optimization" of the health care system, which has led to hospital closures and staff layoffs in a number of regions (Matveev 2016). Such reforms gained steam particularly in the context of the economic crisis of 2014–2016, which has led to a decline in household incomes and subsequent cuts to social spending on education, health care, and communal housing services (Khmelnitskaya 2017).[2] This trend builds on long-running programs of increased privatization in the child care and elderly care sectors. In addition, authorities have enthusiastically supported the policy of utilizing socially oriented NGOs (SONGOs) as service providers, with the government passing major legislation expanding their use in 2010 and 2015, and the Ministry for Economic Development spearheading funding programs of SONGOs at federal and regional levels since 2011 (Krasnopolskaya, Skokova, and Pape 2015). This has involved distributing direct federal and regional grants among SONGOs and improving the legal framework for them to participate in tenders for government and municipal service contracts. A state register of SONGOs was established in 2011, and these organizations are currently offered various funding schemes by the government: federal-level grants to support SONGOs,[3] subsidies to cover utility payments made by SONGOs, and targeted funding for SONGOs from the regional and municipal authorities (Tarasenko 2018). A further innovation that is intended to increase competition and drive up quality in the delivery of previously state-run services is the use of competitive tenders for service delivery that registered commercial and noncommercial organizations can apply for. Under new legislation passed in 2012, all levels of government must use small and medium enterprises and SONGOs to provide 15 percent of the total annual value of their contracts for social service provisions (Benevolenski 2014). 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 policy-making process (Khmelnitskaya 2017).

In contrast to Russia, Belarus is a state that, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has experienced relatively little reform in the political, economic, and social spheres (Pranevičiūtė-Neliupšienė et al. 2014; Wilson 2016). Due to favorable gas and oil prices and easily accessible credit 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 generous populist social policy. The social contract with the population was based on the idea that the government would provide stability, order, a low level of social inequality, and a high (in fact almost total) 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, Belarusian social policy preserved the principles of Soviet-era universalistic welfare redistribution with social support for numerous groups. During this period more than half of the adult Belarusian population was eligible for social benefits of some kind (Chubrik et al. 2009). The state guaranteed the universal provision of social services and benefits, subsidies for utility costs, and control of consumer prices. Predominantly state-owned enterprises and state-controlled trade unions performed not only production and labor-market-oriented functions, but were also ascribed complex "social functions" such as providing jobs, building and maintaining social infrastructure, organizing leisure of employees and their families, engaging into community service, etc. (Chulitskaya and Matonyte 2018).

Beginning in the mid-2000s, however, due to economic pressures and a deteriorating demographic situation (with a continuing decline in the working-age population), Belarusian welfare policy drifted away from the Soviet paternalistic state-centered approach and its universal social security policy. 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). As a result, the number of categories of people eligible for social benefits was reduced. But the scope of social support programs in Belarus remained broad (around 40 percent of the population in 2010), despite its more accurate targeting, which still allowed benefits to leak into households not below the poverty line. In addition, the list of socially vulnerable groups was not comprehensively revised, and it did not include some categories (for instance, temporarily unemployed or homeless people). Recent policy measures have included the redistribu-

tion of some social welfare responsibilities to nonstate 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, and in December 2015 the Law on the Public-Private Partnership (N345-3) was adopted (Ministry of Economy 2019). NGOs are regarded as entities that are useful for assisting specific socially vulnerable groups such as children, large families on low incomes, and the disabled (Matonyte and Chulitskaya 2013; Chulitskaya and Matonyte 2018). In 2013 changes to the Law on Social Provision were adopted that 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 services provision and HIV prevention (Zurakovski and Mancurova 2018). In contrast to Russia, the outcomes of the introduction of social contracting in Belarus are as yet limited. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, in January 2019, there were just eighty-two social contracting agreements in Belarus (with an even smaller number of projects in previous years). In 2018, the amount of funding for social contracting provided by local authorities was the equivalent of around €300,000 (Belta 2019). One organization (the Belarusian Red Cross), which is a state-organized entity or GONGO, receives most of its funding through this mechanism. Other organizations that participate in social contracting are either Soviet-era organizations that help people with disabilities (for example, the Belarusian society for the people with disabilities) or more recently established "grassroots" NGOs for people with disabilities, such as the Belarusian Association for Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities (Belta 2019).

Data and Methods

Our analysis is based on a number of interviews conducted in various cities in Russia between 2015 and 2016 and in Minsk, Belarus, in 2018. A total of fifteen interviews were conducted with representatives of NGOs work-

ing with vulnerable groups such as the homeless, the elderly, and the disabled and with representatives of think tanks specializing in social policy in Moscow, St Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Perm, and Kazan in Russia. A further nine interviews were conducted with NGOs based in Minsk, and three interviews were conducted with representatives of the municipal bureaucracy in Minsk responsible for delivering social services in the city. All interviews were conducted in Russian on the condition of anonymity and were then translated and coded by the authors. Rather than trying to capture a nationally representative sample of NGOs working in the field of social policy in both countries, we chose to focus on a specific type of organization working solely in the area of social service provision that also interacted with the authorities on some level and often had been involved in the "social contracting" process, even if they had been unsuccessful.

NGOs as Social Policy Entrepreneurs: Russia and Belarus Compared

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 gives "street-level bureaucrats" considerable influence over the extent to which a policy is realized in practice (Gel'man and Starodubtsev 2016). As a result, how "successful" a policy is outsourced 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. The NGOs and social policy experts who took part in this study all had extensive contact with bureaucrats that were responsible for service delivery in their regions, and some had joined the official register of socially oriented NGOs able to provide social services. Several were interested in applying, or had applied already, for tenders to provide services, although they had not been successful. Some pointed to the reluctance of these bureaucrats to engage with the new policy and their suspicion of working with non-state providers, but also to the increasing pressures on them to implement policies they are not qualified to deal with:

> The law itself in many respects has a declaratory nature and the resolution of many issues is devolved to the regional level. The regions don't understand how to resolve these issues so out of habit they start to develop these opaque systems in order to avoid it or

deal with it. So, at the moment if you talk to a lot of regions where the network of social services is run only by the authorities you find that bureaucrats there see it as "how can we get the better of this law?" or "how can we survive this law?" So, they treat it as something entirely negative. (Marina, social policy consultant, think-tank, Perm, 2015)

Despite these bureaucratic obstacles, NGOs operating in the social policy sphere in Russia and working with vulnerable groups such as children, the disabled, the elderly, and the homeless in many respects occupy a more privileged position than NGOs focusing explicitly on more political or human-rights-based issues, the latter having been the target of punitive legislation over the course of the past decade (Daucé 2014). This situation can also be observed in China where service-oriented NGOs in the welfare sphere have more freedom to operate and receive more state support (Teets 2018). As mentioned previously, several federal laws and major grant programs at the presidential level have reinforced the idea that socially oriented NGOs can and should undertake greater responsibilities in the social sphere. In addition to involving these NGOs directly in social service provision by awarding them grants and tenders at the federal and regional levels, the Putin administration has been active in developing various cross-sectoral bodies that bring together various types of nonstate actors and policy makers. Currently more than sixty of the country's regions have public chambers (Stuvøy 2014) that play 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 executive and legislative authorities and the wider public (Richter 2009a, 2009b; Stuvøy 2014; Olisova 2015). As institutions, public chambers have been heavily criticized for their lack of accountability and what is perceived to be an overly close relationship with the authorities (Richter 2009a). Evans (2010, 20), however, argues that "institutions that were created to provide feedback to the leaders may also serve as channels of appeal for citizens." For NGOs, the regional public chambers and their assorted committees and specialized working groups can offer an important forum for developing contacts with local policy makers and putting forward policy recommendations that 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 policy makers and working on issues of social service delivery, which are perceived as less sensitive and politicized, NGOs in authoritarian systems can still reshape policy makers' understanding of a particular problem and the range of solutions available to address it (Teets 2018).

Several of the NGOs interviewed for this study had been involved in various meetings organized by their regional public chamber and were positive about the opportunities these provided to access official contacts which might otherwise be closed to them:

> There are roundtables organized by the regional public chamber and we can organize ones on prevention and on interagency cooperation for example. So, we meet there from time to time with the [regional] prosecutor's office, the police, the Investigations Committee and so on to discuss issues such as how to work together effectively to help victims and how to stop violence from happening. (Maria, women and children's NGO, Nizhniy Novgorod)

> We work with the [regional] Public Chamber if our interests overlap. We have had roundtables there and also meetings which we've initiated ourselves. The Public Chamber together with the [regional] Ministry for Social Policy are happy to hold roundtables and to support and invite people on a regular basis. And I think there are results—the Ministry then decided to implement a program for young families and we were pleased because we were one of the organizations involved in this, and as a result we trained a lot of specialists from various state social service agencies and they gained a lot of knowledge and understanding. (Marina, children's charity, Nizhniy Novgorod)

One respondent, who had spent a long period working directly for the regional public chamber as well as running an NGO, expressed the view that much depended on the ability of NGOs themselves to seize the initiative regarding opportunities provided by the chamber for high-level contacts and discussions with other local organizations, rather than passively appealing to it for help:

> Different organizations come to the chamber's discussion fora and talk about the problems they are facing. In general, it seems to me

that the chamber is fulfilling its functions well in terms of uniting people. Anyone can bring up a problem, but in order to resolve it you need to include people who can achieve this. That's why we held our congress with the support of the chamber—the chamber gave it a specific status and the possibility to hold talks with state bodies on a higher level. (Natasha, disability NGO, Kazan)

A further way that allows NGOs to gain access to policy makers is by participation in public councils attached to federal and regional ministries. This was initially mandated by a presidential decree in 2011 and prompted the proliferation of public councils in the federal and regional offices of virtually all government agencies, departments, and services (Owen and Bindman 2019). 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 Styrin 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). Many of the respondents from the NGOs involved in this study had participated regularly in these councils, particularly at the regional and municipal levels, and several were positive about the opportunity these bodies gave them for influencing the implementation of policy in their specific area of expertise:

Virtually all government departments have an advisory council which includes representatives of different social sector NGOs. Any transport issue which might have implications for disabled people cannot be decided without the opinion of social sector NGOs. This cooperation between social organizations and the authorities is well-established and can only continue to improve—ours has plenty of influence. (Alla, disability NGO, Moscow)

We work with the regional Ministry of Education and the city administration and they are very happy to work with us. We've been here for nine years so we've built close relations with them and we are a trusted partner. (Sveta, children's charity, Nizhniy Novgorod)

As these responses demonstrate, a further "window of opportunity" opened as legislation surrounding the creation of instruments of public oversight changed and government's interest in involving NGOs in the provision of social services to specific vulnerable groups increased. Socially oriented NGOs in Russia have been able to take advantage of this window to involve themselves directly in meetings and discussions with policy makers to put the issues they wish to highlight and their proposed solutions on the agenda at the municipal and regional levels of government, which is where the actual details of social policy are often decided on. A further, and equally important, reason for NGOs' effectiveness in this setting 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 that 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. As Teets (2018) points out, in China, NGOs often act as "expert" consultants to policy makers, particularly in areas where the state lacks expert capacity or sufficient information to tackle a particular issue. Several respondents highlighted this role, pointing to the numerous invitations they received from the authorities to offer their expert opinion and to train members of the regional and municipal administrations:

> We work quite closely with regional governments so we've got partnerships at the moment with the Leningrad Oblast authorities, with St. Petersburg, various rayons [districts] of St. Petersburg, and we work at the city level as well. We've also got discussions going on in Moscow and we have quite a lot of requests for support in developing services but also training and education from various regions. (Lyuda, children's charity manager, St. Petersburg)

> We work very actively with all the relevant agencies so that's the [regional] Ministry of Education, the [regional] Ministry for Social Policy and so on. And they invite us as experts to seminars all the time. (Marina, children's charity, Nizhniy Novgorod)

In the case of Belarus, the creation of "windows of opportunity" is in some respects similar to that in Russia, but it also has some crucial differ-

ences. In addition to being a much smaller country with a far smaller number of active NGOs, a further key difference is that, as our respondents argued, social policy and the welfare sphere are still seen as being monopolized by the big state:

> The state has practically a total monopoly in the sphere of essential social services provision. . . . The state social protection system consumes almost 99 percent of the national budget. (Andrey, disability NGO, Minsk)

The outcome of this monopoly is an absence of alternative actors, particularly 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 raise interest of entrepreneurs:

> The money on offer is not big enough to attract business. It is extremely difficult to generate any profit while providing social services. (Sergey, representative of the Minsk City district administration)

Other respondents from the NGO sector and the expert community, in contrast, expressed a relatively optimistic vision of the changes in Belarusian social policy in recent years and attributed these changes to the advocacy work of Belarusian NGOs active in the social sphere:

> In reality, during the last twenty years we see a big transformation of the social system, which happens due to the advocacy actions of the NGOs, which raise urgent problems and tell [the authorities] about drawbacks in the sphere. (Aleksey, disability NGO, Minsk)

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 mentioned by all respondents. The evaluation of the quality of NGOs-state relations in this context, however, was quite different from the Russian case. In contrast to

the views of the Russian NGOs interviewed, several of the Belarusian respondents were quite negative about the capacity of Belarusian NGOs to provide high-quality social services, 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.

> [W]hen the window [of opportunity] opens and they [NGOs] should provide their shoulders to the state, it appears to be that the [third] sector in the sphere of social services is not ready [to help]. They couldn't even define, describe the service which they provide. (Maria, social policy consultant, Minsk)

One representative of the Minsk district administration also argued that it is difficult for NGOs to deal with the public guidelines for alternative providers and expressed the view that NGOs are in principle ready to participate in social contracting but do not have experience in managing public funding:

> You know, frankly speaking, they are ready to work, but they'd rather prefer that public institutions—the department of social security [of the local administration]—prepare everything for them. I mean, all the legal and other documents. On such conditions they are ready. They lack the experience to work within the public administration system, with public funding and so on.

Several respondents also highlighted the need for more trust and respect between the authorities and NGOs working in the social sector and argued that this would require changes in attitudes on both sides:

> When the services are provided to the state by NGOs using state money, we build quite different relations. The relations should be in the form of partnership and respect. (social policy consultant, Minsk)

> There exists a high level of distrust from the state toward NGOs as well as vice versa. The state likes to blame the third sector, saying that we are not active enough, but I understand rather well why we are not active enough. (Alisa, veterans' support NGO, Minsk)

This indicates that in contrast to the Russian case, relations between socially oriented NGOs and the authorities in Belarus are at a much more preliminary phase of development. NGOs in Belarus lack the mechanisms and opportunities for discussion and cooperation with policy makers at the regional and local level that Russian socially oriented NGOs can make use of. Nevertheless, the system of social contracting does seem to offer some Belarusian NGOs the possibility of cooperating with the state. One respondent with experience with the contracting process claimed that,

> We came to an agreement with the local administration [about social contracting] quite fast. The dialogue passed smoothly, and we were able to assure [the administration] that the category [of people we work with] is indeed in need, we have to work with them, and the funding would become a good support. (Katya, family support NGO, Minsk)

Some NGOs, including this respondent, saw social contracting as a window of opportunity, an experimental platform for the development of good practice in state–civil society relations. They saw the successful development of such a small instrument as a cornerstone for future successful cooperation:

> Providing public money for NGOs by the state—it is not just money, but the change in how the state relates to NGOs. And as a result, if we could change relations within this small issue, it would be easier to promote other issues as well: foreign assistance, sponsorship, charity, and so on. (Katya, family support NGO, Minsk)

Another respondent saw these and other changes in Belarusian social policy as a marker of certain changes in attitudes within the state toward alternative actors. She highlighted the importance of more cases of good practices as a tool to "reassure" the state that cooperation with nonstate organizations is useful:

> I feel that the state is ready [to cooperate with NGOs]. But until it understands for sure that there are no tricks and it doesn't see a concrete mechanism; it would be afraid. . . . And every time it sees concrete cases [of positive actions of NGOs] the situation will be changing. (Raisa, charitable foundation, Minsk)

As can be seen in Russia, social policy in Belarus constitutes an important part of President Lukashenka's legitimacy, but it has never undergone full-scale reforms, with welfare provision remaining one of the main priorities of the political regime. From the point of view of the involved actors and in contrast to some of the views expressed by the Russian respondents in our study, Belarusian social policy is still centralized and dominated by the state. As a result, the opportunities for NGOs to build networks involving policy makers and to have input into policy implementation are more limited than in the Russian case given the more closed nature of the political system in Belarus and how underdeveloped the nonprofit sector is. But the more recent changes introduced addressing contracting create a window of opportunity for nonstate actors (NGOs in particular) to (a) become formal providers of social services and (b) act as policy entrepreneurs and put forward their issues of concern and their proposals for resolving them, particularly since, as in Russia, they are able to occupy the position of "experts" who can provide much-needed technical knowledge and information.

Conclusion

Our findings indicate that the conditions of post-Soviet authoritarianism offer certain opportunities for nonstate actors operating at the national and regional levels in Russia and Belarus to influence policy development in certain privileged domains of social policy that are less politicized than others but remain highly important in terms of regime credibility and legitimacy. NGOs working in the area of social policy and social service delivery in both countries occupy a middle ground where they do not act in opposition to the authorities but also have (largely) not been fully coopted by them. Their status as "experts" offers them certain input into the system as the state needs what they have to offer in an area of policy that has a significant impact on the daily lives and well-being of the population. This enables them to act as policy entrepreneurs and take advantage of windows of opportunity that open in the social policy sphere to advance their ideas and proposals through the formation of networks involving policy makers. 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 in the sphere of social policy, even if they remain gradual and limited for now. Ultimately,

what happens at the regional level in both countries is often the real test of whether NGOs can influence policy outcomes as well as development, and in both cases it seems that they have some opportunity to be successful and that such opportunities are likely to increase in the future.

Our findings correspond with those in the next two chapters, as far as groups having more space in the policy areas central to regime-legitimation claims. For example, using a large-N analysis in chapter 12, Angelo Vito Panaro also finds that regime-legitimation strategies centering on socio-economic performance and nominally democratic institutions require technical and political information that groups may supply, encouraging autocrats to develop more institutions for consultation. This suggests that interest groups' degree of policy influence varies depending on the discursive strategies autocrats deploy to legitimate their rule, with the performance-based and democratic-procedural legitimation appeals deployed by "informational autocrats" (Guriev and Treisman 2020) being associated with more access. As discussed in the volume conclusion, three conditions of advocacy under authoritarianism shape all stages of influence production: access to policy making, information demands, and social control. In this analysis of welfare provision in Russia and Belarus, we find that groups' access to information and expertise needed for regime-legitimation claims allow them to participate in policy making and shape specific policy outcomes.

