

Single-Party Autocracies, Ideology, and Repression

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Previous studies have argued that single-party autocracies are less repressive than other kinds of autocracies. Challenging this notion, we emphasize that ideological motivations and strategic use of the party apparatus counterbalance the moderating mechanisms associated with single-party autocracies. Based on a global, statistical analysis of the period 1976-2007, we find little evidence that single-party autocracies are generally less repressive than other kinds of non-democratic regimes. Even though single-party autocracies do indeed violate physical integrity rights less than personalist and military autocracies, they tend to repress such rights more than do monarchies. Regarding civil liberties, i.e., freedom of expression, assembly/association, movement, and religion, the repression levels of single-party autocracies are almost indistinguishable from those of other types of autocracies. Separating communist regimes out of the category of single-party regimes does not change the general findings, but reveals that communist regimes are more repressive than other autocracies with respect to civil liberties but not physical integrity rights. This further indicates that non-economic aspirations such as ideology cannot be ignored by those wishing to understand variations in state repression among autocracies.

Introduction

An emerging consensus within comparative politics holds that different kinds of autocracies “produce different incentives and constraints on dictators which, in turn, should have an impact on their decisions and performance” (Cheibub et al. 2010: 83; cf. Ezrow & Frantz 2011). Nonetheless, with regard to the crucial issue of state repression – one of the major causes of human suffering after World War II (Davenport 2007a: 11-12) – previous studies have been preoccupied with analyzing whether autocracies repress more than democracies (e.g., Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005b; Davenport 2004; Poe & Tate 1994). “Quite surprisingly, the variation that may exist across authoritarian regimes has received much less attention” (Escribà-Folch 2013: 545; see also Møller & Skaaning 2013a).

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Indeed, the only hard and fast expectation concerning the relationship between autocratic regime type and state repression that can be identified in the literature is the notion that single-party autocracies are generally less repressive than other kinds of autocracies. Based on a statistical analysis of the period 1976–1996, Christian Davenport (2007b: 500) concludes that “single-party governments are consistently the least repressive form of autocracy: that is, they are less likely to restrict civil liberties and violate personal integrity.”¹ This proposition can broadly be said to find backing in the works of a luminous string of scholars. First, there is Huntington’s (1968) seminal claim that a strong party is better able to provide the order that is a necessary but not sufficient condition for any kind of liberty.² Second, Davenport’s claim also fits nicely with Barbara Geddes’s (1999: 135) argument that single-party regimes are better at accommodating political pluralism than other kinds of autocracy (see also Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005a; Fjelde 2010; Wintrobe 1990).

In this article, we use Davenport’s proposition as a point of departure for investigating whether different kinds of autocracies repress various “first generation” human rights to different degrees.³ Our point of departure is a simple one. It is not set in stone that single-party autocracies will tend to be less repressive than other autocracies. While several mechanisms can be adduced to support Davenport’s claim, cross-cutting mechanisms can also be identified. Whether one set of mechanisms trumps the other or whether the cross-cutting mechanisms cancel each other out is an empirical question, which we set out to answer. In our reappraisal, we go beyond Davenport’s (2007b) analysis in four ways. First, we present arguments that serve to question the notion that single-party autocracies are less repressive – arguments centered on the more ideological nature of party autocracies and the use of the party infrastructure as a device for political control. Second, though we maintain Davenport’s method (ordinal logistic regression), we expand the analysis to cover a longer time period (1976–2007). Third, while we stick to Davenport’s use of the Political Terror Scale (PTS) to measure respect for physical integrity rights, we argue that Freedom House’s Civil Liberties ratings, which he also uses, are much too composite to tell us whether particular forms of autocracy are more disposed to carry out some forms of repression than others.⁴ Instead, we disaggregate civil liberties by enlisting a new dataset – the Civil Liberties

- 1 Davenport terms his finding a “tyrannical peace,” the implication of which is that some types of autocracy are normatively preferable to other types, even if all fall short vis-à-vis democracies.
- 2 “Men may of course have order without liberty but they cannot have liberty without order” (Huntington 1968: 7–8).
- 3 As Davenport (2007b: 492–493) puts it, “[I]t is possible that certain forms of authoritarianism are important only for certain forms of state repression”.
- 4 For critical assessments of the Freedom House measure, see Munck & Verkuilen (2002), Coppedge & Gerring et al. (2011), and Skaaning (2009).

Dataset (Møller & Skaaning 2013b) – which includes cross-temporal data on freedom of expression, freedom of assembly/association, freedom of religion, and freedom of movement for virtually all countries in the period 1976–2010. Fourth, in a second iteration of our analysis we add a dummy for communist autocracies in order to examine, first, how communist regimes fare vis-à-vis other autocracies, and second, whether controlling for communism alters the main findings regarding relative repression levels in single-party autocracies.

