

CONFERENCE IN THE CONFERENCE AT SPSA 2015

COMPARATIVE FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN THE AUTHORITARIAN CONTEXT

Although most of the human beings have historically and geographically lived under authoritarian rule, majority of the studies in political science have focused on politics in democratic countries. Foreign policy making is no exception. The papers in this “conference in the conference” try to fill this hole in studies of international relations and comparative politics.

We will try to answer the following questions. Is foreign policy making in authoritarian countries different from one in democratic countries? If so, how? The literature of comparative politics has found that authoritarian rulers primarily focus on the regime’s survival by using every means possible, including coercive, institutional, and repressive means. Do these efforts for the regime’s survival influence foreign policy making of those authoritarian countries? If so, how? Currently, China, an authoritarian country, has emerged as one of the most important countries in the world, and U.S.-China relations have arguably become the most important bilateral international relationship in the world. Moreover, since the movement called the Arab Spring, the U.S. relationship with the Middle Eastern countries has been much more complicated than in the past. What implications does foreign policy making in the authoritarian context have on U.S. foreign policy making?

To answer these questions, the papers in the panels draw empirical evidence from politics in China, the Middle East, and other authoritarian countries. Panel 1 focuses on the interactions between foreign policy making and domestic politics (especially public opinion, media, and elections) in authoritarian countries. Panel 2 explores the role of the military and its relationship with other governmental organizations in the authoritarian regime, and discusses the implications on international relations involving authoritarian countries. Panel 3 focuses on China’s political economic policies (such as energy, foreign direct investment, and urbanization) and their implications on world politics and economy.

PANEL 1: DOMESTIC POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chair/Discussant: Hiroki Takeuchi (Southern Methodist University: htakeuch@smu.edu)

Dynamics of China’s Official Nationalism and Disputes over the History Issue with Japan

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After Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013, no public demonstration was allowed in China even though the “Yasukuni issue” was one of the most sensitive problems with Japan. Comparing the several violent movements against Japan’s nationalization of Senkaku Islands (Diaoyu-Dao in Chinese) in the preceding year, China’s reaction was surprisingly mild and controlled. How could the Chinese government restrain the public opinion? This study focuses on the linkage of China’s official nationalism and its criticism on history issue against Japan. It shows how the Chinese rulers reinterpreted the logic

of China's official nationalism in three times along with the changes of its national policy in the early 1980s, the early 1990s and the mid-2000s, by analyzing the characteristics of each reinterpretation with four key factors: Chinese-nation identity, party-state system, economic modernization, and intention to be a great power. Using these factors, this study discusses the causal relationship between Chinese official nationalism and its policy to the history issue with Japan.

The Sources of Chinese Opinion on Foreign Aid

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China is the largest of the so-called emerging donors of foreign aid. In some regions, it now challenges major democratic donors. Yet little is known about Chinese public opinion on China's foreign aid. This paper argues that understanding whether and why Chinese support aid is important for predicting the future of China's aid policy. I present four theories of public support for aid: a theory based on standard economic models of aid's distributional benefits, a theory based on personal ideology regarding the government's role in the economy, a theory involving the desire for national prestige and soft power, and a theory based on great-power competition in the developing world. I test the implications of each theory with a new survey experiment conducted in mainland China.