NOTES

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11 | Land Lobbying and Mobilization

Civil and Uncivil Society in the 1990s in Zimbabwe

Kirk Helliker, Sandra Bhatasara,
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Zimbabwe achieved independence in 1980 after a war between guerrilla armies and the Rhodesian state. As leader of the victorious Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party in elections in April 1980, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe called for racial reconciliation. For two decades, the ruling party did not address the colonial legacy of white-owned commercial agriculture and enact significant land reform. Meanwhile, in the early 1980s, Mugabe deployed the Zimbabwean army in Matabeleland, the stronghold of the Patriotic Front–Zimbabwe African People's Union or PF-ZAPU (the main opposition party), leading to the Gukurahundi atrocities. In 1987, PF-ZAPU merged into ZANU-PF, resulting in a de facto one-party state, with Mugabe as an executive president. ZANU-PF spoke about instituting a de jure one-party state, though this never materialized. Up until the late 1990s, ZANU-PF ruled with minimal political opposition, so by then Zimbabwe was a dominant-party regime with deeply authoritarian characteristics. There arose a fusion of the state and ruling party, or a party-state nexus, with the state acting in line with ruling party's dictates.

In this chapter, we examine lobbying and mobilization efforts in the late 1990s in Zimbabwe around the issue of land reform. In this regard, the party-state was faced with contradictory pressures. On the one hand, during the 1990s, in reaction to creeping authoritarianism, civil society mobilization and advocacy defended the civil and political liberties of Zimbabweans as part of a project of liberal democratic justice. These groups were urban-based and donor-funded, and not membership-based. Their agita-

tion led in 1999 to the formation of the most important opposition party (Movement for Democratic Change, or MDC) to ZANU-PF since 1980. Embedded in this civil society project were attempts to lobby the state directly (through, for instance, workshops) for a more transparent, market-led land reform process inclusive of civil society involvement. This was only a minor dimension of the anti-authoritarian project. On the other hand, ex-guerrillas (labeled as war veterans) mobilized and advocated for land reform (primarily by way of land expropriation) in a sustained manner and as part of a project of nationalist-inspired redistributive justice. War veterans were organized at national and local levels, with mobilization capacity at local levels, particularly among marginalized small-scale farmers. The lobbying practices of war veterans were often deeply confrontational, including the nationwide invasion of white-owned agricultural land in the year 2000. For this reason, we refer to the war veterans as an uncivil society.

We first discuss the notions of civil and uncivil society (including with reference to Zimbabwe) and provide a short historical context to the dramatic events that arose in Zimbabwe in the late 1990s. After discussing land mobilization and advocacy in relation to both uncivil and civil society in Zimbabwe, we then examine the outcome of their land lobbying activities and the implications this has for understanding the autocratic character of the Zimbabwean state.

We find a bifurcation of lobbying in Zimbabwe, where foreign funding aligns civil society groups with the political opposition, ultimately placing them in an outsider position and disadvantaging lobbying efforts. Conversely, the confrontational land lobbying efforts of war veterans were more successful, not least because they resonated with regime discourses dating back to independence, but also because they were membership-based and linked to a clearly delineated constituency. In the Zimbabwean case, with its dual lobbying ecology of war veterans and Western-aided NGOs, policy making was driven by the fear of losing support of important elements of the regime coalition that could not be coopted by limited concessions. In addition, we find that significant elite disagreement or uncertainty in this policy area also created opportunities for groups to provide "expert" information. In the Zimbabwean case, coalition building and providing expert consultation were two successful tactics in influencing land policy given a divided elite.

Our findings mirror others in this section in that advocacy groups are able to achieve concrete policy outcomes, and this is possible due to regime needs for information, expertise, and support from certain advo-

cacy groups. Regime-legitimation claims create opportunities for advocacy groups in Zimbabwe, similar to Russia, Belarus (chapter 10), and the large-N analysis in chapter 12.

Civil and Uncivil Society in Zimbabwe

Civil society was conceptualized originally as a social space in bourgeois liberal society marked by voluntary arrangements, respect for the rule of law and private property, and civil liberties (Kaviraj and Khilnani 2001), though debates have long prevailed about the Eurocentric character of this conception (Hann and Dunn 1996). In an autocratic state like Zimbabwe, the space of civil society is subject to significant state intrusions. While the notion of civil society as a space remains, another understanding arose in the 1970s in the context of neoliberal restructuring, namely, civil society as organizational formations and, more specifically, (liberal) democracy-seeking civil society groups. Any organization in civil society (as a space) that acts contrary to the aspirations and practices of liberal democracy is labeled as uncivil society—or what Chambers and Kopstein (2001) refer to as "bad civil society." Again, this is likely a highly Eurocentric conception (Chatterjee 2004).

We draw upon this second conception of civil and uncivil society as organizational formations. We consider this as an analytical and not a moral distinction, so that uncivil society groups are not necessarily "bad." Further, while the conceptual distinction between civil and uncivil society organizational formations may be straightforward, fitting a particular formation into either category is not (Kopecky and Mudde 2003; Glasius 2010).

We consider war veterans as part of uncivil society because of the violence marking the land occupations from the year 2000 and the disregard for the rule of law and private property rights. Nevertheless, insofar as liberal democracy is a form of representative democracy, war veterans derived their legitimacy from representing the land demands of small-scale farmers, among whom many of them lived. They also at times used procedural and deliberative methods in land reform advocacy. Lastly, the outcome of war veteran land mobilization was a meaningful state-led land reform program (fast-track land reform), which undercut an unjust agrarian landscape dominated by white farmers. Hence war veterans might be considered as "progressive uncivil society" (Yeros 2002, 249).

While more prone to formal lobbying processes through deliberative means and seeking an antiauthoritarian liberal democracy, urban civil

society formations were "advocates without members" (Skocpol 1999), with no membership base and downward accountability. As well, these groups had internal processes sometimes characterized by unprocedural practices (Rich-Dorman 2001). Brilliant Mhlanga (Mhlanga 2006, 2), a human rights activist, writes that Zimbabwean "civil society is showing double standards" as it "has internalized the image of the ruling party, its tactics and general guidelines." Glasius (2010, 1585) makes the wider point: "Adherence to liberal democratic goals does not necessarily equate with internal democracy" and, as we show, "[u]ncivil movements may have civil outcomes."

In principle, civil and uncivil societies have potential for success in mobilizing and lobbying states regarding land reform. In practice, however, their capacity to do so depends upon enabling historical and political conditions. In the late 1990s, the party-state in Zimbabwe was marked by internal tensions, with both liberal and radical tendencies existing. Autocratic states are not necessarily cohesive, as they are riddled with ambiguities and conflicts. Because of this, there was scope for lobbying around land reform from both liberal civil society and radical uncivil society.

Because of the antagonistic character of their competing demands, there could be only one successful lobbying process: either civil or uncivil society. Organized war veterans were in a stronger position than urban civil society groups to win significant concessions around land reform, which they did through the state's fast track program. To emphasize, however, this is not an argument against the potential success of civil-society-driven policy dialogue.

The semiauthoritarian Zimbabwean state did not close down civil society (as a space) totally, as it allowed for some civil society group lobbying regarding land reform and other policy issues. Less so than in democratic states, civil society in Zimbabwe was still able to engage in intergroup coalition building as well as deliberative processes with the state. But civil society's land advocacy was part of a broader regime-change program, and the ruling party rightly conceptualized it as such. For ZANU-PF, the possibility of an alliance with civil society, let alone coopting civil society, seemed doomed from the start.

Semiauthoritarianism, and the repressive character of the Zimbabwean state, meant that—simultaneously—space existed (unlike in democratic states) for war veterans to undertake violence-prone mobilization. This was acceptable to the state only because of the veterans' historical (though troubled) alliance with the ruling party. The giving in of the ruling party to war veteran tactics of mobilization arose from its deep concern about

the threat posed by the regime-change program. The Zimbabwean state sided with war veterans because ZANU-PF's electoral success depended upon war veterans and the small-scale farmers they mobilized during the occupations in the year 2000.

Historical Context

In the early years of Zimbabwean independence, ZANU-PF inhibited the growth of autonomous civil society formations. The ruling party presented itself as the embodiment of the nation, and no organizational formations independent of the party were deemed necessary. For instance, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), which was central to mobilization against the ruling party from the mid-1990s, was initially an organizational wing of the ruling party (Raftopoulos 2000).

In the early 1990s, a structural adjustment program was implemented, and this undermined many socioeconomic advances from the 1980s. As urban living standards plummeted, ZCTU broke from the ruling party and organized major strikes in the 1990s. Urban civil society groups emerged, coalescing around the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), which agitated against the closing down of democratic space by ZANU-PF. Incorporated into this was limited land reform advocacy by way of direct lobbying of pertinent state officials and ruling party leaders. Despite state repression, heightened mobilization (including spontaneous street protests and strikes by ZCTU) led to the formation of the MDC in 1999.

Most of the tens of thousands of ex-guerrillas (now war veterans) had not experienced significant material benefits from independence, and they lived marginalized lives in urban and rural areas. For war veterans, the aim of the rural-based liberation war was reclamation of lands lost under colonialism. But the ruling party failed to implement a broad-based land reform program, pursuing a limited willing seller–willing buyer (market-led) reform process. In this light, war veterans formed a national organization, called the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association (ZNLWVA). In the middle and late 1990s, war veterans led a series of occupations of specific white commercial farms, while lobbying the state directly and engaging in disruptive and violent demonstrations over war-based pensions and other benefits (including land) based on their war sacrifices (Kriger 2003; Sadomba 2008). Later, we detail more fully the methods used by both civil and uncivil society in land advocacy.

The government, in 1999, revised the Zimbabwean constitution, and

this was put to a popular vote in February 2000. Two clauses to the revision were important: compulsory acquisition of commercial farms and a more powerful executive presidency. The NCA and its affiliates along with the MDC (with white commercial farmer support) campaigned for a "no" vote while the ruling party (and war veterans) campaigned for a "yes" vote. These two campaigns took on similar forms. First of all, both campaigns involved educating the public, through the media, about the pros and cons of the revised constitution, consistent with advocacy in democratic states. Second, both campaigns used person-to-person intimidation and coercion to ensure active support. White commercial farmers forced their laborers to vote "no" (even driving them to the polling booths), and war veterans tried to compel small-scale farmers (ZANU-PF's main support base) to vote "yes."

The constitutional revision was rejected, mainly because of low turnout on the part of ZANU-PF supporters. Within days of the results being announced (later in February), and under the leadership of ZNLWVA's local structures, small-scale farmers, led by war veterans, began occupying white commercial farms, an action that involved considerable violence. The occupations were not orchestrated by the party-state, though they had its tacit approval. In occupying farms, war veterans conceived their actions as against the ruling party, considering the party's failure to pursue land reclamation. By June 2000, the state had formulated the fast-track land reform program, which it proceeded to implement. This program, in effect, legitimized the land occupations. War veterans were therefore successful in advocating for a state-led land reform program.

Land and Uncivil Society

At independence, a large number of ex-guerrillas were integrated into the new Zimbabwean army, and the remaining thirty thousand former guerrillas were demobilized, with expectations of engaging in government-assisted retraining and productive activities (Chitiyo and Rupiya 2005). Overall, these initiatives collapsed (Dzinesa 2000). Demobilization also included payment of a monthly allowance to ex-guerrillas (for two years only), but this was inadequate for starting postwar lives, and the unfavorable economic conditions arising from structural adjustment (in the 1990s) further marginalized demobilized ex-guerrillas. Simultaneously, ZANU-PF politicians and war veterans in the upper echelons of the state (including the army) drew upon their liberation struggle credentials to

access state resources for purposes of elite accumulation (Sadomba 2008). Without access to land, demobilized ex-guerrillas grew disillusioned and vengeful, as "they knew they were 'winners' in terms of the revolution but what did they have to show for it?" (Nyathi 2004, 69).

War veterans began to organize themselves into the national body (ZNLWVA) (McCandless 2005). Formed in 1989 amidst ruling party suspicion about it, ZNLWVA advocated for the plight of neglected ex-guerrillas. At its inaugural meeting in 1992, with Mugabe in attendance, veterans expressed anger about the configuration of power within Zimbabwe, including a seeming alliance between ZANU-PF and captains of industry, including white farmers (Sadomba 2008). In making reference to Mugabe's state ministers, veterans proclaimed that the state was run by "opportunists and bourgeois elements" (Musemwa 1995). This no-holds-barred meeting became a glimpse into the deteriorating relationship between marginalized war veterans and the ruling party.

Nevertheless, the recognition by ZANU-PF that war veterans were central to the liberation struggle and to the party's post-1980 support base led to vital policy initiatives, notably the War Veterans Act of 1992. A War Victims Compensation Fund was created for financial compensation on a scale proportional to the severity of injuries suffered during the war. The fund was riddled with fraud, including the falsification of injuries by nationalist politicians (Chitiyo 2000), and marginalized veterans in the main were excluded from the fund's benefits. By the mid-1990s, more than twenty-five thousand war veterans were virtually destitute (Musemwa 1995). The promises of the war were not fulfilled, as noted in the following Motto magazine headline: "'Son of the soil' during the armed struggle; 'squatter' after independence" (cited in Musemwa 1995, 31). In 1997, musician Clive Malunga released a song—Nesango ("in the forest")—that portrayed the deplorable plight of ex-guerrillas who "are wandering the country whilst some are living lavish lives."

In 1997, there was a controversial attempt by the state to go beyond market-led reform by acquiring 1,471 white commercial farms. These farms marked for acquisition were later reduced to 841 farms following a delisting process. Most of the other farms were removed from the designation list after owners appealed to the courts, with the government failing to respond to the appeals. This led to further frustrations over the pace of land reform among marginalized veterans.

By the late 1990s, ZNLWVA was under the militant leadership of Chenjari Hitler Hunzvi and was putting increasing pressure on Mugabe. The war veterans' association embarked on multiple disrup-

tive protests, involving significant intimidation, in pursuance of its land agenda. This included interfering with National Heroes' Day celebrations in August 1997, where Mugabe was speaking and on another occasion occupying Mugabe's presidential office. In using such "strong-arm tactics" (McCandless 2005, 404), Hunzvi was able to reorganize the association into a "highly effective lobbying force and carved out a niche for his association in a ZANU PF that was [seen as] tired, corrupt and visionless" (Nyathi 2004, 71). These strident protests led to meetings between ZANU-PF politicians and war veterans in August 1997 where demands for a gratuity, pension, and, most importantly, land were put forward.

At a ZANU-PF summit in Mutare in September 1997, a financial package for war veterans was set out. The package included the following: "52 000 war veterans received a one-off Z\$50 000 (about US\$4 500 at the time) gratuities and Z\$2 000 monthly pensions each."[1] This was the first clear sign that Mugabe was buckling under the pressure from ZNLWVA. While the ruling party gave in to the demands for gratuities and pensions, nothing was forthcoming with regard to land. The forceful position of war veterans was as follows:

> In order to resolve this issue peacefully, we demand that 50 percent of all ex combatants needing settlement be given land by December 1997, the rest by July 1998. Failure to meet these deadlines will force war veterans to move in and settle themselves on farms that have been identified for resettlement. They will occupy white man's land because the white man did not buy that land. (quoted in McCandless 2005, 304)

The question of land hence remained a paramount grievance among war veterans, even twenty years after independence (Chitiyo 2000).

In fact, sporadic and isolated land occupations, with significant ex-guerrilla involvement, took place from the early 1980s and into the early 1990s. Subsequently, though not without their own internal tensions (Chiweshe 2012), a significant number of occupations, approximately two hundred, took place in 1995 and many others over the next few years. For instance, about seven hundred people occupied Longdale Farm in Masvingo Province and, in the same province, a significant number of war veterans (thirty-six in total) occupied the state's Mkwasine Estate (Marongwe 2002). In the Save Conservancy, occupations occurred regularly and grew increasingly aggressive (Wels 2003). In the best-known case, the

Svosve people in Mashonaland East Province occupied four farms, with war veteran assistance.

In early 2000, war veterans learned that the final draft of the constitutional amendment made no reference to compulsory acquisition of land without compensation. As a result, ZNLWVA demanded that such a clause be put into the revised constitution before voting took place. In various meetings expressing its displeasure, and thereby its insubordination to the party-state, the veterans' association told Mugabe that unless the requested clause was incorporated, its members would occupy land on a major scale (Moyo and Yeros 2005). Mugabe buckled to this pressure and incorporated the clause. Soon after the constitutional revisions were rejected, veterans led the occupations of white agricultural land from late February 2000.

Overall, the years from 1997 to 1999 were marked by significant ambiguities in state policy and practice on land reform, which in part reflected tensions within the ruling party. As Moyo (2000a, 28) notes, "Throughout the mid-1997 to 1998 period of compulsory land acquisition, the government publicly appeared not to be providing room for negotiation, when in fact negotiations and trade-offs with stakeholders had long been underway."

On the one hand, there was extensive deliberation-based land policy formation by the state, alongside intensive "policy dialogue activities" and intermittent "high profile negotiation[s]" (Moyo 2000b, 2, 3) on land reform between government and various nonstate bodies, including the white-dominated Commercial Farmers' Union. Civil society groups were supportive of this initiative and became part of it. These land negotiations formed part of a "politics of broadly-based policy dialogue and negotiation" (Moyo, Rutherford, and Amanor-Wilks 2000, 186) that the ruling party had tentatively adopted in the late 1990s. On the other hand, as noted earlier, the government made the shock announcement that 1,471 commercial farms would be acquired on a compulsory and urgent basis. From Moyo's perspective, this "adoption of a centralized method of compulsory land acquisition" was likely "instigated" by "the war veterans" (Moyo 2001, 314). Simultaneously, ZANU-PF was under pressure from its own radical nationalist wing to adopt this route.

The ambivalence and inconsistency embedded in the state's land reform initiatives were an expression of the dilemmas facing the government in responding to deepening crises in the late 1990s, including trade union and civic society opposition and a downturn in the economy. By then, there existed a seeming embourgeoisement of the ruling party and an increasingly production-based, and not redistributive-justice based, trend in the land reform program which went contrary to war veteran

demands. Nevertheless, it appeared that—within the ruling party and state—there was a "political hardening of the radical nationalist social forces and an escalation of demands to resolve land reforms as a matter of sovereign right, pride and reparation" (Moyo 2000b, 5).