Our article serves not only to shed light on the neglected issue of differences in state repression among different kinds of autocracies. It also has broader relevance in that it paves the way for questioning certain aspects of the dominant theoretical approach to analyzing the effects of variations between autocracies. Most recent theories and analyses rest on a relatively clear-cut political economy perspective, which includes a limited view of the motivations of human beings in general and rulers in particular. According to this perspective, the one overriding goal of any autocrat or autocratic elite is to stay in power and use this power to secure economic gains. Such frameworks largely ignore alternative motivations such as ideology. Our findings indicate that ideology has an independent effect on state repression, meaning that autocrats differ not only with respect to their institutional base. This implies that those wishing to explain differences in the decisions and performance of different kinds of autocracies ignore non-institutional differences such as human convictions, or merely the legacy of such convictions, at their peril.

Different kinds of autocracies

Until the end of the Cold War much effort was devoted to distinguishing between different kinds of autocracies (e.g., Friedrich & Brzezinski 1965; Huntington 1968; Jackson & Rosberg 1982; Linz 2000 [1975]; O'Donnell 1973; see Brooker 2000). Impressed by the massive third wave of democratization – and the increased heterogeneity within the set of democracies which this change produced – scholars to a larger extent became occupied with distinctions within the democratic part of the regime spectrum (Møller & Skaaning 2011; 2013c). However, at the turn of the millennium the pendulum oscillated once more as differences between autocracies were brought back in, first by Barbara Geddes (1999), and subsequently by a number of other scholars following her lead (see Ezrow & Frantz 2011; Kailitz & Köllner 2013).

The result of these sustained debates is that we have at our disposal today both a number of classical distinctions between different kinds of autocracies and some more recent attempts to distinguish these regimes from each other. In his seminal typology, presented in *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Juan Linz (2000 [1975]) proposed an overall distinction between totalitarian, authoritarian, and personalist/sultanistic regimes. However, Linz's conceptual

distinctions cannot be invoked to answer our research questions for two reasons. First, one of the defining attributes of his typology – pluralism – is partly conceived of in terms of civil liberties, making some autocratic types more repressive than others by definition. Second, no type is devoted to isolating single-party autocracies from other autocracies.

What is needed is therefore a conceptual framework that steers clear of both these obstacles. This speaks in favor of opting for a scheme within the tradition that conceives of different kinds of autocracies in terms of the attributes of access to power/the power base of the rulers (Geddes 1999: 123). Three separate classifications can be identified within this tradition: those of Geddes (1999), Hadenius & Teorell (2007), and Cheibub et al. (2010). In her original typology, Geddes (1999) distinguishes between three prototypes: military rule, single-party rule, and personalist rule, and also teases out a number of hybrid versions. Hadenius & Teorell (2007) add monarchies to Geddes' list, remove personalist rule, and introduce a more general category of nondemocratic rule which they term "electoral regimes" and which includes one-party rule. Finally, Cheibub et al. (2010) distinguish between monarchical autocracies, civilian (usually party) autocracies, and military autocracies.

For three reasons, we rely on the typology and dataset created by Geddes, which was recently updated through 2010 by Geddes, Wright, and Franz (2012).⁵ First, Hadenius and Teorell include measures of civil liberties – one of our dependent variables – to separate autocracies from democracies. Second, Cheibub et al. do not allow us to isolate single-party autocracies, as their civilian dictatorship category also subsumes other kinds of autocracies.⁶ Third, the frame of reference for this article, Davenport's theoretical arguments and empirical analyses, are based on the work of Geddes, and retaining her distinctions makes it easier to compare our findings with his.

That said, we part ways with Davenport with regard to the categorization of autocracies in two respects. First, we do not include Geddes' hybrid categories, such as personalist-military, but use only the variable in her dataset that identifies the dominant feature of each regime (cf. Wright 2008; Escribá-Folch 2012, 2013). Second, the updated version of the Geddes dataset includes monarchies as a separate category in addition to single-party, military, and personalist autocracies. We concur with this addition, as monarchies deserve independent scrutiny, as suggested by Hadenius & Teorell (2007) and Cheibub et al. (2010). Finally, after our initial assessment of the effect of single-party autocracies on physical integrity rights and civil liberties, we examine the extent to which the statistical results change when communist regimes are introduced

5 Geddes' distinction between democracies and autocracies is basically of the same ilk as that of Cheibub et al. in that it merely concerns turnover at elections, not civil liberties as such.

6 For relatively comparable results based on the regime distinctions of the Democracy-Dictatorship dataset, see Møller & Skaaning (2013a).

as a dummy, thereby teasing out the independent effect of non-communist single-party regimes and assessing the independent effect of communist regimes.

Why would single-party autocracies be less repressive?

In her path-breaking study, Geddes (1999: 135) documented that single-party autocracies generally survive longer than other kinds of autocracies. Geddes (1999: 135) condenses her explanation of this superior survival rate as follows:

Single-party regimes survive in part because their institutional structure makes it relatively easy for them to allow greater participation and popular influence on policy without giving up their dominant role in the political system.

As the quotation highlights, Geddes is occupied with the stability of autocratic subtypes rather than their respective repression levels. However, the mechanism emphasized by Geddes (see also Magaloni 2008; Smith 2005) can plausibly be extended to repression levels both directly and indirectly. Directly, because such regimes are able to placate at least some citizens via the participation that is allowed and the legitimacy this produces, in turn decreasing the need for state repression. Indirectly, because the longer timespan of these regimes – their longer durability compared to that of other autocratic regimes – means that they have invested in repression in the past. A lingering legacy of the willingness to repress, especially when confronted with challenges to the regime, might mean that single-party regimes need not repress as much in the present.