Land and Civil Society

During the 1990s, urban-based civil society organizations (or nongovernmental organizations—NGOs) adopted an advocacy stance around a range of issues emerging from the structural adjustment program and the authoritarian restructuring of the Zimbabwean state. In reflecting upon the 1990s, Raftopoulos (2000, 6) argues:

> The economic marginalization of the majority of Zimbabweans that has accompanied the adjustment programme created an environment for [civil society] advocacy on poverty issues. In addition the growing authoritarianism of the Zimbabwean state provided a platform for groups to mobilise around the question of governance.

Unlike in democratic nations, the growing authoritarianism in Zimbabwe set strict conditions for the existence of civil society activity without shutting down democratic space completely. Civil society was able to pursue coalition building (such as the NCA) and deliberative lobbying processes with the state. Advocacy by civil society groups, which were donor-funded, focused primarily on human rights and governance reform, as part of its civic-nationalist democratic initiative against the ZANU-PF state. This crowded out and displaced land reform advocacy, though not entirely. As one civil society network indicated, no matter how limited, civil society "began to recognize the primacy of land in the mid 1990s and began formulating strategies for intervention as well as contributing to policy formulation" (CREATE 2002, 9).

A local NGO named ZERO, though, admitted that civil society was likely "too weak" (Matowanyika and Marongwe 1998, 20) to place significant pressure on government around land reform, such that it "generally remained marginalized" (Marongwe 2003, 14) in this regard. This was explained by NGOs as arising from the centralized top-down thrust of the state and "a complete lack of transparency, corruption and self-interest on the part of the elite at both national and local levels" (Mutepfa, Essof, and Matowanyika 1998, 16).

Despite this, from 1997 to 1999 NGOs became involved in a flurry of land research and lobbying activities. This advocacy work relates back to the Rukuni Land Commission on land tenure in 1993, before which NGOs (but not war veterans) gave evidence. The public release of the report in late 1995, the state's dismissal of its key recommendations, and the likelihood of land legislation nevertheless arising from it set off a round of civil society advocacy efforts. The Women and Land Lobby Group (WLLG), a network of gender NGOs, argued that the commission "heralded the development of more coordinated efforts toward NGO consensus building" in relation to "the concerns of women on the land question" (Makombe 2001, 18).

In the following few years, numerous seminars, workshops and, conferences on land were held in which a loose and fluctuating coalition of NGOs (supported by various donors) played a significant part. For instance, a group of NGOs, including prominent gender organizations, arranged a Women Farmers' Conference in November 1995. Women NGOs formed a Task Force to lobby government to ensure a gender-sensitive land bill but:

> Little significant progress was made due to the lack of a structure to coordinate the diversity of interests, a lack of capacity by individual NGOs and general fatigue arising from the lengthy nature of the process. . . . The increasingly proactive role of NGOs on land, however, had the effect of increasing the government's willingness to involve them in the process (Makombe 2001, 18).

The problems identified in this appraisal were organizational weaknesses of NGOs rather than government intransigence. The apparent willingness to engage civil society on land was consistent with the liberal trend in the party-state, that is, a tendency facilitating relatively inclusive policy dialogue.

In further coalition building, civil society groups held a milestone NGO Consultative Land Conference in May 1997 to chart the way forward. This conference was meant to set the basis for ongoing advocacy activities and a "genuine partnership between civil society and Government" (Mutepfa, Essof, and Matowanyika 1998, 22). Before, during, and after the conference, various networks of NGOs interested in land reform were formed, such as the ELF-NGO Land Working Group, the WLLG, and later CREATE. The possibilities for inclusive land policy engagement "had the effect of reener-

gizing NGO efforts toward coalition building" (Makombe 2001, 19). As with democratic states, civil society sought to bring specialist knowledge and skills to the state's policy-formation process.

Prior to the conference, various workshops on activism were held by civil society groups in 1996. Four areas of activism were identified, one of which was land reform, as "the land question represents a major challenge to civil society in Zimbabwe."[2] This land advocacy would entail "getting those NGOs involved in environmental, civic education and gender-land related programs as representatives of grassroots communities to provide input into Land Reform policies."[3] The representative function of these NGOs and their accountability to "grassroots communities" was, however, highly questionable. This was because many of the NGOs (particularly the advocacy NGOs) were urban-based with minimal contact with rural Zimbabweans.

Several NGOs formed a steering committee, and this committee included key NGOs such as ZERO, ZimRights, and Zimbabwe Women Lawyers' Association. The committee sought "to promote a framework and opportunity for the widest possible dialogue"[4] on land. The holding of the conference in 1997 was agreed upon to facilitate dialogue, and it would be a "unique"[5] opportunity for civil society groups to engage the government and make specific and constructive land policy recommendations. The minister of lands, K. Kangai, in his opening speech to the conference, referred to it as a "historic workshop" that would mark "the beginning of a meaningful engagement between our ministry and civil society."[6]

A major donor's conference in Harare in 1998 saw the government make an effort to speed up land reform under a market-led land program based on democratic principles and inclusivity. Forty-eight countries including Great Britain, the United States, and South Africa, as well as donor organizations such as the World Bank, attended. Civil society was present, but not war veterans. It was underscored at the Harare conference that donors were unwilling to fund land reform unless certain preconditions were met (Masiiwa 2004).

The conference agreed on certain principles, including transparency and respect for the rule of law. This would involve a more flexible approach to land acquisition and resettlement and the strengthening of stakeholder (including civil society) consultations and partnerships, and these became embodied in the Inception Phase Framework Plan (for land reform) of 1998–1999. From November 1998 to March 1999, the state's Technical Committee worked out the finer details of the Inception Phase. Sam Moyo,

who was chairperson of an NGO (ZERO), headed this committee.[7] In April 1999, the Zimbabwean cabinet formally approved this plan of action. Various NGOs were acknowledged by the technical committee for providing significant input into the drafting of the framework.

The land reform Policy Framework and Project Document, as presented at the donors conference, emphasized that the government would "mobilize the existing capacities of various NGOs"[8] to contribute to a market-led land program, including encouraging development NGOs to become involved in support activities at resettlement-scheme level. In the document, these NGOs were conceptualized as partners (with the government) in land reform, because of their "accumulated experience" in working with rural communities. It even spoke glowingly about "democracy NGOs" and how these NGOs "may be attracted by the transparency in the implementation of the land reform program."

Overall, the state's new land program initiative gave NGOs considerable space for direct involvement in land reform through nonstate complementary approaches, or "an enabling environment" (GoZ 1999) for NGOs to configure land reform policy and implementation. This open invitation to NGOs entailed, at least potentially, "a change in operational parameters of the government to include issues of transparency, accountability and democratic participation" (Moyo 2000b, 9). At this juncture, there was optimism among NGOs about their status as land advocates and land-reform implementers. This optimism was exemplified by WLLG. In a moment of exuberant reflection, this NGO argued that through its efforts, "[t]here is a greater visibility of women and women's issues in the current land reform programme and an acceptance of the role of the WLLG as a key stakeholder" (Makombe 2001, 19).

Despite this exuberance, difficult challenges lay ahead for civil society groups engaged in land reform. For instance, ITDG reiterated that "[t]o effectively take up the space and challenges" of land reform during the Inception Phase, "the wide array of civil society groups need to coordinate their efforts" (Mutepfa and Cohen 2000, 13). By the beginning of 2000, more than twenty NGOs were accredited by the Zimbabwean state for involvement in resettlement projects. For instance, ZERO was accredited to undertake research on land-based resources. External funding and agricultural land for the complementary approaches, however, were not forthcoming and, even if they had been, the Inception Phase was taken over by events propelled by the war veterans.

Uncivil Society's Success, Civil Society's Failure

Civil society was involved in land policy dialogues in the late 1990s, which was "fairly participatory" compared to previous years (Marongwe 2003, 16). The September 1998 donors conference was "the high point for NGO involvement in the land reform programme," even if NGOs "lacked a clear strategy" for coordinated involvement in land reform (CREATE 2002, 9). According to Moyo (2000c), however, the dialogue around land policy formation collapsed in part because of civil society's misguided reading of national political dynamics and its ensuing actions.

Civil society (and its donor backers) "believed wrongly" that the war-veteran-led national land occupation movement was "merely a political and partisan ploy" initiated by the government to maintain its grip on power (in the upcoming national elections in June 2000), "rather than a socially grounded demand" by war veterans and other occupiers that ZANU-PF was "responding to (albeit also for its political benefit)." Civil society expected:

> That the individual political survival of Mugabe and of Zanu-PF at the elections [in June 2000] would obviate pressures for land reform. This detracted attention [of civil society] from land reform to the electoral contests of [June] 2000. . . . The few NGOs that had been interested in land reform [before 2000] . . . became directly entangled in the broader political struggles for constitutional reform and elections, as a means of eventually addressing land reform. (Moyo 2000c, 4, 5)

Civil society assumed that the land occupations were orchestrated and organized by the ruling party, when in fact they emerged independently of ZANU-PF through local war veterans' associations. If ZANU-PF were to win the election in June, civil society's view was that the party would remove war veterans and other occupiers from the farms (as occupations were a mere election gimmick to bolster the party's rural support base). If MDC were to win the election, civil society believed that the new ruling party would pursue land reform consistent with civil society's agenda. In the context of the impending elections, civil society (coalescing in the NCA) focused its attention on regime change and not on redistributive land reform.

Civil society did not fully comprehend the mobilization capacity of war veterans and the specific character of the relationship between the party-state and war veterans, which led to strategic failure. Because of this, the war-veteran-led occupations dramatically altered the political terrain and caught civil society off-guard, which found itself in "disarray" (ZERO 2000, 22). As well, the violent character of the land occupations set a political tone in which direct lobbying and policy dialogue by civil society were marginalized almost immediately. Even WLLG, so central to land advocacy, recognized that lobbying around women's land rights now became a "marginal issue" (Makombe 2001, 19). Overall, the land occupations "narrowed the space for NGO involvement in land reform" (CREATE 2002, 2).

For autocratic states like Zimbabwe, the sole political contestation is not necessarily between an authoritarian state and a liberal civil society. Political dynamics and tendencies cannot be reduced to such a contestation and are more complicated and convoluted. Urban civil society (as a set of organizational formations) is only one dimension of civil society (as a space) in Zimbabwe, as other organizations (such as ZNLWVA) exist. As well, Zimbabwe's autocratic state is not homogeneous and cohesive. Though it is difficult to pinpoint exactly the cleavages within Zimbabwe's party-state in the late 1990s, its tension-riddled character was manifested around land reform policy.

A land policy dialogue-based process existed, focusing on ongoing market-led land reform, albeit on a more inclusive and transparent basis. Contrary to this, other policy initiatives centered on land reclamation through expropriation, including without compensation. These conflicting land policy tendencies acted as signals for lobbying for, respectively, democracy-seeking civil society and redistributive-seeking uncivil society, thereby offering a platform for both to engage with the party-state. Ultimately, there could be only one land policy outcome.

From the beginning, civil society was at a distinct disadvantage. First of all, civil society's relationship with ZANU-PF was vastly different from the ruling party's relationship with war veterans. Civil society was aligned with the MDC, which ZANU-PF envisaged as a donor-funded political party without liberation credentials and engaged in unbridled regime change. Because ZANU-PF depicted donors pushing a regime-change agenda, the legitimacy of civil society was always in doubt. More specifically, the civil society organizations involved in land policy dialogue were part of a broader democratic project, adding to ZANU-PF's deep concerns about their agenda. Despite significant criticisms of ZANU-PF's

ongoing failure to bring about land reform, war veterans in ZNLWVA shared a liberation history with the political and military elites in the Zimbabwean state and were considered by ZANU-PF as far more trustworthy. As well, ZANU-PF realized that the "liberation capital" held by war veterans (particularly in the eyes of marginalized small-scale farmers) would be crucial in facing the MDC's electoral challenge.

Secondly, the organizational makeup of civil and uncivil society favored the latter. Civil society groups in the 1990s were nonmembership professional organizations with paid employees. Without any meaningful membership base, their capacity to move beyond direct lobbying, and intensify pressure on the state by way of pursuing political mobilization, was almost nonexistent, unlike the war veterans. Additionally, any popular support for civil society was in the urban centers, making it difficult to mobilize supporters around a land reform agenda. At the same time, ZNLWVA was a membership-based organization with provincial and district branches nationally, including in deep rural areas. War veterans lived alongside small-scale farmers, and, like these farmers, they experienced firsthand the liberation war of the 1970s and the land deprivations of post-colonial Zimbabwe. War veterans could readily mobilize small-scale farmers if and when necessary.

Undoubtedly, though, the results of the constitutional referendum provided the spark that sprung the war veterans into action, setting off the nationwide land occupations. In the past, when sporadic occupations of white-owned commercial farms took place, the state labeled the occupiers as "squatters" and removed them by force. Even when the nationwide occupations first began, there were spats (including publicly) among leading ZANU-PF politicians about the legitimacy of this new wave of occupations. But public statements by "radical nationalist social forces" within the ruling party and state (including by Mugabe himself) signaled to the war veterans that their uncivil (and often violent) occupation strategy would be, at the very least, tolerated. Any hope of civil society's land policy preferences being pursued by the party-state was abruptly and convincingly dashed.

Conclusion

This chapter juxtaposed the actions of two separate actors (civil and uncivil society) in land lobbying and mobilization in autocratic Zimbabwe. We outlined various factors (such as historical alliances, political

agendas, and advocacy methodologies) that conditioned the success or failure of these competing interest groups in pursuing their policy preferences regarding land reform. That the Zimbabwean state was willing to engage with multiple interest groups simultaneously, even in a deliberative and procedure-bound manner common in democratic states, indicates that some degree of pluralist advocacy does exist in autocratic states like Zimbabwe. For the reasons detailed, however, civil society's exclusive use of direct lobbying was ultimately no match for uncivil society's mainly protagonist and coercive methodologies. At one level, then, by ensuring that its policy preferences prevailed, uncivil society achieved success. At another level, though, the war-veteran-led occupation movement was demobilized and subdued via the state's fast-track land reform program, and war veterans struggled to assert their claims to land under fast track. As well, though civil society was unsuccessful with respect to its land policy preferences, its advocacy around land (and its democratic agenda more broadly) facilitated significant coalition building as it continued to advance its agenda in post-2000 Zimbabwe.

Thus we find a divided landscape of lobbying in Zimbabwe with war veterans and Western-aided NGOs, and policy making was driven by the fear of losing support of important elements of the regime coalition that could not be coopted by limited concessions. Significant elite disagreement or uncertainty in this policy area also created opportunities for groups to provide "expert" information. Overall, coalition building and providing expert consultation were two successful tactics in influencing land policy. Like other chapters in this section, we show that advocacy groups are able to achieve concrete policy outcomes if and when the regime needs information, expertise, and support from certain advocacy groups. Regime-legitimation claims surrounding the struggle for independence create opportunities for advocacy groups in Zimbabwe, similar to social welfare discourses in Russia and Belarus (chapter 10) and similar to economic-performance-based and democratic-procedural legitimation appeals studied in the next chapter. Regarding the three "dismal" conditions of advocacy under autocracy that are theorized in the concluding chapter, this analysis of land reform in Zimbabwe finds that groups' access to societal support and expertise needed for regime legitimation are related to policy successes.

NOTES

1. https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2017/11/25/war-veterans-love-hate-affair-mugabe-endgame/.

2. A Consultative Land Conference Statement by Working Group (draft), sent by fax from ZWRCN to ZERO on May 23, 1997. ZERO LAND FILES.

3. Undated document entitled "Project Proposal for a Workshop on the Land Tenure Commission Report." ZERO LAND FILES.

4. Letter dated May 7, 1997, from director of ZERO on behalf of steering committee to possible participants of NGO conference. ZERO LAND FILES.

5. Letter dated May 7, 1997, from director of ZERO on behalf of steering committee to possible participants of NGO conference. ZERO LAND FILES.

6. K. Kangai, speech to be delivered to 1997 Consultative Conference. ZERO LAND FILES.

7. As a land scholar, Moyo was a unique figure in Zimbabwean civil society at the time. Often deeply critical of civil society and market-led land reform, and though he was not aligned to ZANU-PF, the government recognized both his expertise and his support for meaningful land reform.

8. All quotations in this paragraph are from GoZ 1998.

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12 | Delivering on Legitimation Claims

Creating Consultative Mechanisms for CSOs in Authoritarian Regimes

Angelo Vito Panaro

The literature on authoritarian regimes argues that societal participation is limited as the policy-making process is dominated by the ruler and access is restricted to the members of the ruling coalition (Boix and Svolik 2013; Svolik 2012). But recent studies and other contributions to this volume demonstrate that autocratic leaders do not govern in isolation. Instead, they also need to acquire political support from groups outside the ruling coalition in order to strengthen their position in power (Geddes 1999; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Gandhi 2008). In doing so, rulers are not immune from groups' pressure and, under some circumstances, their preferences may even influence policy decisions in those contexts (Teets 2017; Steinberg and Shih 2012; Böhmelt 2015).

This chapter asks under which conditions nondemocratic regimes develop routinized mechanisms for societal interest representation in the policy-making process. By focusing on rulers' need for information, I analyze the conditions that facilitate interest groups' access under authoritarianism. I demonstrate that autocracies that legitimize their position in power by using claims of socioeconomic performance and democratic procedures need to collect more information about citizens' preferences. This in turn creates more opportunities for civil society organizations (CSOs)[1] to interact with public officials than in autocracies that rely on other sources of legitimation. Unlike the previous chapters in this section that shed light on outcomes in one policy area (land in Zimbabwe and social services in Russia and Belarus), I

focus on the outcome of institutional changes creating consultative mechanisms, and argue that they are catalyzed by specific regime information needs and the ability of advocacy groups to provide this information.

My theoretical argument builds on previous contributions according to which, although repression and military force remain in the autocrat's toolbox (Kailitz 2013), regime survival does not primarily depend on the use of force (Croissant and Wurster 2013). Dictators, in fact, need to acquire support from both members of the ruling coalition and citizens in order to secure their position in power (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Geddes 1999; Wintrobe 1998). A ruler's need for information about citizens' preferences creates varying interactions with actors outside the political arena.

In addition to information needs, a recent body of research argues that the strategies autocrats use to legitimize their position in power impinge on a regime's survival. These contributions demonstrate that different legitimation strategies affect the economic and social performance of nondemocratic regimes (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017; von Soest and Grauvogel 2017; Kailitz and Stockemer 2017; Kailitz 2013; Debre and Morgenbesser 2017; Cassani 2017). Following this logic, I argue that rulers using performance-based and democratic-procedural legitimation strategies need more information about citizens' preferences compared to other types of regimes if they intend to deliver on their legitimation claims. More specifically, in performance-based autocracies, rulers need to collect information on how to allocate or to whom to distribute resources in order to boost the economy and enhance citizens' well-being. Similarly, autocracies using democratic-procedural legitimation claims require more frequent interactions between the ruler and other groups to uphold the veneer of nominally democratic institutions. Built on this logic, I hypothesize that both types of legitimation strategies are associated with higher degrees of access for CSOs.

Following Binderkrantz and Pedersen, I define access as "instances where a group has entered a political arena passing a threshold controlled by relevant gatekeepers" (Binderkrantz and Pedersen 2016, 310). In the case of authoritarian regimes, the decision-making process is controlled by the ruler who interacts with selected groups in order to "exchange policy-relevant information" (Beyers 2002, 2004). Overall, access allows leaders to collect the necessary information in order to secure their position in power while, at the same time, providing opportunities for external actors such as CSOs to interact with public officials. From the perspective

of organized interests, access is a crucial intermediate objective facilitating broader policy influence.

The empirical analysis rests upon a time-series-cross-sectional (TSCS) model with panel-corrected standard error estimates. The sample includes all authoritarian regimes that have been autocratic for more than three consecutive years from 1990 to 2014. Data on CSOs consultations and political regimes' legitimation strategies are collected from V-Dem Database (Coppedge et al. 2019).[2] Importantly, those data yield new insights into the internal logic and groups' access in nondemocratic states, which for many years have been made difficult by data scarcity.

Overall, the chapter provides a twofold contribution to the literature of interest groups. First, it supports the evidence that despite a hierarchical and top-down decision-making process, social actors are not excluded from the policy-making process in authoritarian regimes. Second, it demonstrates that CSOs' access is dependent on the claims and strategies used by autocrats to legitimize their position in power. Building on previous contributions on autocratic politics, this chapter sheds light on the interlink that exists between autocrats' need for policy information and different points of access for CSOs. The findings in this chapter mirror those in other chapters in this section in that advocacy groups are able to achieve concrete policy outcomes, which is made possible by a regime's need for information, expertise, and support from certain advocacy groups. Regime-legitimation claims create opportunities for land reform advocacy groups in Zimbabwe, similar to social welfare groups in Russia and Belarus (chapter 10). These findings are supported more broadly by the large-N analysis in this chapter.

The chapter is organized as follows. The first section reviews previous research on interest groups' access in both democracies and autocracies. The second part analyzes four legitimation strategies—indoctrination, adulation, socioeconomic performance and democratic-procedural—and how each creates different needs for political information on behalf of the ruler. I then elaborate on the hypothesis regarding how information needs and legitimation strategies affect the prevalence of CSO consultations. The third section presents the data and research method linking legitimation strategies to interest representation. The empirical analysis provides evidence that performance-based and democratic-procedural legitimation claims are associated with a higher degree of CSO consultations compared to other types of autocracy. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the results and potential pathways for future research.

Political Regimes and Interest Representation

Studies in the field of interest representation offer a cornucopia of neologisms for interest organizations. Among others, Berkhout (2013) defines interest organizations based on three constitutive elements: (1) organizational structure, (2) policy advocacy, and (3) collective action. In this view, interest organizations include any organized forms of political behavior engaging in lobbying tactics and intrainstitution relationships (Beyers, Eising, and Maloney 2008; Jordan, Halpin, and Maloney 2004). Importantly, though, the literature demonstrates that those organizations are most of the time passive as their primary concern is not to broadly influence the policy process but rather only those policies directly related to the group survival or success (Lowery 2007).

Supply of and Demand for Access in Democracies

Established research on access of interest organizations in Western democracies is mostly focused on the exchange of "access goods" (i.e., political and technical information) between interest groups and policy makers (Bouwen 2004, 2002; Berkhout 2013). Based on those studies, access is influenced by the characteristics of the mobilized interests as well as by the institutional context in which those interests operate. These two approaches are commonly referred to as "resource-based theory" and "institutionalist perspective."

The resource-based theory assumes that neither policy makers nor interest groups alone can pursue their own political interests; therefore, both actors have an incentive to interact with each other (Denzau and Munger 1986). Scholars posit that the exchange of resources among interest groups and gatekeepers depends on the characteristics of the group, such as financial resources (Lindblom 1977), ideological alignment (Bouwen 2004), level of expertise (Crombez 2002; Hall and Deardorff 2006; Beyers 2002, 2004; Avant, Finnemore, and Sell 2010) and size of the membership (Eising 2007b). According to this approach, policy makers interact with interest groups because they need information to pursue their own goals, while, at the same time, interest groups mobilize resources in order to attract public officials' attention to "their" issue and to access the political process.

A second approach to the study of interest groups looks at the structure of political regimes and emphasizes the role of institutional points of

access (Weiler and Brändli 2015). This body of research argues that institutional configurations play a pivotal role in either promoting or constraining access of interest groups in Western democracies (Grande 1996; Marks and McAdam 1996), particularly at the EU institutional level (Beyers 2002; Pollack 1997; Lowery 2007). Beyers (2004), for instance, finds evidence that interest groups access public officials more easily at the European level than at the national level, since the European Union is made up of different political arenas that offer multiple points of access. A more rigorous version of the institutionalist approach argues that democracies provide more opportunities than autocracies for interest groups to organize their resources and exercise pressures on public officials (Kanol 2016).

Supply of and Demand for Access in Autocracies

In applying these approaches outside of democratic contexts, scholars contend that political power in nondemocratic regimes is strongly centralized in the hand of a leader, which consequently constrains interest groups access (Fearon 1994; Lake 1992). Autocrats often suppress groups' mobilization in order to eliminate dissent and reduce the probability of being overthrown. Based on this evidence, scholars argue that interest groups in autocracies have only marginal roles in the policy process (Hrebenar, McBeth, and Morgan 2008), as they are not independent and mostly coopted by the ruler (Hasmath and Hsu 2016).

Despite institutional differences between democracies and autocracies, recent studies demonstrate that under certain circumstances, interest organizations manage to access and consequently influence policy decisions in authoritarian regimes as well. Following the logic of the resource-based approach, Steinberg and Shih (2012) provide evidence that interest groups in China strategically influenced policy decisions in the tradable industry between 2003 and 2006 in order to keep the exchange rate undervalued. In particular, they argue that capitalist groups used their connections with high-level officials to express their preferences and steer decisions on the exchange rate. Similarly, other scholars contend that capitalist groups in China nowadays constitute the party's most important basis of support (Tsai 2008; Dickson 2007). In this account, group characteristics such as group size, ideology, and fiscal resources matter much more than expertise.

In contrast to the resource-based theory, scholars utilizing an institutionalist approach identify structural factors that enhance interest organizations' access in nondemocratic contexts. For example, Teets (2017) demonstrates that policy networks in China successfully influenced elite

conception of policy problems and consequently the range of policy solutions. In this context, an institutional structure that requires NGOs and other interest groups to register with a government agency as a supervisor creates the access point for lobbying. Similarly, based on the work of Bueno de Mesquita (2003) and the selectorate theory, Böhmelt (2015) demonstrates that the size of the selectorate and the winning coalition has an impact on the likelihood that autocrats will ratify international environmental agreements (IEAs). Using a large-N sample of environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOs), he finds evidence that the marginal effect of ENGOs' lobbying on the likelihood of IEA ratification is less pronounced in single-party regimes than in personalist types.

Overall, those studies demonstrate that autocrats are not immune to interest organizations' pressures. Both resource-based and institutionalist arguments explain varying levels of access for interest groups, policy networks, and NGOs in nondemocratic regimes. Similar to democracies, authoritarian regimes' need for political support creates an incentive for policy makers to interact with actors outside the political arena and gather necessary information, while interest organizations mobilize their resources to steer policy decisions. Despite these similarities, though, the literature on authoritarian regimes argues that autocrats acquire and maintain political power in different ways (Geddes 1999; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014; Kailitz and Stockemer 2017). Some govern with the extensive use of military power and repression, while others establish institutions and allow opposition groups to enter the political arena (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Gandhi 2008; Magaloni 2008). According to the strategies autocrats use to secure their position in power, interest organizations' access might vary substantially across authoritarian regimes. To explore these relationships, I first investigate the variation that exists across authoritarian regimes and then develop a theory and elaborate the resulting hypothesis about informational needs in authoritarian contexts.

The Information Gap: Legitimation Strategies and Interest Groups' Access

Autocratic leaders do not live in isolation but they use different claims to legitimize their position in power and consolidate political support. Following Kailitz (2013, 40, 41), "legitimization forms the theoretical foundation of any governmental power" and "constitute the organization of any political regimes." The process of legitimation includes strategies and

claims used by the leaders to gain support and justify their position in power (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). In the case of authoritarian regimes, legitimation constitutes one of the three pillars that strengthen autocratic rule (Gerschewski 2013).

Some scholars highlight the importance of indoctrination, based on political ideologies and tradition, for consolidating nondemocratic regime stability (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). Ideology refers to a system of belief aimed at creating a collective identity and a specific societal order (Linz 2000), while tradition includes the historical values and national heritage of the country. Both of them are used by the ruler to set the boundaries of what is socially accepted, indoctrinate citizens, and make them accept a hierarchical organization of power. In order to do so, rulers use political narratives or symbols related to specific ideology or a country's history. Nowadays, pure forms of this type of autocracy are extremely rare (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). Though an extensive mass control on everyday activities, the disruption of boundaries between public and private life and the presence of a strong ideology led some scholars to affirm that North Korea is an example of an indoctrination-based authoritarian regime (Armstrong 2005; Scobell 2005; Dukalskis and Hooker 2011).

Worldwide, authoritarian regimes frequently portray their leaders as the ones who represents the nation's unity and who can bring peace and prosperity since they are chosen from above to fulfill a certain mission (von Soest and Grauvogel 2017). Charisma and leadership qualities of the leader still constitute a fundamental source of legitimacy. Additionally, rulers sometimes appeal to their personal and military achievements and depict themselves as ordinary people who deserve to stay in power. Based on this evidence, adulation, conceived as a deep form of respect and devotion only to the leader, is a second legitimation strategy. Adulation differs from indoctrination, as the leader claims to have a God-given natural right to rule and, thus, he or she is the only one who is legitimized to govern. Claims based on the person of the leader are present in every type of authoritarian rule, although they are particularly common in military regimes and monarchies such as Chile under Pinochet (1973–1990) or the Republic of Congo under the Kabila family (1997–2019).

Toward the end of the twentieth century, the toolbox of legitimation claims that autocrats tap into has been enriched with the regime's socioeconomic performance (Przeworski et al. 2000). Contemporary autocrats, in fact, use economic successes rather than ideology or tradition to legitimize their position in power. In particular, they emphasize economic

growth, citizens' well-being, equal redistribution and access to certain public goods such as education and health, and present them as great achievements of the regime under their rule (von Soest and Grauvogel 2017). Singapore is an example of such an autocratic regime type. From 1962 until 1990, Singapore experienced tremendous economic growth during which business and financial services in real GDP rose from 14 percent 1960 to 26 percent in 1992, the share of manufacturing in GDP increased from 17 percent to 28 percent, and the level of employment trebled (Bercuson 1995). Based on this period, the ruling party uses economic results as a way to glorify their rule. Within performance-based authoritarian regimes, rentier states deserve particular attention, as they use rents coming from the export of natural resource to deliver public and private goods to their citizens. By satisfying the basic needs of the population, autocratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa render the population passive and, at the same time, reduce the probability of a regime outbreak (Ross 2001).

Over the past decades, we have witnessed an increasing number of autocrats establishing nominally democratic institutions.[3] The emergence of so-called "electoral autocracies" (Schedler 2006) or "competitive authoritarianism" (Levitsky and Way 2002) have received greater attention in the literature on authoritarian regimes since democratic-procedural legitimation strategy is nowadays quite common. As Wahman, Teorell, and Hadenius (2013) demonstrate, more than half of contemporary autocracies hold elections or have established legislatures.

Those institutions give the ruler the pretense of having a democratic legitimacy (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). If the autocrat wins the elections with more than 90 percent of the votes, as has happened for instance to the president of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, in 2017[4] or the president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, in 2004,[5] then the leader claims to have the right to rule as the leader represents the will of the majority. Institutions therefore give a semblance of democratic legitimacy.

Table 12.1 summarizes those four legitimation strategies—indoctrination, adulation, performance, and democratic-procedural—and show how each of them captures conceptual content of a variate of legitimation claims and tools across different regime types.

In light of such discussion, authoritarian regimes that intend to deliver on such legitimation claims (1) need different types of information to secure their position in power and (2) have different incentives to collect such information. Authoritarian regimes using indoctrination and adula-

TABLE 12.1. Legitimation Strategies, Claims, and Tools

Legitimation Strategies	Legitimation Claims	Legitimation Tools
Indoctrination	Ideology, Tradition,	Political narratives, symbols
Adulation	Person of the Leader	Charisma, personal and military achievements,
Performance	Socioeconomic conditions	Economic growth, citizens well-being, equal redistribution, access to public goods
Democratic-Procedural	Democratic procedures and norms	Elections, legislatures, and party competition

Source: Author's elaboration from Dukalskis and Gerschewski (2017).

tion strategies rely on what I define here as the "internal logic" of legitimation. Those regimes use ideology, tradition, and the ruler's personal and military achievements to consolidate and enhance regime stability. Those claims are omnipresent in the political and daily life of the regime (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956) and create a feeling of belonging around the person of the leader (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017). In this view, authoritarian regimes using those claims have less incentives to acquire any type of information as the process of legitimation is internal to the regime itself. This logic is best captured by the famous phrase of Mussolini "everything within the state, nothing outside the state and nothing against the state."

In contrast, performance-based and democratic-procedural autocracies rely on an "external logic" of legitimation. In autocracies delivering on socioeconomic performance, rulers need to acquire information on how to allocate and distribute resources in order to boost the economy as well as acquire citizens' preferences to enhance their well-being. The need for technical information and citizens' preferences require policy makers in performance-led autocracies to engage in more interactions with interest organizations (Flöthe 2019; De Bruycker 2016). Similarly, rulers that intend to deliver on electoral competition and political participation to justify their position in power need to collect political information. As other contributions to this volume demonstrate (e.g., Hanegraaff and De Bruycker in chapter 2), political information indicates the amount of political support for the regime, which, in the case of authoritarian regimes delivering on democratic-procedural legitimation strategies, is pivotal to creating a pretense of democratic legitimacy and strengthen regime stability (Schedler 2013).

In short, the need for technical and political information as well as citizens' preferences exposes some rulers to pressure from interest organizations. In performance-based regimes, interest organizations reflect the preferences of those groups working in the sectors that are strategic for the economic performance of the regime, while interest organizations in democratic-procedural authoritarian regimes have more opportunities to communicate their preferences to members of the winning coalition. This is because, on one hand, the need for political support creates more incentives for the ruler to collect political information, while on the other hand the presence of institutions such as elections and legislatures provide more points of access. Conversely, interest organizations in authoritarian regimes that rely on indoctrination and adulation strategies have only a marginal role as both the need for technical and political information and institutional opportunities are limited. Following this logic, I formulate the resulting hypothesis:

> H1: Performance-based and democratic-procedural legitimation strategies are associated with higher access of interest organizations in authoritarian regimes compared to indoctrination and adulation strategies.

Empirical Analysis

Data

I conducted a longitudinal analysis of ninety-three authoritarian regimes from 1990 to 2014. This time span makes it possible to control for variation in the legitimation strategies across authoritarian regimes. Before 1990, in fact, the number of nondemocratic regimes relying on democratic-procedural legitimation claims was quite limited (Levitsky and Way 2002, 2010). Countries are classified as autocracies according to the Regime of the World (RoW) indicator collected from the Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) Database (2019). Data for the dependent variable and the covariates are also collected from V-DEM. The complete dataset includes countries that have more than a million inhabitants and have been autocratic for more than three consecutive years.[6]

The main dependent variable access is measured by the degree to which CSOs are consulted by policy makers on policies relevant to their members (v2cscnsult).[7] According to V-DEM, CSOs include interest

groups, labor unions, professional associations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), thus fitting well within the definition of interest organizations used here. Consultations with policy makers have already been used in other studies as a proxy for the level of interest organizations' access to the political arena (Bouwen 2002, 2004; Crombez 2002; Chalmers 2013).

To account for legitimation strategies, I use four V-DEM indicators that point to governments' claims to legitimacy: ideology, person of the leader, social-economic performance, and rational-legal procedures. Importantly, legitimation claims are not mutually exclusive and, therefore, those indicators reflect the propensity of the regime to rely on different types of claims. The indicators are elaborated in an expert survey based on five questions that reflect the most important legitimation claims used by the rulers. Experts' scores for each claim are converted into interval latent variables with values that represent country-year point estimates on the bases of the expert coding. As expected, the 2019 report "Regime Legitimation Strategies" demonstrates that authoritarian regimes differ among themselves in terms of legitimation claims. Closed autocracies rely more on ideological and personalistic claims, while electoral regimes tend to legitimate their rule on performance and rational-legal claims (Tannenberg et al. 2019).

In addition, other potential confounders might affect groups' access. Democratization studies contend that the extent to which autocrats use military force and respect civil rights and liberties influence access of civil society or opposition groups to policy makers. Those studies demonstrate that access of opposition leaders and groups to the political arena is negatively associated with the level of state control on group's activities (Levitsky and Way 2010; Haggard and Kaufman 2016). Therefore, we should expect to see access of CSOs in autocracies with higher level of repression to be more constrained compared to regimes with lower levels of repression. To account for this relationship, I use two CSO indicators collected from the V-DEM database: 1. CSOs repression (v2csreprss), which reports the extent to which government attempts to repress CSOs. 2. CSOs entry and exit (v2cseeorgs), which describes to what extent the government achieves control over the entry and exit of CSOs in public life. Importantly, higher values for CSOs' repression (v2csreprss) reflect more freedom in CSOs' organization, while lower values signal higher levels of government repression. Similarly, higher values for CSOs' entry and exit (v2cseeorgs) indicate a limited control of the government over entry and exit of CSOs into public life, while lower values signal an explicit monop-

TABLE 12.2. Descriptive Statistics for All Variables (1990–2014)

Variables	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Dependent Variable					
CSOs consultations	2325	−0.76	0.51	0.02	1.973
Independent Variables					
Indoctrination	2309	2.22	0.96	0.37	3.95
Adulation	2315	2.50	0.99	0.35	3.97
Performance	2325	2.59	0.71	0.12	3.75
Democratic-procedural	2315	2.38	0.72	0.16	3.78
Control Variables					
CSOs entry & exit	2325	2.11	1.04	0.06	3.95
CSOs repression	2325	2.33	0.95	0.04	3.91
Democratic Experience	2325	1.88	4.28	0	22

Source: Coppedge et al. (2019) and Ross-Mahdavi Dataset (2015).

oly of the government over CSOs' political activity. Overall, these two variables measure the competitiveness of each regime, with more closed regimes having higher levels of repression and less entry.