The direct connection can be further substantiated by invoking Wintrobe's (1990) notion that dictatorships have two ways of surviving: they can either repress or invest in loyalty. Wintrobe (1990: 867–868) adduces a series of arguments as to why single-party autocracies⁷ are better at creating loyalty than other autocracies (see also Fjelde 2010: 199–204). Likewise, Gandhi & Przeworski (2006: 15) observe that a “party is an instrument by which the dictatorship can penetrate and control the society.” This is needed because, compared with monarchies and military autocracies, civilian dictators require more cooperation (Gandhi & Przeworski 2006: 18). Summarizing these arguments, party organizations and legislatures are instruments that can mobilize support in numerous ways: they provide arenas for elite bargaining, they pave the way for credible power-sharing agreements, including the co-optation of opposition

7 Wintrobe contrasts “totalitarian dictatorships” and “tinpot dictatorships.” The first is relatively similar to Geddes “single-party” category whereas the other encompasses her “personalist” category. Furthermore, Wintrobe teases out “military dictatorships” as a subspecies of the tinpot category.

members, and they present a way of channelling the demands of important social groups (cf. Abel Escribá-Folch 2013).

If a tradeoff exists between such institutions securing cooperation/loyalty and the outright use of repression, we would expect single-party autocracies to repress less. However, like Geddes, Wintrobe (1990) is basically preoccupied with the stability of different kinds of autocracies whereas Gandhi & Przeworski (2006) attempt to explain why institutional design differs across dictatorships.

The only comprehensive study where lower repression levels are explicitly attributed to single-party autocracies has been provided by Davenport (2007b; cf. Escribá-Folch 2013). Davenport's main argument has to do with the extent to which autocratic rulers are politically insulated. Single-party regimes are, due to the party's mass basis and relatively broad middle-level organization, less insulated from the population than military autocracies and, in particular, than personalist autocracies: "This 'channeling' is essential because without it political authorities are not provided with a non-coercive means of influence, and repression would be expected" (Davenport 2007b: 490). Moreover, Davenport argues that the relatively larger emphasis on bureaucracy and legality in single-party autocracies means that they will be less likely to resort to arbitrary state repression. These arguments suggest that single-party autocracies would tend to violate both physical integrity rights and civil liberties less than other autocracies. More respect for civil liberties is part and parcel of pluralism whereas the higher bureaucratic quality is likely to put a damper on violations of physical integrity rights, in particular violations orchestrated by private persons.⁸

COUNTERARGUMENTS

Arguments to the contrary can be made, however. While party autocracies are normally more institutionalized than personalist autocracies and military autocracies, they also tend to be much more politicized. More particularly, they are often guided by a more or less elaborate ideology, whether this is one of socialism/communism, anti-colonialism, or national cohesion, while this is less the case with respect to the other kinds of autocracies. According to Brooker (2000: 109):

Only a minority of even twentieth-century military regimes either developed or borrowed an official ideology, with its abstract commitment to sacred ideas, principles or goals. The party dictatorships are much more ideology-prone and in fact it is rare to find one that does not espouse an ideology of some description.

8 Such "private violence" is of course not an act of state repression per se. But insofar as the state does not prevent it, it may still be said to be linked with state repression – and will surely be picked up by most measures of state repression.

Such ideologies have often been the pretext for repression because they entail that some behaviors and attitudes or even some social groups *tout court* are not tolerated. This cross-cutting mechanism is likely to be most relevant with respect to civil liberties, as it entails the repression of pluralism; but one would also expect it to increase disrespect for physical integrity rights because of lower levels of tolerance for any kind of behavior that goes against what is prescribed ideologically. Basically, whereas all kinds of authoritarian regimes repress oppositional activity, only those infused by a guiding ideology are wont to systematically repress other kinds of nonconformist behavior.

In addition, a ubiquitously present mass party has the organizational residue to step up repression and to make repression reach even the remotest village. As Fjelde (2010: 200; see also Svoblik 2012: 193) points out, single-party autocracies:

... tend to have large non-military intelligence organizations with far-reaching tentacles into society The intrusiveness of the party institution into all aspects of civil, military, and political life makes it extremely difficult to mobilize an efficient rebel force able to overthrow the government. It provides single-party regimes with a forceful infrastructure to suppress opposition within the wider society, and within the state apparatus itself ...

Plausible theoretical arguments can thus be adduced both pro and contra the expectation that single-party autocracies are less repressive. This, of course, is exactly what necessitates an empirical appraisal. Recall, however, that we set out to interrogate not only whether some kinds of autocracies – most particularly, single-party autocracies – are more repressive than others in general, but also whether some kinds of autocracies are relatively more repressive with regard to some rights than others. Before we enter the realm of data analysis, it is pertinent to try to close in on this, based on prior arguments and findings.

MORE REPRESSIVE IN SOME WAYS THAN IN OTHERS?

A number of arguments and observations can be adduced to support the contention that different autocracies violate rights in different ways. Davenport (2007b: 500), for instance, finds that military autocracies not only repress civil liberties less than other autocracies (except single-party autocracies) but also that they repress physical integrity rights more. Wintrobe (1990: 860–62) likewise makes the observation that military autocracies are good at repression but bad at creating loyalty (see also Fjelde 2010: 200): when military juntas reward the military cadre at the expense of other segments of society, they further increase the need for repression. Similarly, Gandhi & Przeworski (2006: 17) note that the very fact that the military controls the apparatus of coercion means that it will be less likely than single-party autocracies to create other institutions, which could increase cooperation and loyalty.

It follows from these arguments that one would expect military autocracies

to be more repressive than other kinds of autocracies. But, invoking Davenport, we can specify the expectation further by noting that one would expect military autocracies to fare worse on physical integrity rights than on civil liberties, relatively speaking. Furthermore, to the extent that single-party autocracies actually happen to be less repressive, we expect this to be more pronounced for physical integrity rights than for civil liberties. However, we also expect personalist autocracies to be relatively more repressive – vis-à-vis single-party autocracies – with respect to physical integrity rights than with respect to civil liberties. This expectation is based on the tendency of personalist regimes to be the mirror image of single-party regimes in two particular respects: the lower political institutionalization and weaker state capacity associated with personalism is likely to create situations that are conducive to arbitrary violence.

Related to this, we expect monarchies to violate physical integrity rights less than other autocracies for two reasons. First, we once again invoke the effects of regime durability. We have already argued that the relatively long survival rate of single-party autocracies means that they may have invested in repression in the past and therefore need not repress as much in the present. This argument can, *a fortiori*, be extended to monarchies, which is the only kind of autocracy that has a longer survival rate than single-party autocracies (cf. Geddes 1999; Hadenius & Teorell 2007). Second, to a higher degree than other autocracies, monarchs may invoke traditional legitimacy (Weber 1956 [1922]: 702), which is likely to function as a partial substitute for active repression (Gerschewski 2013). This point of view is supported by Gandhi & Przeworski's (2006: 17) observation that monarchy is such a strong institution that “monarchs are least likely to rely on other institutions” – such as parties – to create cooperation among crucial segments of society. While we expect this feature to produce lower levels of violent repression against the citizens, we do not expect it to produce a higher respect for civil liberties, as monarchies are unlikely to provide niches for formally recognized pluralism.

Research design

As our dependent variable is in all instances ordinal, we run ordered logit models with robust standard errors. To measure civil liberties, we employ the Civil Liberties Dataset referred to above. This dataset enables us to measure the four liberties of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly/association, freedom of religion, and freedom of movement in the period 1976–2010. Each freedom is measured on an ordinal four-point scale (1–4), with lower values denoting more repression (see Møller & Skaaning 2013b). Regarding physical integrity rights, we employ the Political Terror Scale⁹ (PTS) (Wood & Gibney 2010). This

9 Of the two available versions, we employ the one based on the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (PTRSs) as it has the greatest number of country-years.

measure scores the level of political and extra-judicial killings, disappearances, political imprisonment, and torture on a five-point scale (1-5), with higher values denoting more repression.

In this article we are not interested in the differences between democracies and autocracies, but only in those between different kinds of autocracies, and we therefore solely include autocracies in our sample.¹⁰ In all models, we use single-party autocracies as the reference category since our main objective is to assess whether such autocracies are less repressive than other kinds of autocracies. We also include a series of standard control variables emphasized in prior research on variations in the violation of physical integrity rights (e.g., Davenport 2007a,b; Poe & Tate 1994) and civil liberties (e.g., Conrad 2011; Møller & Skaaning 2013a). Besides distinguishing between different kinds of autocracies, the basic model includes the following measures: a modernization index, the percentage of Muslims in the population, population size (in thousands, logged), and oil rents per capita (in \$1000, logged).¹¹ Moreover, we include one-year lagged dummy variables for each category of our dependent variables, to take into account that current levels of human rights violations are likely to be influenced by previous levels. This variable also works as a partial control for omitted variable bias and autocorrelation.

Analyzing repression levels

Before analyzing the full model, we report some simple descriptive data to get a first glimpse of the answer to the questions posed above. Figure 1 illustrates the mean levels of respect for civil liberties across the different subcategories of autocracy, Figure 2 the equivalent levels of respect for physical integrity rights. With respect to civil liberties, we encounter a general hierarchy in that the more political liberties of the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly/association are violated much more than the more private liberties of the freedom of religion and the freedom of movement. This is unsurprising, as prior research has shown that autocracies tend to be relatively more repressive the more political the rights in question (Møller & Skaaning 2013a). However,

¹⁰ Here we part ways with Davenport, who not only includes democracies in the sample but furthermore employs democracies as the reference category. This difference reflects the fact that Davenport is first and foremost interested in comparing democracies with different types of autocracies.