Finally, scholars argue that democracies allow more groups to participate in the policy process compared to nondemocratic regimes (Kanol 2016). Therefore, I control for the number of years a country has been democratic; a longer democratic experience should reflect a legacy of more group consultations.

Table 12.2 presents the descriptive statistics for each of these variables. Those statistics show that there is variation in CSOs' consultation across authoritarian regimes. On average, the top five countries with the highest degree of CSOs consultations are Tunisia, Indonesia, Niger, Peru, and Venezuela, while the five countries with the lowest degree are Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Libya, North Korea, and Eritrea.

At a first look this suggests that CSOs are more frequently consulted in countries using performance and democratic-procedural legitimation strategies (Indonesia, Venezuela, Peru, and Tunisia) compared to countries using ideology and the person of the leader to legitimize their rule (Uzbekistan, Libya, North Korea, and Eritrea).

The scatter diagrams in Figure 12.1 show this relationship in more details as they plot the distribution of v2cscnsult_osp over the four legitimation strategies. Each diagram also illustrates predicted values for a linear regression between CSOs and each legitimation strategy. The correlation coefficients are, respectively: Indoctrination −0.19, Adulation −0.19,
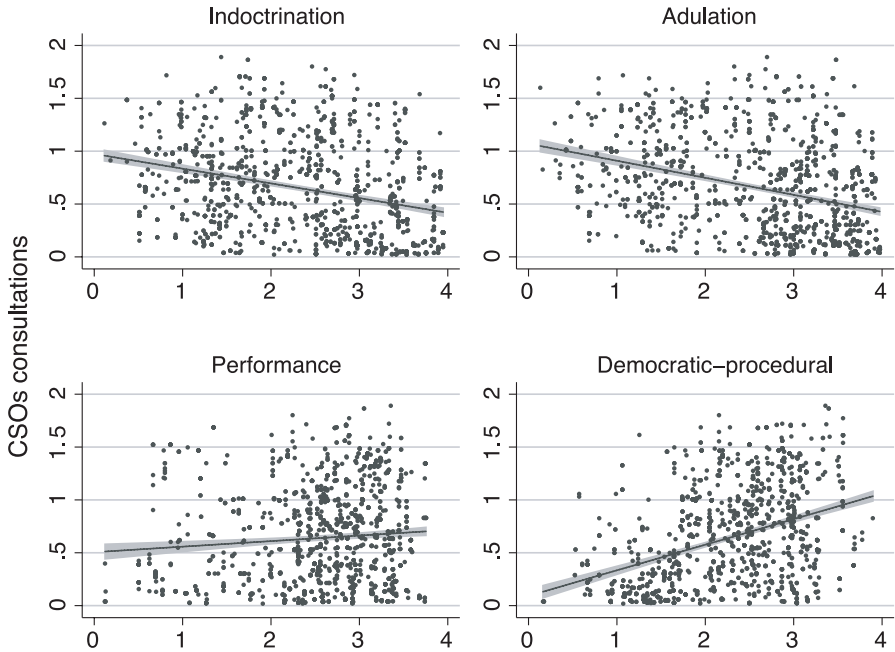
Figure 12.1. Autocratic Legitimation Strategies and CSOs Consultations
Note: Linear prediction of *v2cscnsult_osp* by legitimation strategies, with a 95% confidence intervals.

Performance 0.08, Democratic-procedural 0.31. These patterns of association signal that (1) CSOs consultations vary across authoritarian regimes that use distinctive legitimation claims to justify their position in power and (2) indoctrination and adulation strategies are negatively associated with CSOs consultations, while performance-based and democratic-procedural-based regimes interact more frequently with CSOs.

Estimation Technique

To test the hypotheses, I employ pooled Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions. As Beck and Katz (1995) argue, OLS is optimal for time-series-cross-sectional (TSCS) data if (1) the error processes have the same variance (panel homoscedasticity) and (2) all error processes are independent of each other both across time (no serial correlation) and units (no contemporaneous correlation). The authors also advise researchers to first examine the temporal properties of the data and eliminate serial correlation by either adding a lag dependent variable as a regressor or transforming the data

(Beck and Katz 1995, 638). Following this logic, Cumby-Huizinga tests suggest that serial correlation is not eliminated by adding a dependent variable on the right side of the equation, while the serially correlated (SC) error model with a panel-specific autocorrelation structure (AR1) best accounts for the temporal dynamics in the error processes.

Once the temporal dimension has been examined, I combine OLS with "panel-corrected standard errors" (PCSEs) to correct for contemporaneous correlation and panel heteroscedasticity. The combination of OLS with PCSEs in fact allows me to correctly estimate panel variability and structure of the error terms (Beck and Katz 1995, 2004).

Additionally, it is reasonable to assume that the parameter estimates are influenced by country-level covariates. As seen above, a country's geographical location or historical legacy seems to play an important role in the extent of CSOs' consultations in authoritarian regimes. Those unobserved factors, however, are not associated with different legitimations strategies as, for instance, countries in the MENA region use both ideology and leader's achievement to legitimize their position. Thus, according to Beck and Katz (2011 2007) and Hsiao (2003), when unit-specific heterogeneity is uncorrelated with the explanatory variables, the most appropriate approach is to use random-coefficient models (or multilevel model) in which the observations (i.e., country-years) are nested in the unit of analysis (i.e., country). Similarly, the Hausman's specification test does not reject the null hypothesis that unit-level effects are adequately modeled by a random-effects model. In light of such discussion, I employ OLS regressions with PCSEs to control for contemporaneous correlation and panel heteroscedasticity, and random effects to account for unit-specific heterogeneity. Finally, I also add time dummies to the regression model in order to control for time-specific effects.

Results

Table 12.3 presents a summary of various regression models. Model 1 reports coefficient estimates for a static pooled-OLS baseline model with random effects and all three control variables. Model 2 presents the coefficient estimates for OLS regressions with PCSEs estimates and a first-order autoregressive process (AR1), while model 3 reports coefficients for the same model but also includes time dummies.

As we can see, different legitimation strategies are correlated with different frequencies of consultations between CSOs and policy makers. Performance-based and democratic-procedural legitimation strategies

TABLE 12.3. Pooled OLS Regressions of CSO Consultations

Variables	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)
Indoctrination	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Adulation	−0.12***	−0.06***	−0.06***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Performance	0.08***	0.07***	0.05**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Democratic-procedural	0.20***	0.18***	0.18***
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
CSO entry & exit	0.39***	0.35***	0.34***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
CSO repression	0.48***	0.42***	0.43***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Democratic experience	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Constant	−0.33***	−0.17***	−0.19***
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Time-dummies	No	No	Yes
Panel-specific (AR1)	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,309	2,309	2,217
R-squared		0.47	0.48
Time-period	1990–2014	1990–2014	1990–2014
Number of countries	93	93	93

Note: Panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Coefficients are presented with standard errors in parentheses. Coefficients for time-dummies variables are measured, but not reported.

are positively correlated with the degree of CSO consultations across all models, while autocrats using legitimation strategies that rely on the person of the leader tend to have lower numbers of consultations with CSOs, as the coefficients for adulation claims are negative and statically significant across all models. Instead, although the coefficient estimates for indoctrination-based regimes are negative, they are not statistically significant in any model suggesting that ideology is not correlated with CSO consultations. This result is in line with a strand in authoritarian literature that highlights the importance of grassroots monitoring groups and grid-based digital surveillance in autocracies that legitimize their power using ideological claims, such as China and North Korea (Lee 2007; Creemers 2017; Qiang 2019; Stockmann and Gallagher 2011).
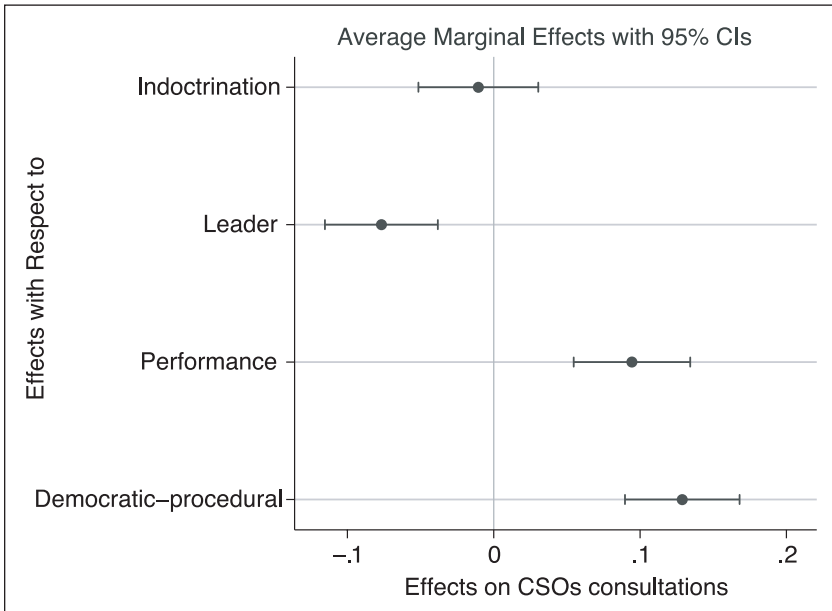
Figure 12.2. Marginal Effects of Legitimation Strategies on CSOs Consultations
Note: Marginal effects with a 95% confidence intervals.

Coefficients for both CSO repression and organization are positive and statistically significant, as hypothesized. This means that when the use of repressive measures and government's control over entry and exit of CSOs in public life is lower, CSOs tend to have more opportunities to interact with policy officials. Additionally, as expected, democratic legacy creates an environment that allows CSOs to have access to policy makers more frequently. Authoritarian regimes that are exposed to democratic institutions, in fact, allow more frequent interactions between CSOs and policy officials.

Figure 12.2 shows the average marginal effect of each legitimation strategies on CSO consultations. As we can see, adulation-based regimes have a negative marginal effect on CSO consultations while autocratic regimes where the ruler legitimizes his or her position in power based on performance and democratic-procedural claims have more frequent interactions with CSOs. Interestingly instead, indoctrination-based regimes have almost no effect on CSOs consultations.

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, a growing amount of theoretical and empirical research on access of interest organizations has been produced (Eising 2007b, 2007a; Beyers 2002, 2004; Bouwen 2004; Binderkrantz, Christiansen, and Pedersen 2015; Binderkrantz 2005; Chalmers 2013; Weiler and Brändli 2015). Yet most of the attention has been devoted to interest group mobilization in Western democracies. Some scholars in fact posit that there is a symbiotic relationship between democracy and interest groups, as the one cannot exist without the other (Klimovich and Thomas 2014; Kanol 2016). As authoritarian regimes curtail political participation and often use repression to suppress the voice of those that do not support the regime, groups' access is believed to be more limited (Boix and Svolik 2013).

In line with other contributions in this volume, this chapter demonstrates that, despite a centralized and hierarchical organization of power that characterizes authoritarian regimes, autocrats are not immune to interest-group pressures. Based on the seminal work of Wintrobe (1998), I argue that the need for technical, political, and policy information encourages autocratic leaders to interact more frequently with CSOs; thus the ruler's demand for policy information depends on how they legitimize their position in power. Authoritarian regimes using socioeconomic successes and citizens' well-being to legitimize their position in power require more technical information and information on citizens' policy preferences to strengthen support from external actors. Similarly, autocrats who legitimize their rule by appealing to nominally democratic institutions such as elections and legislatures provide more points of access for CSOs groups to public officials and require more political information in order to make these institutions appear to be functioning.

The empirical analysis finds that legitimation strategies create different incentives for autocrats to consult with CSOs, with performance and democratic-procedural-based regimes providing more opportunities for CSOs to interact with public officials (as also found by Guriev and Treisman 2020). Legitimation claims based on ideology and tradition do not have any effect on CSO consultations with policy makers. Thus, specific legitimation claims create more consultative channels, as also seen with land policies in Zimbabwe and social services in Russia and Belarus.

Overall, these findings have several implications for the debate on interest representation in a nondemocratic context. First, the chapter supports the evidence that autocrats do not live in isolation and authoritarian

regimes differ among themselves not only in terms of formal and informal institutions (Gandhi 2008; Geddes 1999; Hadenius and Teorell 2007), but also in the extent to which autocrats create mechanisms through which to interact with CSOs. Thus the chapter provides evidence that not all authoritarian regimes have a closed policy-making system that only members of the ruling coalition can access.

Second, the results show that when autocrats face more incentives to open the policy-making process to collect the necessary technical and political information, interest organizations adapt and navigate the political context to provide such information and consequently access the political arena, as also seen in the two preceding chapters. Overall, this specific resource-exchange relation produces a situation in which both autocrats and CSOs mutually benefit from such consultations. Yet further investigation on whether more frequent CSO consultations are conducive to better representation of citizens' preferences and what kind of interest organizations get access to the policy-making process is still needed.

Finally, all three chapters in this section find that groups' policy varies depending on the legitimation claims autocrats deploy. As the concluding chapter discusses, in this volume we theorize that three overarching conditions shape all stages of influence production under authoritarianism: access to policy making, the regime's information demands, and its need for social control. In my examination of consultative mechanisms, I find that regime-legitimation claims based on performance and/or procedure create the need for societal information and expertise provided by CSOs, which then encourage greater access to policy making.

NOTES

1. I define civil society organizations (CSOs) as nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations that have a legal personality and whose purpose is clearly stated. This definition includes interest groups, labor unions, professional associations, and classic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

2. I refer to consultations as informal channels used by policy makers to consult with CSOs in formulating policies (e.g., CSOs are invited to comment on new policy initiatives). The frequency of consultations may vary according to the degree of insulation of the government from CSOs' input.

3. Studies on authoritarian regimes demonstrate that the number of electoral regimes or competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way 2002) has increased since the beginning of the 2000s.

4. Berdymukhamedov won with 97 percent of the votes.

5. Saakashvili won with 96 percent of the votes.

6. Countries that have been autocratic for less than three consecutive years are con-

siders hybrid regimes (Diamond 2002) or flawed democracies (the Economist Intelligent Unit 2019). Thus those countries are excluded from the dataset because the scope of this paper is to investigate CSOs' access in stable and fully autocratic regimes rather than in flawed democracies or hybrid regimes.

7. The original variable v2cscnsult_ord is on an ordinal scale that takes the value 0 if the government does not often consult CSOs in formulating policies, 1 if CSOs are sometimes consulted but not on a regular basis, and 2 if CSOs are recognized as important stakeholders in some policy arena and there are corporatist arrangements between the government and the CSOs. The variable used in the analysis here (v2cscnsult) is the continuous version of this variable, based on V-Dem's measurement model.

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Part VI

Conclusion

13 | Toward a Theory of Advocacy under Authoritarianism

Max Grömping and Jessica C. Teets

As the contributions to this volume have demonstrated, lobbying by civil society organizations is a widespread phenomenon in countries under authoritarian rule, despite the generally centralized and tightly controlled policy process. While policy decision making is often concentrated among a small number of key players in the executive and bureaucracy, the volume chapters show that advocacy groups carve out niches in this authoritarian policy process, even influencing policy outcomes. In this concluding chapter we analyze the commonalities and differences of lobbying in democracies and autocracies by first summarizing the chapters' main findings through the lens of the four-stage influence production process. We then identify three conditions that impact all stages of influence production: *access to policy making*, *information demands*, and *social control*. These three conditions originate from the structure of policy making under authoritarianism and thus will shape lobbying across all authoritarian regime types. The resulting style of advocacy is in some ways similar to democratic contexts; for instance, fostering allies on the inside of the policy-making process, starting advocacy at the local level before scaling up, or changing the framing of an issue will likely prove productive for advocates in either setting (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Klüver 2013; Haddad 2021). The conditions under dictatorship, however, present grim and unique challenges—for instance ever-changing policy red lines and endemic repression—that demand a level of adaptability from advocates not required in democratic contexts. The conditions thus constitute the building blocks of a theoretical framework of lobbying the autocrat, focusing on the avenues for future research that may catalyze a new comparative research agenda on policy advocacy under authoritarianism.

Although recent literature examining advocacy in authoritarian regimes has proliferated, much of it consists of single-country case studies and is focused on outcomes, ignoring the routine process of advocacy. This narrow scope stems partly from challenges with fieldwork, such as publishing pressures and the need for language expertise. This is exacerbated by data scarcity in authoritarian regimes, especially on sensitive indicators like civil society or bureaucratic activity, which hinders cross-national studies. Thus, although this research has greatly expanded our understanding of advocacy in these regimes, the research program struggles to generate more systematic findings because of the inability to compare across cases. Our volume was designed to allow comparative analysis across these atomized studies and to create a framework upon which future research may build. Furthermore, the narrow focus on outcomes in the existing literature results in a lack of theoretical leverage for scholars to analyze the whole life cycle of advocacy groups (i.e., how we understand success and failure in different stages from original group formation to policy change). In response, we borrowed the analytical framework of influence production used to study democratic interest representation because it provides an approach to capture the whole process of advocacy, including learning feedback loops leading to change.

In addition to broadening our focus from single cases and across the life cycle of advocacy, we also wanted to derive a theoretical framework based on the structural conditions of authoritarianism that would generate testable hypotheses for future research. To this end, we compared which outcomes are in common with advocacy in democracies and which differ, to identify those specific to authoritarian regimes. For example, we find that advocacy in the final stages of "strategies" and "outcomes" resembles observations in democracies, but that the earlier two stages of "mobilization" and "interest communities" differ substantially due to more repression, less resources, and less information. These systematic comparisons then create the analytical leverage necessary to identify the scope conditions of effective lobbying in nondemocracies in much the same way as observed with the earlier "institutional turn" in comparative authoritarian literature. Using democratic theories of parties, elections, parliaments, and bureaucracies enabled new theory building around democratic practices adopted by nondemocratic regimes. For future research, scholars may use this framework for advocacy in authoritarian regimes to compare findings from different types of autocracies around the world, and to make predictions to identify outliers or "on the line" cases. Without an explicit

theory of how advocacy works in authoritarian regimes, in ways similar to or different from democracies, scholars are unable to draw broader conclusions or identify unique cases based on their single-country studies.