¹¹ Data for the first three variables are taken from Teorell (2010). The modernization index is based on eight indicators: 1) industrialization (output of non-agricultural sector/GDP), 2) education (gross secondary school enrollment ratio), 3) urbanization (urban percentage of total population), 4) life expectancy at birth (in years), 5) the inverse of infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births), 6) the log of GDP/capita (current US dollars), 7) radios/capita, 8) televisions/capita, and 9) newspaper circulation/capita. The index values are computed by taking the factor scores "and then using imputation on the regression line with all nine indicators as regressors" (Teorell 2010: 164-165). Data on oil rents per capita is based on Ross (2008).

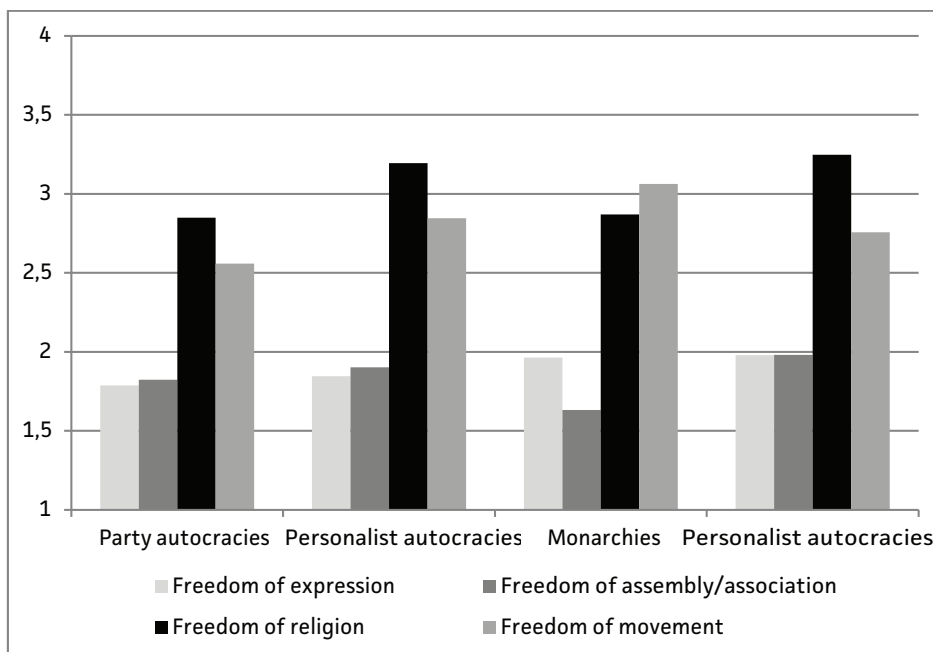
Figure 1. Mean repression of civil liberties across autocratic subcategories, 1976–2010.

Figure 1 also shows that the differences between repression levels in the four kinds of autocracies are negligible. The only class that differs somewhat is the monarchies, where – among all four categories – the freedom of assembly/association is violated the most whereas the freedom of movement is violated the least. The absolute levels therefore lend little support to the notion that important differences in repression levels exist between the four kinds of autocracies in general and that single-party autocracies are less repressive in particular.

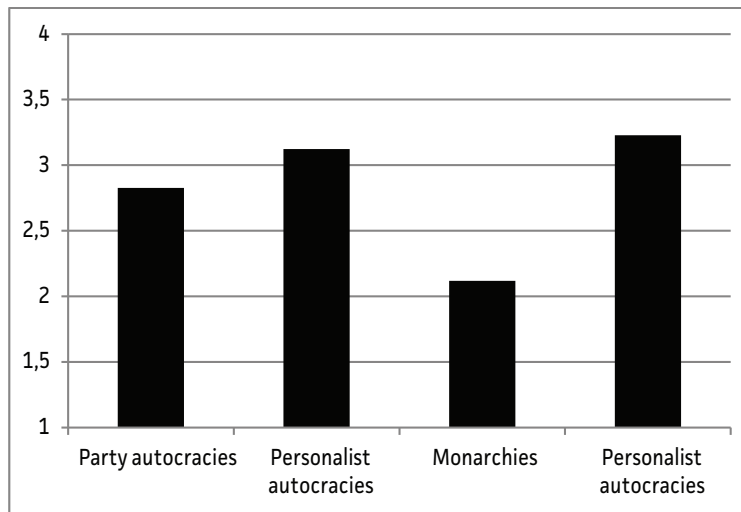
Regarding the violation of physical integrity rights, lower PTS scores denote lower levels of repression. As Figure 2 shows, the differences across the four kinds of autocracies are more conspicuous with regard to this variable. Once again, it is first and foremost the monarchies that stand out, this time by violating integrity rights less than the other autocracies do. However, the single-party autocracies also score marginally lower than military autocracies and personalist autocracies, respectively.

Whether civil liberties or physical integrity rights are used as the dependent variable, it seems fair to say that the absolute levels reported in Figures 1 and 2 lend little support to the notion that single-party autocracies are less repressive. However, to genuinely test this, it is necessary to perform a statistical analysis that includes the control variables mentioned above.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The results presented in Table 1 provide little evidence for the contention that single-party autocracies (the reference category) are less repressive with respect

Figure 2. Mean repression of physical integrity rights across autocratic subcategories, 1976–2010.



to civil liberties. Though monarchies are more repressive than single-party autocracies with respect to the freedom of association, military autocracies tend to be less rather than more repressive with regard to the two relatively political rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association. The remaining differences between single-party autocracies and the other subcategories of autocratic regimes are all insignificant.