Developing a framework creates a frame of reference to which each individual study of a new group, issue, strategy, or country can contribute to over time to develop a larger body of literature. For example, this research constructs an empirical foundation to better develop the emerging informational theory of autocracies, where "[d]ictators survive not by means of force or ideology but because they convince the public—rightly or wrongly—that they are competent" (Guriev and Treisman 2020b, 100). Autocrats can bolster public support through information manipulation up to a certain extent, but even more so by good governance outcomes, such as economic growth or public safety (Guriev and Treisman 2020a). These good governance outcomes depend on autocrats receiving accurate information from society, making information flows vitally important (Manion 2015; Teets 2014). Our volume extends this initial work to highlight the explanatory power of regular citizen participation in informational theories of autocracies.

Our framework suggests that the theorized conditions for lobbying under dictatorship present challenges for both advocates and autocrats alike. The former are pushed by an environment of constant threat and uncertainty into a precarious dance with the dictator, needing just the right amount of acquiescence and assertiveness, private persuasion and public pressure, and the flexibility to change quickly to suit different situations. An adaptive lobbyist survives and may even thrive in such conditions, while others often face dire consequences. For the autocrat on the other hand, the more they stifle the associational sphere in an effort to prevent mass mobilization, the less they will reap the informational benefits associated with it.

In the next section we analyze the commonalities and differences of lobbying in democracies and autocracies based on the chapters' main findings through the lens of the four-stage influence production process. Then we identify three conditions that impact all stages of influence production—*access to policy making*, *information demands*, and *social control*—and discuss how these may be used to develop testable hypotheses at each stage of the life cycle of advocacy groups. In the final section, we conclude with some reflections on possible future avenues for research in this vein.

Influence Production under Authoritarianism

The goal of lobbying is to achieve influence over the process by which policy problems are identified and defined, adequate policy solutions selected, and public policies formulated and implemented. To facilitate comparisons across the eight country cases and three large-N analyses included in this volume, as well as with the extant literature on lobbying in democracies, we relied on the analytical framework of the influence production process developed by Lowery and Gray (2004). It provides a useful heuristic to break down the process of generating influence into four stages. In the introductory chapter we used this heuristic to derive some initial expectations about how influence production might differ in autocracies compared to democracies, and might also vary among autocracies, given differing structural conditions and incentives. In the following, we discuss insights from the eleven empirical chapters of this volume and reflect back on the expectations outlined in table 1.2 in the introduction, highlighting where they were met and not met, and also what outcomes were not expected but that emerged from the cases. Table 13.1 summarizes our findings, showing that most of our initial expectations received full or partial support. We find more differences between regime types in stages one and two of influence production, and more similarities later in the influence production process.

Mobilization

The chapter authors in the first section of this volume examined why and how societal interests develop into organizations. The existing democratic literature finds that advocacy groups must first overcome collective action problems to mobilize, and then enhance chances of survival by finding specialized niches reducing competition for resources with other groups. We expected that would-be advocates in autocracies face more difficulties in both tasks because of strict entry controls and repression. Due to higher start-up and maintenance costs, we predicted that these groups would need stronger incentives to attract members, resulting in fewer and smaller groups and more informal mobilization. We furthermore expected that regime pressures on latent interests would vary by the sensitivity of the policy area.

These expectations were confirmed to a certain extent in that Hanegraaff and De Bruycker (chapter 2) find that democratic regimes are more open to political information that provides insights into constituent inter-

ests and the political acceptability of policies, whereas authoritarian ones often repress groups that provide this information. Also, Hajdinjak (chapter 3) finds that in dominant party regimes—such as the one found in Montenegro—topics that endanger the political and economic interests of the incumbents are a lobbying "no-go." Elites are not interested in genuine policy learning on these topics and thus have little demand for advocacy groups' inputs. Quite the opposite, they would prefer as little participation and attention to these issues as possible. Hajdinjak explains, however, that these topics are not fixed or determined simply by policy area, but rather change as the interests of the incumbents do. Thus groups may mobilize in response to genuine grievances, if and when the issue at hand does not represent a threat to the regime's patronage network. As expected, the level of repression therefore differs depending on the policy area in which groups operate and whether the policy frames selected are reconcilable with the regime's interests. In some areas, say human rights, this often stops interest mobilization completely, but as chapter 3 showed, groups' and the regime's interests may overlap in areas such as the national economy, especially in rentier states.

Also, as expected, the first stage of influence production is the primary bottleneck for lobbying under autocracy. Most of the state's management strategies are aimed at regulating the entry of new groups into the system and channeling group formation toward "permissible" issues and away from those that may precipitate larger social mobilization. In fact, all chapters in this volume—not only those in this first section—highlight to some degree the constraining effects of government repression, licensing requirements, and the dearth of funding sources. While none directly test the assertion that such pressures result in fewer and smaller formal organizations, several contributions suggest that outcome. The mobilization around electoral reform issues in Malaysia described in chapter 9, for example, while impressive in size and longevity, centers around just one formal organization (the advocacy group Bersih). Similarly, the Cambodian environmental groups examined by Young in chapter 5 are small in size, and the movement as a whole is sparse in organizations. As the Cambodian case also shows, repression is a major factor impacting organizational morphologies by shifting them away from formal and professionalized structures to more informal, decentralized or less-professionalized groups. At the same time, we see mixed results regarding the expectation of more informal mobilization. In most chapters of the volume, for instance, major inputs into the policy process *do* come from formal organizations, such as NGOs, think tanks, and professional associations.

TABLE 13.1. Summary Findings in Influence Production Stages (Note: ● = support; O = no support; ⊙ = mixed support; ○ = no evidence)

Stage	Expected features in autocracies	Findings	Additional findings	
			Differences in autocracies	Similarities between regimes
(i) Mobilization and Maintenance	(1) Fewer and smaller groups	●	-Strong repression of mobilization on certain **no-go issues** (e.g. rights-based claims or those tackling core regime interests).	-**Technical information** is valued by leaders in both regime types. -Objective **grievances** aid mobilization.
	(2) More informal groups	⊙		
	(3) Extent of entry control and repression varies by policy area	⊙		
(ii) Interest Communities	(4) Lower density of group system	⊙	-Group system **bifurcated** into loyal and oppositional communities. -Lower density may be offset by **duplication of niches** due to bifurcation. -**Cooperation with TANs** artificially sustains groups but also increases repression. -**Competition** driven by regime cleavage (less competition in sensitive policy areas). -**Virtual organizing** to evade repression.	-The more **competitive** autocracies have group densities similar to democracies. -**Competition** driven by ideological and social cleavages. -**Niche-seeking** in policy areas with limited agenda space or resources. -**Virtual organizing** as adaptation to the hybridization of media systems.
	(5) Lower diversity of group system	●		
	(6) Similar dominance of business interests	⊙		
	(7) Cooperation primarily with either regime-aligned groups or with TANs	●		

(iii) Advocacy Strategies	(8) Bureaucratic strategy more prevalent	○	-Greater impact of groups' **political resources** on strategy choice (e.g. gov't embeddedness or opposition alignment).	-Generally **similar group-level drivers of strategy choice,** such as group resources or organizational maintenance goals.
	(9) Legislative strategy less prevalent	●		-Similar prevalence of **"outside" lobbying.**
	(10) Media strategy less prevalent	○	-Greater salience of **online media strategies,** to compensate for offline censorship.	-**Collective action** pushes issues onto policy-making agenda.
	(11) Preference for local access seeking	●		
	(12) Informal networking more prevalent	◯		
(iv) Outcomes	(13) Influence restricted to non-sensitive policy areas	●	-Influence strengthened where **regime legitimation claims** make recourse to economic performance or democratic procedures.	-Lobbying providing **technical expertise** most effective to change policy.
	(14) Influence depends on demand for policy-relevant information, which is highest in electoral autocracies and highly complex economies	●	-**Elite divisions** increase access.	-**Membership organizations** generate more influence.
	(15) Smaller ratio of groups making representative claims vs. those providing expert information	●		-**Public-private partnerships** and **government contracting** are important avenues to influence.
	(16) Autonomous groups risk cooptation as downside of influence	○		-Groups **balance** perceptions of independence with influence and access to policy makers.

The authors also found unexpected similarities despite regime differences. For example, Hanegraaff and De Bruycker (chapter 2) show that autocrats' demand for technical information is equally high as in democracies, and, similar to democracies, this favors the survival chances of groups with more resources and with a good reputation. Just as in democratic states, we should therefore expect similar types of biases toward more resourceful groups and political insiders to occur in interest group communities across autocratic states. Similarly, Hajdinjak (chapter 3) finds that group characteristics are important in that better-organized groups, with more personnel and expertise, can offer better policy advice and are also more likely to get public attention. She also finds that, similar to democracies, the ability to publicize information is critical in creating pressure, but public pressure has to reach higher levels to influence the regime or matter to important external actors, such as the EU, as Montenegro attempts to join its membership. Additionally, as again the Montenegrin case in chapter 3 demonstrates, objective grievances drive members and resources toward groups operating in a given policy space, thus aiding mobilization, just like in democratic contexts.

Both empirical chapters find that the demand for policy-relevant information, especially technical expertise, revealed by advocacy groups is therefore a key driver for group mobilization. This is in line with seminal demand-side theories of interest mobilization in democracies, which posit that the prevailing policy agenda shapes elites' need for lobbying inputs (Leech et al. 2005). As the chapters in this volume demonstrate, formal mobilization will likely be skewed toward groups providing policy expertise, especially in areas of intense ongoing policy-making activity, instead of those making representative claims on behalf of a constituency.

Interest Communities

Mobilized advocacy groups exist in an interest community where they compete or cooperate with other groups in the same policy area. Studies of interest representation in democracies have shown that patterns of competition and cooperation are in turn outcomes of the density and diversity of this ecology (Lowery, Halpin, and Gray 2015). Given the scarcity of core resources such as policy maker access, new members, and potential funding, we expected a lower carrying capacity for authoritarian interest systems, while we expected that similar biases in favor of well-resourced business groups may exist. Additionally, groups might prioritize alliances with actors close to the regime and with transnational advo-

cacy networks (TANs) given the limited agenda space and funding sources, which would foster competition among groups rather than cooperation. Thus as we move from the analytical unit of individual groups to the aggregate or "ecological" level, the lower carrying capacity of authoritarian regimes predicts lower density and diversity of groups and more competition among groups.

These expectations of the impact of regime differences on interest communities were supported to a certain extent in the cases of think tanks in China, environmental groups in Cambodia, and women's groups in Turkey. In all three cases, the authors observed overall less density and diversity in groups due to fewer resources and more repression, and more competitive strategies to secure limited policy access and funding. For example, in chapter 4, Hasmath finds less diversity and more regime-facing strategies among foreign policy think tanks in China. His analysis of research publications shows that more independent think tanks exhibited increasing similarity relative to the positions of government think tanks from mid-2014 through 2015, and relative conformity on the policy principles that are considered crucial to China's domestic and international developmental strategies. Similarly, in chapter 5, Young finds that repression and scarce resources diminish density and diversity among environmental groups in Cambodia. He also highlights that due to fears of democratization, groups cannot partner visibly with international allies and elect instead to work more closely with government-sponsored groups to prove national loyalty and autonomy from Western actors. Overall, as all the chapters in this section confirm, both overt and subtle repression is a major factor impacting this second stage of influence production. It adds ecological pressures, making for sparser and less diverse interest communities and driving groups toward more decentralized and less-professionalized organizational forms.

One key source of support has a larger influence on authoritarian interest communities than in democracies: international linkages. For instance, where groups may naturally wax and wane in pluralist interest communities simply due to population pressures, foreign funding may artificially prop up groups and keep certain issues alive. At the same time, links to transnational advocacy networks (TANs) may be a blessing or a curse to groups under authoritarianism. On the one hand, they may be the only viable way to sustain organizational survival given the lack of other funding options and the only way to leverage international pressure given the lack of inside access. On the other hand, this funding poses the risk of the group becoming ostracized or even designated as an enemy of the

nation. Oppositional interest communities in autocracies straddle this thin line and may opt to (or be forced to) sever international links in favor of a more tenable domestic approach.

In the case of a more competitive authoritarian regime, however, Yabancı (chapter 6) finds that slightly different conditions in Turkey influence the ecology of interest groups through pockets of civic resistance, relative competitiveness of oppositional groups, and political pressure in the form of cooptation and selective repression. The ecology allows for more density than in China or Cambodia, but similarly political polarization reduces issue diversity and creates pressures for organizations with government links to engage in inside lobbying to access state resources and policy space. Yabancı delineates a divided ecology where groups are segregated into loyal "government-oriented" groups and oppositional "autonomous" ones, with high levels of competition between the two. Additionally, although the regime allows more policy advocacy, repression is still highly unpredictable, again leading to more informal, decentralized, or less-professionalized structures for autonomous groups. As a result, drawing boundaries between organized interest groups and social movement organizations can be difficult.

Despite these differences, we also find similarities between authoritarian and democratic regimes, such as strategic niche seeking, limited cooperation among similar autonomous or progovernment groups but competition across this divide, the use of social media to change the existing ecology, and, at least implicitly, an overrepresentation of business interests. For example, Hasmath finds that although university-affiliated think tanks appear to position themselves proximately vis-à-vis government think tanks, they exhibit more independent and varying positions with less sensitive policy topics. Think tanks try to differentiate when possible to carve out market space, as seen in democracies. Also similar to democracies, Yabancı finds that partisan polarization often cuts across the previous cleavages, such as the religious versus secular divide in Turkey, to create new opportunities and partnerships. Both Yabancı and Young find that groups increasingly turn to social media to alter their ecology, creating more access to resources, catalyzing public opinion to create more policy influence, and limiting the role of international groups on these issues in the eyes of authoritarian rulers. Thus the move to virtual organizing is an outcome of changes in media systems, just as in democracies (Guo and Saxton 2020). Authoritarian regimes' repression, however, might provide even more of a push to move online. Finally, the question of a potential probusiness bias in authoritarian interest communities is not directly

tackled in this section of the volume. Still, Hanegraaff and De Bruycker's findings in chapter 2 are suggestive in that regard, in the sense that well-resourced groups possessing policy expertise (such as business associations) are better able to match autocrats' information demands. This echoes long-standing scholarship on bias and the lack of diversity in interest representation, which has confirmed that most interests attain some kind of political organization, yet there is clear numerical dominance of business interests over others (Schattschneider 1960; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012).

As in democracies, group behavior in terms of competition, cooperation, and niche seeking is in no small part explained by the nature of the group ecology, for instance its density, and also by existing societal cleavages pitting groups on opposite sides of policy debates. However, as all chapters in this section demonstrate, authoritarian advocacy communities replicate the regime cleavage such that interest communities are bifurcated not only by different policy stances, but also—perhaps even more strongly—by loyalty to the regime. This essentially creates two distinct ecologies, one populated by groups broadly aligned with the regime and the other populated with oppositional or autonomous ones, which are often the focus of intense repression or other social management strategies. This has important consequences for density dependence theory (see Halpin 2015). Counter to our expectations, interest communities may actually be as dense in some autocracies as in democracies because the bifurcation essentially creates two communities insulated from the ecological pressures of the "other side." Under democratic conditions this higher density of groups would drive some out of business or force them to specialize on niche topics. But the bifurcated authoritarian group system has potentially a larger carrying capacity than anticipated because (a) groups do not compete for key resources across the regime cleavage, and (b) proregime groups are subsidized by preferential access, relaxed licensing, and discursive support via state media.

Finally, the bifurcation of authoritarian interest communities also impacts groups' policy positions and their attention to different policy areas, as chapter 4 suggests. Semiautonomous groups converge with regime-aligned ones and GONGOs on issue areas that are tightly controlled by the regime, such as the national sovereignty issue in China. The consequence is less competition of policy frames and group activity in these areas, which become completely dominated by the government line. In less critical issue areas such as the economy, however, there is more leeway to diverge from the government's agenda, which spurs competition

among advocacy groups to frame the debate and to attract resources. Given the limited agenda space or resources even in the more open policy areas, competition between groups in authoritarian regimes might mirror what is observed in democracies with certain policy issues or groups when there is extremely limited ability to get an issue on the agenda (Chenoweth 2010; Stroup and Wong 2017).

Strategies

In the third stage of the influence production framework, we focus on how the unique constraints and opportunities of nondemocratic political regimes affect the lobbying strategies used by advocacy groups. As groups attempt to influence policy makers, we theoretically expected differences between democracies and nondemocracies based on reduced channels for public participation and more repression. Given the weakened functioning of elections and—at best—partially free media, strategies aimed at the public may be less salient than those aimed directly at bureaucracies. Furthermore, government embeddedness, or conversely the oppositional character of groups, may predetermine the repertoire of strategies available, leading to preferences for local access seeking and informal networking. As explained below, although we find some differences between regimes, we also find many similarities, suggesting that variation in strategies is not determined exclusively by institutional opportunities.

The chapters in this section suggested that groups calibrate lobbying tactics according to perceived political opportunities or boundaries and according to group maintenance needs and resources. In other words, established theories of strategic choice travel reasonably well across regime types. Surprisingly, the expectation that groups in nondemocracies would use more "inside" versus "outside" lobbying strategies received little support. In chapter 7, Grömping analyzes a cross-national sample of electoral advocacy NGOs and finds that groups in all regime types tend to engage in outside lobbying at similar levels, and that media pluralism—which does exist in some autocracies—matters more than regime type to understand lobbying strategies. In chapter 8, Li examines environmental lobbying in China and finds that public mobilization and media strategies are more prevalent than tactics targeting the bureaucracy. And in their case study of the Malaysian electoral advocacy group Bersih, Khoo and Leong (chapter 9) find that advocates work nationally and target bureaucracies, legislatures, and even the general public as deemed necessary to achieve goals. All three chapters thus found evidence inconsistent with our initial

expectation that inside strategies aimed at the bureaucracy should be more prevalent than public-facing outside strategies. Overall, however, the legislative strategy is the least prevalent, as expected. While this may be hardly surprising in a closed autocracy like China, the same is also corroborated for the more competitive Malaysian case, where strategies targeting legislators were less prevalent than those aimed at other arenas.