With respect to physical integrity rights, single-party autocracies do in fact seem to be less prone to repression compared with military and personalist autocracies, which is in line with the general expectations in the literature and Davenport's (2007b) account. However, they are more repressive than monarchies. This latter finding is something Davenport could not help but miss since he did not include monarchies as a subtype of autocracy. Based on our theoretical discussion, the lower levels of repression of integrity rights in monarchies should probably be attributed to the ability of monarchs to draw on a higher degree of (traditional) legitimacy, meaning that violent repression is often not needed.

The results for the model using physical integrity rights as the dependent variable thus indicate that different autocracies use state repression to significantly different degrees, all else equal. To a lesser extent, the same can be said with respect to the models using civil liberties as the dependent variable – but here it is first and foremost the repression levels in the military autocracies that are different, and only with respect to the more political liberties of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association. Regarding the control variables, the lagged dependent variables are, unsurprisingly, strongly associated with all kinds of state repression in an autocratic context. However, modernization shows no significant relationship with the human rights violations

Table 1. Ordered logit-models (baseline) with different civil liberties and political terror as dependent variable, 1976-2007.

	Freedom of expression	Freedom of association	Freedom of religion	Freedom of movement	Political terror
DV(t-1)=2	6.060*** (.248)	5.192*** (.209)	7.875*** (.683)	6.025*** (.408)	2.917*** (.233)
DV(t-1)=3	10.277*** (.321)	8.680*** (.291)	13.662*** (.760)	10.390*** (.456)	5.030*** (.260)
DV(t-1)=4	14.397*** (.802)	11.864*** (.432)	18.244*** (.773)	14.199*** (.503)	7.825*** (.297)
DV(t-1)=5					10.450*** (.360)
Personalist autocracy	-.047 (.196)	.081 (.143)	.122 (.173)	-.073 (.151)	.419*** (.116)
Monarchy	-.345 (.267)	-.384* (.175)	-.341 (.242)	.194 (.203)	-.368* (.163)
Military autocracy	.532* (.223)	.404* (.198)	.349 (.274)	.154 (.220)	.260* (.140)
Modernization index(t-1)	.074 (.109)	.119 (.082)	-.007 (.127)	.020 (.089)	-.106 (.071)
Oil rents per cap. (logged) (t-1)	-.008 (.022)	-.031* (.018)	-.068** (.021)	-.037* (.017)	-.003 (.015)
Percentage Muslims	-.535** (.202)	-.369* (.160)	-.856*** (.210)	-.251 (.173)	.010 (.131)
Population size (logged)(t-1)	-.174** (.048)	-.076* (.043)	-.177** (.062)	-.190*** (.049)	.298*** (.039)
Pseudo R2	.647	.585	.716	.587	.392
Observations	2194	2194	2194	2194	2138

Note: * < .1, ** < .01, *** < .001 (two-tailed test), party autocracy is the reference category for the autocratic regime type variables.

in question, whereas oil rents, the share of Muslims, and the size of the population are negatively associated with respect for civil liberties, but not significantly associated with respect for physical integrity rights.

Controlling for communist regimes

Given the theoretically plausible link between ideological politization and organizational capacity on the one hand and repression levels on the other, it seems pertinent to discuss whether the single-party category needs to be further disaggregated. Davenport (2007b: 497-498) considers this issue by controlling for leftist political orientation. We argue that this is much too vague a criterion to serve the purpose of further disaggregation. Instead, we include a

dummy variable for the status of communist regime.¹² Our exclusive focus on communist regimes follows from the fact that among political regimes with strong, guiding ideologies, this is the only empirical animal left standing in the period that we analyze: fascist regimes died out as a consequence of World War II, and in the subsequent period we have witnessed very few theocracies.

Repression in general and violations of civil liberties in particular are likely to be worse in communist regimes than in other autocracies. For Linz (2000 [1975]) and Hannah Arendt (1958 [1951]), this is true by definition with respect to the totalitarian versions of communist regimes, which suffocate pluralism to an extreme degree. However, the issue can be addressed without resort to such definitional fiat if we exclude repression from the conceptualization of communist regimes and rely solely on their self-reference as communist or socialist, including their explicit subscription to Marxist-Leninist ideology, to operationalize the concept. Based on this classificatory operation, it is worthwhile to ponder the effects of communist regimes on state repression. We argue that such a status is likely to go hand in hand with a higher propensity to violate civil liberties, whereas the picture is less clear with regard to physical integrity rights. The premise of our argument is that, even though not all self-proclaimed communist/socialist regimes are totalitarian, they are more likely to be so than the average autocracy due to their central reference to a doctrinaire, anti-liberal ideology and the consequent ambitions of total societal control.