That said, the bifurcated authoritarian advocacy ecology influences access to policy makers and leads to an outsized role of political resources in driving groups' strategy choice. Groups without regime support have a limited repertoire of strategies. The larger and better-connected groups, however, use strategies similar to both regime groups (GONGOs) or groups in democracies. Li (chapter 8), for instance, divides groups by level of government embeddedness and finds that GONGOs use legislative strategies more, but that there is otherwise no significant difference between GONGOs and civic NGOs in their use of administrative, media, and organizing strategies. In fact, registered groups with a supervisory agency also engage more in legislative advocacy compared to groups without a supervisory agency. In addition to policy access, government funding increases advocacy activities. Li also shows that groups substitute for lack of access to national policy arenas by focusing more on *local* legislatures or consultative forums.

Leveraging changes in political resources over time, Khoo and Leong (chapter 9) find similarly that group strategies changed due to differing degrees of policy access. Utilizing public grievances with the conduct of elections, the advocacy group Bersih elevated the issue of electoral reform onto the policy agenda through five mass street protests. Once policy makers agreed that this was an important issue—and after a landmark election loss of the dominant party—Bersih was able to access policy makers directly and use inside lobbying tactics to enact policy change. In chapter 7, Grömping looks at a different political resource, namely alignment with the political opposition, and finds that such alignment leads to conflicting incentives among advocates in authoritarian regimes. On the one hand, it puts them on the "wrong" side of the regime cleavage and closes inside access, thus driving them toward public-facing strategies. But this tactical pivot, on the other hand, often leads to the dilemma of appealing to media in contexts of lacking media pluralism. In this way, political resources and, in a broader sense, the political opportunities afforded by different regime types *do* structure strategic choice.

On the whole, chapters in this section thus provide findings that are not often expected outside of democracies, such as the use of collective

action and media strategies to pressure policy makers. For example, Khoo and Leong highlight how Bersih used mass protests, despite fear and intimidation, to exert public pressure on policy makers. Thus, the available repertoires may be broader under authoritarianism than predicted using only regime type, including tolerating violent repertoires as seen in the Zimbabwean case (chapter 11). The use of mass protests or even violence might push issues onto the policy-making agenda in similar ways as found in democracies when the issue is less known or popular (Chenoweth 2010), despite the increased risk of repression. On the other hand, this may not always be the case when the issue at hand is a policy red line. This was suggested in chapter 2 by Hajdinjak, where even strong mobilization and public pressure failed to achieve policy successes on no-go topics.

In addition to direct collective action, these cases illustrate the importance of media access for policy influence, especially social media in regimes without independent media. For instance, Khoo and Leong document more than seventy self-organizing communities on Facebook, including about forty community pages that were created by the Malaysian diaspora in ninety cities globally, and they find that the movement's widespread success in leveraging social media to mobilize supporters is vital to its efforts. In Cambodia and Turkey, Young and Yabancı also highlight how oppositional groups relied on digital activism, and Grömping finds that among autocracies media pluralism is a predictor of autonomous groups' strategic choices. Media strategies, however, are as high risk/high reward as collective action and often draw increased repression (see chapter 5).

Thus, despite differences between regime types that influence advocacy strategies, the authors found unexpected similarities with strategic choice in many democracies, suggesting that institutional constraints such as electoral competitiveness or media pluralism, and political resources such as alignment with the government or the opposition, matter more than dichotomous measures such as "regime type." Group strategies appear to be more similar than predicted, and regardless of regime type, they appear to be sensitive to how opportunities shift over time, by topic, and even by policy maker targets.

Outcomes

In the final stage of the influence production framework, we focus on whether groups were able to achieve concrete policy influence, and

whether advocacy serves to make the political system more responsive to community preferences. We expected that in authoritarian regimes, groups will successfully influence policy only in certain areas that do not impinge on core regime interests, and, like democracies, in areas where they may provide technical expertise and information that the regime lacks. Additionally, we expected that regime-aligned groups will influence policy more than will independent groups, or that independent groups will risk cooptation in exchange for more ability to influence policy. As explained below, we find support for some differences between regime types influencing outcomes, but also that groups across regime types face similar advantages in changing policy when possessing expertise or scarce information.

Our expectations of the impact of regime differences on groups' ability to influence policy change were largely supported in that advocacy groups exert the most influence on issues core to regime-legitimation claims, in issue areas that are less sensitive, and in those areas where the regime has less access to information. For example, Bindman and Chulitskaya examine the impact of nonstate actors on social service reform in Russia and Belarus in chapter 10, and they find successful examples because of the vital importance of social policy and the provision of public welfare in maintaining the legitimacy of the electoral authoritarian regimes that dominate both countries. Using a large-N analysis in chapter 12, Panaro also finds that regime-legitimation strategies centering on socioeconomic performance and nominally democratic institutions depend on technical and political information that groups may supply, making them valuable to autocrats. 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 deployed by "informational autocrats" (Guriev and Treisman 2020b) being associated with more access.

Similarly, in chapter 11, Helliker, Bhatasara, and Chiweshe find a bifurcation of lobbying in Zimbabwe, where foreign funding is associated with creating policy access through demands for societal information; but this donor dependency aligns these groups with the political opposition, ultimately placing them in an outsider position and disadvantaging lobbying efforts. Conversely, the confrontational land lobbying efforts of war veterans were more successful, not least because they resonated with regime discourses dating back to independence, but also because they were membership-based and linked to a clearly delineated constituency. They therefore present a more plausible instance of interest representation com-

pared to the foreign-driven agenda of NGOs. In addition, the authors showed that significant elite disagreement or uncertainty in policy areas also creates opportunities for groups to provide "expert" information. In the Zimbabwean case, coalition building and providing expert consultation were two successful tactics in influencing land policy given a divided elite.

Although the chapters in this section establish that advocates generally work on a narrower set of issues in autocracies, the authors also find that an increasing prevalance of public-private partnships and government contracting have created sites of policy influence similar to the ones found in many democracies. For example, Bindman and Chulitskaya demonstrate that recent welfare reform in both Russia and Belarus created opportunities for groups to influence the development and implementation of policies in this area, although the timing and location of the windows of opportunity in the welfare sphere differ in the two countries. In Russia, groups exert influence at the federal level in terms of policy development and at the regional level in terms of policy implementation, and in Belarus, groups may only work at the national level in terms of both policy development and implementation. This means that outcomes in Russia are likely to be more widespread and diffuse, whereas in Belarus they are likely to be more limited in both scope and number. In this way, new legislation requiring that government must contract for social service provision carves out legitimate space for groups to influence policy making occupying a middle ground where they are not acting in opposition to the authorities but also have (largely) not been fully coopted by them. This status as "expert" offers the opportunity to advance ideas through the formation of networks of policy makers. This phenomenon is currently more pronounced in Russia than in the more centralized and authoritarian system in Belarus, but even there this trend is occurring.

In addition to achieving policy goals, the "outcomes" stage of influence production also examines the aggregate impacts of the advocacy group system as a whole. This taps into one of the most contentious debates about lobbying under authoritarianism: Do the efforts of advocacy groups as documented here and elsewhere constitute the genuine transmission of societal preferences? That is, do authoritarian advocacy group systems actually aggregate interests? Or are they rather the reflection of intraelite distributional conflicts or a mere façade of civil society consultations aimed purely at legitimating autocratic rule? One important insight here is the restriction of policy influence to certain policy areas but not others, as discussed above. This is of course a clear deviation from any pluralist

notion of interest representation. What further complicates the matter is the very real possibility of cooptation as the price groups must pay for influence. The findings of the chapter authors, however, did not bear out this latter expectation. In the Zimbabwean case, with its dual lobbying ecology of war veterans and Western-aided NGOs, the regime did not engage in serious attempts to coopt either side. Instead, policy making was driven by the fear of losing support of important elements of the regime coalition that could *not* be coopted by limited concessions. And in the Russian and Belarusian examples, NGOs maintained degrees of autonomy despite making significant inroads into the policy process. Thus the three empirical chapters in this section find that authoritarian lobbying *does* add additional voices to the policy making process, but that these groups might mirror the cleavages found within the elite and not truly increase representation. Some chapters in earlier sections also support this point. Where favorable policy change occurred, such as partly in Montenegro (chapter 3), or Malaysia (chapter 9), it did not come with the cost of substantial cooptation. Something of a counterpoint is provided in the Cambodian (chapter 5) and Turkish (chapter 6) case studies, where influence accrued to those groups that could best demonstrate alignment with the regime's policy platform.

Overall, the findings in this section echo those of earlier sections that nondemocratic advocacy system are skewed toward the provision of policy expertise over the making of representative claims. Consequently, although advocacy may increase *responsiveness* to real-world problems and improve the efficacy of policy solutions, this does not necessarily translate into *representation* of interests in a pluralist sense.

Theory Building: Adaptive Lobbying under Dismal Conditions

The analysis of the volume chapters revealed commonalities and differences of influence production by societal groups in authoritarian regimes compared to democratic ones, as well as among different types of autocracies. In this section we leverage these findings to identify factors or conditions that explain observed variation in mobilization, competition/cooperation, choice of advocacy strategy, and degrees of access/influence. These are important building blocks of an initial theory of lobbying under authoritarianism. The development of theoretical frameworks is vital to knowledge production because it connects individual researchers to an

existing base of knowledge, allowing the construction of hypotheses, guiding the choice of research methods, and highlighting findings from each subsequent case to identify how key variables might differ and under what circumstances. This foundation unifies disparate observations across time and countries to intellectually transition from simply describing to generalizing about various aspects of citizen advocacy. Therefore, if a theory is "a reasoned and precise speculation about the answer to a research question, including a statement about why the proposed answer is correct" (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 19), then a theory of lobbying the autocrat must provide answers to research questions arising at the different stages of influence production, such as: When and why do latent interests mobilize and become sustainable? When and why do advocacy groups cooperate or compete with each other? Which (mix of) advocacy strategies do groups deploy? When and why do advocacy groups achieve favorable policy outcomes?

By identifying the conditions that shape these outcomes, we envision our theory-building efforts as similar to Milan Svolik's (2012) theory that identified two "dismal" conditions influencing elite politics in authoritarian regimes, namely, making credible commitments to power sharing and the omnipresent threat of violence. Our theoretical framework shifts the focus from elites to society and finds that three conditions influence all stages of interest production: *access to policy making*, *information demands*, and *social control*. These three conditions originate from the structure of policy making in authoritarian regimes. While they are not necessarily unique to autocratic settings—information demands, for instance, are recognized as crucial for explaining mobilization and outcomes under democracy as well (Berkhout 2013)—they do constrain autocratic lobbying systems more than under democracy. At the same time, the conditions 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.

Our proposed theoretical building blocks are depicted in figure 13.1. As the graphic suggests, the theorized conditions are interconnected and impact each other. Since they vary considerably from one regime to the next, variation in each can be exploited to explain influence production by societal actors across regime types. In the following section, we first analyze each condition and then suggest how scholars might use this authoritarian lobbying framework to gain better analytical leverage in future research.
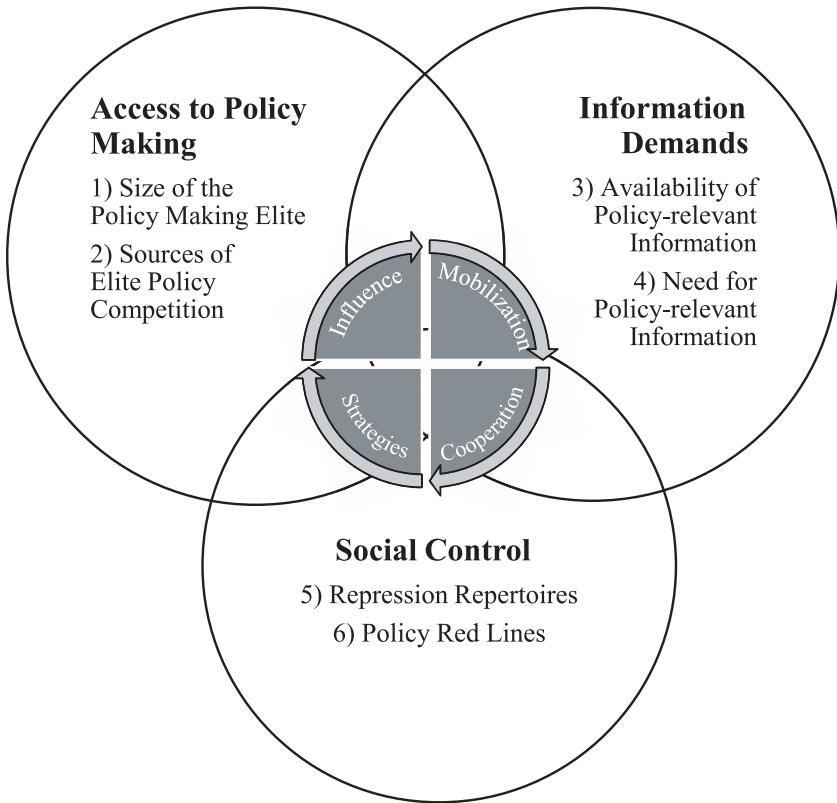
Figure 13.1. Conditions Shaping Policy Advocacy under Authoritarianism

Access to Policy Making

Authoritarian regimes are characterized by a concentration and central-ization of power. Scholars credit institutions that credibly share some of this power among elites over time with authoritarian durability, but also generally find that once autocrats gain enough power, they stop sharing (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005; Smith 2005; Brownlee 2007; Svolik 2012). In regimes with more concentrated power, fewer elites have policy-making authority, and this reduces potential targets for lobbying. In addition, the less competitive regimes are, the more likely that policy makers are clus-tered inside the executive bureaucracy rather than dispersed in other bod-ies like legislatures and courts, which reduces the scope of potential lobby-ing targets. This condition means that societal groups aiming to influence

policy under authoritarianism have fewer potential points of access to the policy-making process.[1]

Limited access to the policy-making agenda creates challenges at all stages of the influence production process, but more significantly the last three stages of interactions in interest communities, advocacy strategies, and influence outcomes. Within interest communities, the constrained space for getting issues on the agenda means that groups are more competitive and less collaborative with other groups. Constrained access also influences advocacy strategy such that groups are pushed to informal channels, having to rely on either personal connections with policy makers or advocate at the local level to facilitate access. Most obviously, limited points of access means fewer opportunities for groups to share policy-relevant information with relevant elites, which, as discussed above, is an important currency in the generation of influence.

Several parameters structure this first condition of lobbying under authoritarianism. For example, the degree of personalism—a dictator's personal control over the ruling party, bureaucratic and military appointments and promotions, and other key decisions—is inversely related to access to policy making (Frantz and Ezrow 2011). The most personalist dictatorships even lack mechanisms for consultation within the regime leadership, let alone with society. Policy making takes place in the absence of information about societal needs and the consequences of policies, making it prone to policy failures and erratic policy shifts (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018). On the other end of the spectrum are multiparty electoral autocracies where inbuilt mechanisms for information acquisition—such as elections, legislatures, and parties—are meant to provide said information. By their very nature, these institutions create potential access points for advocacy groups. Elections, for instance, provide space for issue-based campaigning, legislatures are sites of debates, committee hearings and other interactions with individual legislators and political parties are potential carriers for advocacy groups' issue agendas. Similarly, access to policy making is increased by multilevel governance, notably federalism. Several autocracies, for instance Russia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Ethiopia, and Venezuela, are federations. Although the modalities of decentralization and devolution differ, federalism results in a propagation of access points throughout the country and at different levels of governance (Grindle 2007).

This condition creates an exchange relationship around access between advocacy groups and policy makers. Groups may trade their societal "access" to gain entry to the policy-making agenda. As representatives of

society, groups may confer more power to elites who collaborate on issues of interests. Even in less competitive regimes without elections, elites still compete for power, including policy-making power. Often scholars categorize this type of competition as policy competition or factional competition (Teets 2018). Elites may try to partner with groups to leverage social unrest or social elites (e.g., religious, ethnic, lineage/clan, or regional group leaders) in order to win political advantage over other elites to expand their authority and change policies in desired directions (Slater 2010). Regimes with less elite cohesion or more competition thus create more opportunities for groups to access the policy-making process. Once groups align with particular factions, however, they are also linked to these elites. This might not be as strong a linkage as the cooptation described in social corporatism (Collier and Collier 1991); rather, this might simply be an exchange relationship where regime elites receive community support and groups receive access to the policy-making agenda.

Our proposed theoretical framework outlines two variables for analysis about this condition: (1) **size of the policy making elite**: how many policy makers are there, and where are they located throughout the system (center or local; branch of government; party, state, or military)? and (2) **sources of elite policy competition**: how many elite factions exist and what are their policy preferences? Understanding the size and location of policy-making elites in each system, and the areas where different factions of elites compete over policy, will allow researchers to conceptualize the condition of access. Once access is measured, researchers may then develop and test hypotheses, including areas where we might expect competition or collaboration, how groups select lobbying strategies, and the amount of influence groups may exert in different policy areas and over time.

Information Demands

Effective governance requires the collecting and processing of vast amounts and types of information. Policy makers must assess the scope, causes, and consequences of social problems; identify and prioritize alternative policy solutions that may address these problems; and consider the political feasibility and acceptance of those solutions (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). This is a universal problem regardless of regime type, but authoritarian regimes struggle more to collect information than democracies in that they limit or prohibit electoral competition and curtail the free circulation of preferences and interests in the associational and media spheres. This inhibits their ability to gather and process societal informa-

tion on policy problems, solutions, and political acceptance, as countless scholars of comparative authoritarianism have noted (see for example Brownlee 2007). The lack of policy-relevant information in turn leads to governance failures, misallocation of resources, and blind spots regarding social grievances (Treisman 2020). All of this has the potential to undermine regime support among the population or even the state's economic capabilities that form the material basis for repressive apparatuses, as we discuss in the next section.

These information problems create space for lobbying groups, as they provide "information for autocrats" (Manion 2015). In addition to well-documented information channels such as authoritarian legislatures and elections (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009), political parties (Bellinger 2020), or semifree media (Lorentzen 2014), advocacy groups are an additional avenue by which dictators can acquire policy-relevant information (Teets 2014). When compared to the other options, sourcing information via a managed advocacy system incurs a lower risk of the accidental loss of power. Protests, for instance, deliver important information about grievances to autocrats, but using reliable information collected by citizen groups to prevent protests in the first place is arguably preferable for stability (Lorentzen 2013). The use of an advocacy system to source information from society and then respond also has the advantage that there is no need to balance information acquisition with signaling the regime's strength (as elections and legislatures do, see Schuler 2020). On the other hand, it does need to balance information with cooptation, since stronger cooptation will diminish the informational signal.

Thus, a second exchange relationship develops between groups and policy makers around information: policy makers need information for governance and groups need information on policy priorities and policy makers' preferences for advocacy. These opportunities are greatest in policy areas with less available information and higher needs for that information. 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-legitimation claims such as public service provision (Benton 2016; Cassani 2017). This suggests that information demands might be fairly variable, not only determined by regime type, but also by policy area or targeted community. These information demands create different opportunities for the four stages of influence production, such as where we might expect certain groups to form and secure resources more easily and

to develop strategic framing around these needs that enable groups to influence specific policies.

Regarding policy areas, advocacy groups can potentially channel two broad types of information to autocrats: political information and technical information (see chapter 2). The former is knowledge about public preferences, interests, and the acceptability of different policy solutions. Advocacy groups have this knowledge due to their engagement with communities or with their own members. Depending on the community relevant for a particular policy, autocrats might lack necessary information due to low community trust or a history of state repression, such as sex workers for HIV/AIDS policies (Spires 2011). In these areas, advocacy groups with trusted relationships in the community may provide missing information the regime needs. The need for political information will increase with a regime's reliance on nominally democratic institutions, such as elections. Notwithstanding the varied menu of manipulation deployed in authoritarian elections (Schedler 2002), they do still force a degree of competition upon the regime that requires a greater knowledge of public preferences in order to secure continuous wins (see chapter 12).

Additionally, the latter type of information, technical information, is expertise in a given policy area about available policy solutions, comparative advantages and disadvantages, and the best way of implementing policies (Avant, Finnemore, and Sell 2010). As chapter 2 shows, autocratic regimes desire technical information to a similar degree as democratic ones, and thus there may be incentives to relax restrictions on the formation and operation of such groups, even to afford them a certain degree of access to key political arenas. In policy areas with high demand for technical information, such as economic growth in highly innovative industries that require skilled labor, numerous steps of refinement, intricate regulation, or trade agreements integrating global supply chains, economic governance becomes more complex and needs more diverse, timely, and accurate policy information. Unions, professional associations, and industry groups aggregating the expertise and the needs of the multiple stakeholders in extended value-added chains spanning multiple sectors and crossing international boundaries become invaluable vehicles of information. In contrast, where value is created primarily via extractive industries or in the primary sector more generally speaking, the demands on economic governance are lower. We thus expect that information demands increase with the degree of economic complexity.

Furthermore, in these areas requiring a high level of technical exper-

tise or community trust, we find that there are often opportunities created by a lack of state capacity for groups to provide not only information, but direct service delivery. Governments lacking capacity increasingly out-source diverse services, such as education or health, to nongovernmental actors (Brass 2016; Cook, Iarskaia-Smirnova, and Tarasenko 2021). We therefore predict that the lower the regime's steering capacity in a policy area, the more successful advocacy groups' mobilization, cooperation and resources, advocacy strategies, and influence will be.

In summary, our proposed theoretical framework expects advocacy to be structured by prevailing information demands, which can be analyzed along two dimensions: (1) **availability of policy-relevant information**: Does elite competition (such as during elections) produce information? Does a fairly free media exist or other channels for collecting informa-tion?, and (2) **need for policy-relevant information**: Does the regime require political information such as those with quasi-democratic institu-tions like elections? Does the regime require technical information such as those with complex economies or based on performance legitimacy? Does the regime lack capacity and require direct service delivery? Under-standing what information is required by the regime and what informa-tion is available allows researchers to conceptualize the condition of infor-mation demands. Once information needs and availability are measured, researchers may then develop and test hypotheses, including areas where we might expect certain groups to form and secure resources, and to develop strategic framing around these needs that enable these groups to influence specific policies.

Social Control

Similarly to Svolik's (2012) second "dismal" condition of authoritarianism—the constant possibility of the use of violence—we argue that the ever-present threat and use of repression significantly impacts all four stages of interest production. Repression arises from autocrats' need for social con-trol, to prevent popular mobilizations or emergence of viable opposition figures, or to gain society's compliance more broadly speaking. The modern menu of social control no longer relies solely on the direct use of violence, but has diversified to include threats, harassment, bribery, fabricated crimes, coercive distribution, infiltration of civil society, and other "softer" tools of repression (Guriev and Treisman 2019; Hassan, Mattingly, and Nugent 2022). In this context, the diverse tools of repression serve to bifurcate types of groups and types of policy areas into two spheres of advocacy.

As discussed in the empirical chapters, the diverse management strategies in the regime's toolbox, from registration requirements, arduous tax statutes, prohibition of foreign funding, or direct surveillance, harassment, or closure of advocacy groups divide groups into two types: inside (GONGOs and coopted groups) and outside (independent groups). The barriers erected through this menu of management strategies create a more expansive ecology for inside groups that may form, secure funding and project permission, and access policy makers with secure channels of consultation to play a role in policy making. For outside groups, these barriers stifle mobilization, hinder group cooperation, minimize the repertoire of available advocacy strategies, and close off most points of access.

Repression also creates a divided policy space in that the key to influence production under nondemocratic conditions is to understand the formal and informal red lines that inform the regime's menu of repression. To be sure, lobbying always needs to be flexible, adaptable, and cognizant of emergent opportunities, but in autocracies, lobbyists have to shape their organizational forms, coalitions, advocacy strategies, and frames to (a) fit exactly within the permissible bounds, knowing that these bounds are constantly moving, and (b) leverage the autocrat's need for legitimacy and information.

The menu of repression thus shapes the ecology within which groups function, and it creates a third exchange relationship that trades less repression for more "social management," or groups voluntarily staying within the acceptable boundaries. This exchange relationship shapes groups' opportunities, resources, and strategies so that they work with inside groups, including contracting services with the government, and frame issues to fit inside acceptable policy boundaries. Overall, we expect that the less challenge there is to the legitimacy of the political regime as a whole by advocacy groups, the more porous the management of these groups' mobilization, cooperation, and access, and the more diverse the available repertoire of strategies. In addition, the depth of the regime cleavage superimposes a regime's survival anxiety over its interactions with organized civil society (as Brownlee 2007 finds with elections). For example, where a regime enjoys elite cohesion and public support, any regime cleavage (or factions) may become less salient and allow more porous management of advocacy groups.

Outside or independent groups may overcome constraints by cooperating with inside groups like GONGOs or directly with government departments through consultation or service contracting. These partnerships alleviate constraints on forming, mobilizing, accessing resources,

and reaching relevant policy makers. These "authoritarian policy networks" (Teets 2018) enable independent groups to circumvent the restrictions imposed upon them; but cooperation over time risks cooptation. This is not to say that independent interest groups are always coopted, but that they at least do not seek to change the regime status quo and are careful to maintain close ties with inside groups or relevant government agencies, as seen clearly in Turkey (chapter 6) and in China (chapter 8), where the government embeddedness of advocacy groups, and thus their closeness to the regime, determines their ability and willingness to engage in a variety of otherwise risky advocacy strategies.

In addition to cooperation with inside actors, advocacy groups navigate repression strategies with strategic issue framing. Authoritarian regimes often have certain policy areas that are designated as "no go," or conversely as core legitimation strategies that divide policy space. For example, in chapter 5, we observe that the environment is a no-go issue area in Cambodia, with advocacy groups in this space intensely harassed and regulated. Conversely, environmental advocacy is comparatively widespread and relatively free in China (see chapter 8). We argue that an important consideration for the degree of social control is the deviance of a policy area in relation to the regime's core legitimation discourse and its core interest. Many policy issues in most countries fall into the "sphere of legitimate controversy," where debate and contestation about the best policy solution takes place (Hallin 1986). Issues in the sphere of deviance, however, are deemed unfit for public discourse, either for reasons of ideology, morality, or the self-preservation of the political regime. Actors advocating on these issues will be identified, condemned, and actively excluded from the public agenda by the media (Hallin 1986, 117). Deviant issues certainly exist in democracies, for example where mainstream parties set up a cordon sanitaire around right-wing populism. Under dictatorship, however, discussion of taboo topics is often completely eliminated. Examples of deviant issues under authoritarianism often discussed in the literature are human rights, defense, internal security, or media regulation (Truex 2016, 38–39; Schuler 2020, 146). But off-limit policy topics can have idiosyncratic historical roots, such as coming to terms with the past wartime conduct of the ruling party in Rwanda (Dukalskis 2021, 145) or reform of the monarchy in Thailand (Ivarsson and Isager 2010). Chapters in this volume demonstrate that the environment (chapter 5), tourism (chapter 3), or national sovereignty (chapter 4) may also be considered out of bounds. While policy making certainly occurs in these issue spaces, it will involve advocacy groups to a lesser extent, either by explicitly exclud-

ing them or by making their work harder due to repression. We expect that the less deviant the policy area, the more porous the management of advocacy groups' mobilization, cooperation, and access, and the more diverse the available repertoire of strategies.

However, groups are not passive recipients of prescribed policy areas, but they actively choose and frame repertoires that allow them to cast issues in new ways by selectively highlighting some aspects of the issue over others so as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, or treatment recommendation (Entman 1993, 52). Generally, most major policy debates cannot be reframed easily, and dominant policy frames are stable (Baumgartner et al. 2009, 186). If, however, adaptive lobbyists wield micro-level framing strategies that accommodate the regime's prevailing macro frame of a debate, they may achieve frame congruence, which is a key precursor to policy influence (Jensen and Seeberg 2020). In deviant policy areas, advocacy groups' framing strategies have to straddle the line of the permissible and, where possible, present solutions in line with a dominant macro frame of national sovereignty or the national interest (see chapter 5). In less deviant policy areas frame repertoires will be more diverse, but here too there are higher payoffs for advocacy groups in terms of access and influence, if they achieve frame congruence with the regime's legitimation discourse (see chapter 12).

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) **repression repertoires**: How restrictive are social management practices? Are they targeted or comprehensive? Are there opportunities for outside groups to partner with inside groups?, and (2) **policy red lines**: How many "no go" policy areas exist? How stable are these red lines? Do regime-legitimation claims offer opportunities for framing advocacy? Understanding the menu of repression allows researchers to develop and test hypotheses, including where we might expect certain groups to partner with "inside" groups or government agencies to secure resources and policy access, and when adaptive lobbyists may successfully develop strategic framing to influence specific policies.

Implications and Future Research Agenda

In the previous sections we outlined the differences and similarities between authoritarian and democratic regimes across all four stages of

influence production and then identified the three main conditions affecting this process, namely, policy making access, information demands, and the need for social control. These conditions are not completely unique to authoritarian regimes, but advocacy groups in these regimes face significant challenges that pattern how and when they successfully lobby the autocrat. A theory of lobbying the autocrat thus needs to account for these three conditions and develop specific hypotheses from them at each stage of influence production because authoritarian institutions do not influence all stages of influence production the same way.

Despite these conditions, we found that there are niches for pluralist practices under authoritarianism. In fact, the dismal conditions breed a unique type of advocate inhabiting these spaces: the adaptive lobbyist. To be sure, while advocacy under any conditions needs to be adaptive and flexible, the degree of adaptability required of lobbyists in dictatorships is disparately higher. For one, there is less access to policy making and less demand for information than even in the most constrained democratic interest system. What is more, there is much less certainty over the rules of the game, as things may change at a moment's notice. Moreover, the constant suspicion of breeding antiregime sentiments or actions, and the associated threat of persecution, puts much higher pressures on advocacy groups in autocracies and divides policy space and groups not only by issue area but also by regime loyalty. There is only so much wiggle room, be it in the way they mobilize, the ecological niches and opportunities for cooperation available to them, the strategic repertoires they can draw from, or ultimately the degree of influence they can achieve. The kind of lobbyist thriving in these conditions adopts just the right amount of give in her approach to advocacy, ready to switch tactics or goals when pressures mount and able to mount pressure herself when a window of opportunity opens. The adaptive lobbyist therefore espouses a degree of pragmatism for working within the boundaries set by the regime, and simultaneously a resilience and perseverance that those in more open systems do not require in equal degrees. In fact, in order to survive in a resource-strapped and closely scrutinized environment, the adaptive lobbyist herself creates the space for pluralist practices by engaging the regime in social exchanges. She leverages to her advantage the very same dismal conditions that constrain her, be it by trading access to elusive communities for access to the policy-making process, by trading information about constituent interests and policy solutions for information about elite priorities, or by trading acquiescence to the regime's policy red lines 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 group systems.[2] But within the bounds of the three theorized conditions, adaptive lobbying may still facilitate *localized* responsiveness and representation, 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.

The conceptual framework presented in this volume expands on the work of Svolik (2012) and others in the "institutional school" who identify structural conditions in authoritarian regimes (Smith 2005; Brownlee 2007; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). Our theoretical framework, however, shifts focus from elites to society. The conditions identified in this framework build on and go beyond those identified by scholars working on informational theories of autocracy (Manion 2015; Truex 2016; Guriev and Treisman 2019, 2020b). In addition to expanding our theories of authoritarianism to include society, and building on the emerging informational autocracy literature, our theoretical framework creates a unifying foundation for future research on advocacy inside authoritarian regimes. In fact, scholars may reveal new lines of inquiry by not only adding more cases from authoritarian states, but also by comparing these explicitly to cases drawn from more democratic regimes. Variation in policy maker access, information demands, and patterns of social control might structure influence production more than a simple regime-type dichotomy.

Some promising areas of research that may productively engage with our theoretical framework of authoritarian lobbying include future work on 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 (Coppedge et al. 2020), the Authoritarian Regime Dataset (Wahman, Teorell, and Hadenius 2013), the Autocratic Regimes Dataset (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014), the Bertelsmann Transformation Index,[3] or others, to test the hypothesized influences on authoritarian lobbying via large-N analysis. Scholars may also adopt methods from similar efforts in Western democratic contexts such as by the Comparative Interest Group Survey project (Beyers et al. 2020), or the Comparative Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner, Breunig, and Grossman 2019), to create bespoke comparative data that systematically maps advocacy group

populations in nondemocratic countries, as well as groups' prominence in different political arenas, such as in media content or in legislative speeches. Additionally, single- or multiple-country case studies tracing advocacy groups through all four stages of influence production and over time (longitudinal) may highlight new features and either support or challenge the ones outlined in this volume. All this makes for an exciting future research agenda on policy advocacy under authoritarianism.

NOTES

1. Note that this condition is about *potential* access to policy making, that is, the total number of access points available. De facto access on the other hand is the outcome of groups' resources, lobbying strategies, and other factors amply discussed throughout this volume. Potential access puts an absolute limit on the degree of de facto access advocates can achieve.

2. Although there is of course also a healthy debate about how much representation and responsiveness interest groups really foster in democracies (Halpin 2006; Greenwood 2007; Albareda 2018).

3. https://bti-project.org/en/.

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Appendix A

Supplementary Materials for Chapter 3

TABLE A1. Summary of Case Conditions

Case	Resources	Information Exchange	Organization or Support of Collective Action	Political Agenda Setting	External Legitimacy (Conditionality)	Regime Patronage Interests
Tara Powerplant	Local NGOs with environmental and regional expertise and capacity to ensure efficient communication with the public and the media led to organization of a citizens' initiative	Environmental effects known, the role of the NGOs important in information dissemination	Informing the public through NGOs' website, traditional and online media, organization and support of protests, organization of a petition	A petition to the MNE Parliament	UNESCO's pressure to drop the deal	Agreement with the Bosnian Serb Republic on the construction of Buk-Bijela plant
Tara Highway	Six well-organized, funded NGOs with expertise and experience in environmental and patronage issues	NGOs monitor 150 locations, drone shots	Informing the public through NGOs' website, publications in traditional and online media, organization of conferences, public divided	Filed a case with the prosecution	EU, Chapter 27 of the EU accession talks	Connecting the north with coastal Montenegro, patronage options for the locally owned construction businesses

Valdanos Bay	Engagement of a well-organized NGO with funding, expertise in tourism, urbanism, and privatization issues	Investigating the accepted tourism offer using company registry data	Informing the public through the critical media, public outrage	Filed a case with the prosecution	Not applicable	Results of the tendering process
Mamula Fortress	Ad hoc, reactive citizens' initiative, supported by NGOs with experience in tourism, cultural heritage, and international tendering	Details of international tender known, the role of the NGOs important in information dissemination	Local community-based citizens' initiative organized protests and a petition, supported by NGOs, informed and mobilized the public through the government-critical media	A petition to the MNE Parliament	International tourism experts' pressure	A large investor in Montenegro, already in strategic partnership with the government

Appendix B

Supplementary Materials for Chapter 6

TABLE B1. List of Interviewed Organizations

Cited Anonymous Interviews	Webpage	Date of Interview
Federation of Women Associations of Turkey-TKDF	https://tkdf.org.tr	April 2018
Association for Supporting Women's Candidates-KA-DER	http://ka-der.org.tr	January 2018
Turkish Women's Association-TKB	http://www.turkkadinlarbirligi.org/tr	April 2018
Reçel Blog, founding editor	http://recel-blog.com	July 2018
Havle Association	https://www.instagram.com/havle kadin/	May 2020
Muslims Against Violence Targeting Women-KŞKMİ	https://twitter.com/KSKMuslumanlar	March 2018
We will stop femicides-KCDP	http://kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net	2018–2019
Women's Councils	https://twitter.com/kadinmeclisleri	2018–2019
Istanbul Women's Organizations Platform (GIKAP/IKADDER)	https://ikadder.org	February 2018
Hazar Association, president	http://www.hazardernegi.org	February 2018
EU Delegation Ankara, civil society support unit.	https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en	May 2018

Appendix C

Supplementary Materials for Chapter 7

TABLE C1. Result of Principal Component Analysis of Lobbying Strategies

Item	Oblimin Rotated Factor Loadings	
	Inside Lobbying	Outside Lobbying
Contact journalists	0.19	**0.59**
Write op-eds	0.23	**0.59**
Initiate litigation	−0.17	**0.56**
Organize demonstrations	−0.16	**0.55**
Contact political parties	0.21	**0.42**
Contact int'l organizations	**0.79**	−0.07
Contact election management body	**0.65**	0.16
Encourage citizens to contact MPs	**0.54**	0.07
Publish policy reports	**0.45**	0.27
Eigenvalues	3.31	0.46
% of variance	22	20
Cronbach's α	0.66	0.74

Note: Factor loadings over 0.40 appear in bold. Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi2 (36) = 604.83$, $p < 0.001$. Overall KMO = 0.85, and all KMO values for individual items >0.78. Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 896; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.086. The dependent variable "outside lobbying" consists of the factor scores of the factor "outside lobbying."

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Index