This is where we direct focus squarely on the effects of ideology on state repression. We do so by invoking Howard and Donnelly's (1986) arguments about why communitarian societies tend to repress civil liberties to a greater extent than liberal societies. Communitarian societies are those "that give ideological and practical priority to the community (sometimes embodied in the state) over the individual" (Howard & Donnelly 1986: 808). Communist regimes figure as one of four subtypes of such communitarian societies. Howard and Donnelly indicate that it is this version of communitarian societies that is most interesting to contrast to liberal societies for two particular reasons. First, with the passing of other subtypes, including traditional societies, communist regimes are probably the most prominent specimen of communitarian societies after World War II. Second, in both communist states and liberal societies, and in contrast to what has occurred in traditional societies, individuals have been differentiated through a modernization process. This process of functional differentiation – described by several generations of scholars working within

12 Hence, we do not disaggregate the autocracy variable by including an additional subtype but instead introduce communist regimes as an additional variable. The reason for this is that communist regimes to some extent cut across Geddes' categories. Though the majority of communist regimes are also single-party regimes, we do find some communist regimes in the other subtypes, such as the personalist regime headed by Nicolae Ceausescu in communist Romania. Still, controlling for communism can be seen as a way of teasing out the independent effect of single-party autocracies, bereft of communism.

the modernization paradigm (see Møller & Skaaning 2013c: Ch. 7) – is the very foundation of personal freedom in liberal societies. However, in formally communist regimes it presents a serious challenge, namely, the challenge that the individual must be reabsorbed into the state/society:

Direct political coercion, therefore, is a feature of communist collectivism that generally is absent from traditional society (because of the effectiveness of other means of social control) ... The permanent denial of civil and political rights is required by the commitment to build society according to a particular substantive vision, for the expertise of personal autonomy and civil and political rights is almost certain to undermine that vision (Howard & Donnelly 1986: 810).

Hence, the stated aim of carrying out a fundamental transformation of society and creating a *homo novus*, a new man,¹³ makes it necessary to repress not only overt challenges against the regime (i.e., oppositional activities) but also more covert challenges against the communist “way of life” (i.e., nonconformist behavior) (Dallin & Breslauer 1970: 7). In its pursuit of unanimity,

[T]he party seeks to monopolize all possible sources of social initiative and to destroy independent social organizations. Organizations are allowed to exist only as long as they are ‘transmission belts’ of the party line. All forms of collective action organized from below are banned ... (Kamiński & Sołtan 1989: 374-375).

Meanwhile, systematic as well as arbitrary terror is used by the authorities. The terror serves not only to create undisputed political control but also facilitates the communists’ attempt to revolutionize society, the economy, and their citizens (Dallin & Breslauer 1970: 6). In fact, Lenin himself proclaimed that, “[t]he dictatorship of the proletariat is an absolutely meaningless expression without Jacobin coercion” (cited in Dallin & Breslauer 1970: 10). However, over time a weakening of these characteristic features, i.e., the commitment to ideology and aspiration to total control, takes place in most such regimes (Kamiński & Sołtan 1989: 376-377). Mass terror is more and more perceived as dysfunctional (Dallin & Breslauer 1970: 8-9) and therefore tends to be replaced by some constraints on the exercise of state coercion, while selective terror is still used, as in other autocracies, to crack down on oppositional forces.

Against this background, we expect self-proclaimed communist/socialist regimes to be more repressive than any other kind of autocracies. This expectation is most adamant with respect to civil liberties. Whereas the early stages of communist regimes are also likely to be characterized by comparatively high levels of violent repression of integrity rights, this is probably not the case for

13 According to Dallin & Breslauer (1970: 10), “[t]he communist approach to directed societal change reflects a fundamental assumption that man’s perfectability is unlimited and that the transformation of the individual into a ‘new man’ is both desirable and possible.”

later stages. Since most communist regimes had already been established for decades by the beginning of the period covered in the analysis (1976–2007), they might not – in general – exhibit significantly higher levels of physical integrity violations than other kinds of autocracies.

These expectations about the repressiveness of communist regimes are worth assessing in their own right. But, as explained above, including a dummy for communist regimes also nuances our examination of the main research question, i.e., whether single-party autocracies are less repressive. Such a relationship may be suppressed by the fact that communist regimes have predominantly been single-party regimes. Some of the mechanisms associated with the functioning of single-party autocracies might thus operate only in non-communist party dictatorships – or they might be trumped by the mechanisms associated with communism, meaning that we cannot identify any aggregate effects.

ENTER THE COMMUNIST DUMMY

As a final test of whether single-party autocracies are less repressive and to hone in on the more particular effects of ideology on state repression, we therefore introduce the communist dummy, coded based on self-reference as communist. This procedure allows us simultaneously to tease out any independent effect of single-party rule, bereft of communism, and to appraise whether more ideological autocracies repress civil liberties and integrity rights more.

As illustrated in Table 2, the coefficients for the variable measuring communism are strongly significant when the four civil liberties are employed as the dependent variable. Notice, however, that the inclusion of the communist dummy only produces three minor additional significant differences between the autocratic subtypes; namely, that monarchies now tend to be more repressive with respect to religion and that military autocracies no longer perform significantly better on freedom of assembly and association. Thus, even controlling for communist regimes we find no strong evidence that single-party autocracies generally repress civil liberties less than other autocracies.

Notice furthermore that the significant differences in physical integrity violations between single-party autocracies and, respectively, personalist autocracies, military autocracies, and monarchies persist after the inclusion of the communist dummy. Personalist and military regimes still seem to be significantly more repressive with respect to physical integrity rights than single-party autocracies, whereas the opposite is the case for monarchies. This is broadly in line with our expectations about the more particular differences in repression levels.

The results of this second round of analyses reveal another interesting finding, which is also in line with our expectations. Whereas communist regimes are significantly more repressive regarding all four civil liberties than other

Table 2. Ordered logit-models (including communist dummy) with different civil liberties and political terror as dependent variable, 1976–2007.

	Freedom of expression	Freedom of association	Freedom of religion	Freedom of movement	Political terror
DV(t-1)=2	5.749*** (.271)	4.978*** (.218)	7.331*** (.727)	5.591*** (.414)	2.898*** (.233)
DV(t-1)=3	9.970*** (.334)	8.462*** (.293)	12.839*** (.816)	9.845*** (.459)	4.997*** (.261)
DV(t-1)=4	14.105*** (.807)	11.608*** (.436)	17.395*** (.835)	13.610*** (.509)	7.806*** (.297)
DV(t-1)=5					10.423*** (.360)
Communist	-.830** (.302)	-.820** (.275)	-.920** (.334)	-.923*** (.244)	.200 (.132)
Personalist autocracy	-.173 (.200)	-.007 (.145)	.047 (.173)	-.165 (.151)	.456*** (.119)
Monarchy	-.399 (.261)	-.478* (.175)	-.412* (.241)	.139 (.204)	-.336* (.166)
Military autocracy	.384* (.228)	.293 (.198)	.260 (.273)	.031 (.220)	.306* (.144)
Modernization index(t-1)	.087 (.112)	.158* (.085)	-.060 (.136)	.004 (.092)	-.105 (.070)
Oil rents per cap. (logged)(t-1)	-.003 (.022)	-.032* (.018)	-.066** (.021)	-.036* (.017)	-.005 (.015)
Percentage Muslims	-.712** (.218)	-.476** (.167)	-.997*** (.208)	-.362* (.182)	.047 (.132)
Population size (logged)(t-1)	-.155** (.052)	-.064 (.044)	-.194** (.064)	-.180*** (.050)	.295*** (.040)
Pseudo R2	.649	.587	.717	.590	.392
Observations	2194	2194	2194	2194	2138

Note: * < .1, ** < .01, *** < .001 (two-tailed test), party autocracy is the reference category for the autocratic regime type variables (except communist).

non-democratic regimes, they are generally neither more nor less repressive when it comes to physical integrity rights. It seems plausible that the cross-cutting mechanisms highlighted above go some way towards explaining this disjunction, as they are likely to offset each other with respect to physical integrity rights. The higher levels of institutionalization and order in communist regimes at their later stages of existence might well decrease physical violence to a “normal” level for autocracies, while the ideological prescription to transform (non-conformist) individuals into unanimous members of the collective has kept the repression of civil liberties at comparatively high levels.

Conclusions

Based on his findings about repression levels in different form of autocracies – and broadly sustained by the theoretical frameworks of a number of other scholars discussed in the theoretical section – Davenport (2007b: 500) concludes that “there is a ‘tyrannical peace,’ in that single-party governments possess some of the characteristics of democracies that reduce state repression, incorporating a greater proportion of the population into the political process.” Reappraising this issue, we found little evidence to support his expectations and findings. To be sure, personalist and military autocracies violate physical integrity rights more than do single-party autocracies, but monarchies violate integrity rights less. And with regard to civil liberties the results lend virtually no support to the proposition that single-party autocracies are less repressive than the other types of autocracy. The only exception is that monarchies exhibit higher levels of repression regarding freedom of assembly and association.¹⁴

With respect to civil liberties, our first set of findings can thus be seen as a partial challenge to what has recently become the received wisdom: that different kinds of autocracies have different political effects (see also Møller & Skaaning 2013a). However, what we did find in a second iteration was that a subcategory of autocracies not taken into account in recent classificatory schemes and assessments, i.e., communist regimes, exerted a salient negative effect on respect for civil liberties. Communist regimes consistently exhibited higher levels of state repression, all else equal. This was in accordance with our expectations, and the result indicates that the stringent attempt to disaggregate the autocratic spectrum solely based on the access to power – the new “descriptive consensus” within the literature – suffers from certain analytical limitations. Further along these lines, our findings may be said to provide some ammunition to those critical of the prevailing “explanatory consensus” within the literature, viz., the political economy perspective’s insistence that the overriding goal of any autocrat or autocratic elite is to stay in power and to use this power to secure economic gains. Our results indicate that ideology – the convictions held by men and instilled into the scaffolding of regimes originally based on revolutionary blueprints – has an independent effect on state repression.

14 And freedom of religion when a separate variable for communist regimes is introduced into the model.

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