The Media and Foreign Policy Making in Autocracies

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Although the media is typically viewed as being a mere mouthpiece of autocracies, this paper argues that it can in fact be a highly useful tool with which to understand these regimes' inner politics and its foreign policy implications. Scholarship on the role of the media in non-democracies often views the state as a monolithic entity and thus the state-controlled media as a unitary actor. They ignore that while dissident media outlets are brutally cracked down upon, hundreds of government and semi-governmental papers, websites, weblogs, and other media outlets are engaged in highly combative debates on a wide range of issues. Focusing on the Iranian case, this paper argues that despite their governmental ties, they can be reliable tools to study semi-authoritarian political systems and their foreign policies. These elite media outlets are distinct from the mass media, including the state-controlled TV/radio, whose function is often limited to the traditional propaganda mouthpiece of the government. They discuss specific issues, test certain ideas, and promote particular views. Many of these writers are former or current officials, such as MPs, ministers, etc., while others may not hold office, but are directly linked to top officials. Thus, they are unofficial officials. Both groups, particularly the latter, play a critical role in promoting certain policies at the elite level. These media outlets constitute the extension of the fourth branch of the government. Instead of acting as a link between citizens and leaders, as is the case in democracies, they serve as a mediator between the state elites. Through a qualitative analysis, I bring to light the evolution of a number of policies including Iran's nuclear program and link the media debate surrounding the issue to certain foreign policy

outcomes. These hard cases are selected because of their unusual complexity and unpredictability, exemplified by Iran's acceptance and subsequent repudiation of a deal on the nuclear fuel swap with the P5+1 during negotiations in Geneva (2009) and Vienna (2010, 2014). The paper's conclusion is that the media articulated Iran's policy more accurately and quickly than the state's top officials.

A Social Origin of Electoral Support for Authoritarian Regimes: A Case Study of Chinese Immigrants in Hong Kong

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Extant studies on competitive authoritarianism examine how authoritarian regimes manipulate electoral rules to ensure their political survival. The current study suggests the possibility of a more radical approach to increasing their electoral support: changing the electorate by including more immigrants. Why would immigrants support authoritarian incumbents? Drawing on recent survey data from Hong Kong, we find that the effect of self-selection plays a crucial role; those who opt to immigrate tend to favor the political status quo. The data also show that an immigrant's upbringing has a strong effect on her post-migration political preference. Although the political preference of immigrants may gradually converge with that of natives, we find that this assimilation effect is substantively insignificant. Our findings provide a reason why some authoritarian regimes maintain a lax immigration policy.

PANEL 2: THE MILITARY AND STATE BUILDING

Chair/Discussant:

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Authoritarian Reconstruction and Foreign Policy in Egypt

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For decades, Egypt's authoritarian regimes used foreign policy to safeguard state security vis-à-vis regional rivals and protect their power against domestic challengers. That was so from Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arabic maneuvers to Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat's accommodations with the U.S. and Israel, and to Muhammad Husni Mubarak's reliance on aid from the U.S. Foreign policy remains crucial to the current Abdel Fattah al-Sisi regime which has embarked on a project of authoritarian reconstruction—securing a stable state, defeating internal opposition and attaining economic recovery. Yet, as this paper argues, Sisi's project is fraught with problems because of the circumstances that surround his regime. Born of a military coup against Muhammad Mursi, Sisi's regime appeared as deepening political struggles in the Middle East plunged the so-called "Arab Spring" into destabilizing regional conflicts. Authoritarian

reconstruction in Egypt depends, among others, on resources derived from established ties with external allies but cannot be immunized from major regional realignments that may be forced upon the Middle East by spiraling turmoil and desperate realpolitik. Thus, it remains to be seen whether the realignments will help or hinder Sisi's use of foreign policy to maintain power.

Securitization of the Regime in the Post-Arab Spring Countries

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Authoritarian regimes in the Arab world have been undergoing a process of rebuilding and reconsolidation. Securitization can be identified as the common denominator of each regime's survival strategies. Arab Spring in the 2011 has shaken military-security complex in each Arab countries and caused a split between the military and the police, which, in turn, let the collapse of regimes inevitable in some of the Arab countries. Securitization is the opposite swing of the pendulum. Securitization of Arab regimes is founded by three pillars: retying the knot of the alliance between the military and the police, presenting itself as the bridgehead against Jihadist threat, and whipping up support or acquiescence of regional and global powers. In Egypt in the run up to the July 2013 coup led by General el-Sisi, a slogan "the military, the people and the police are one hand" was widely disseminated. Full-frontal assault on the Muslim Brotherhood now designated as a "terror organization" is the most important pillar of ruling ideology to gather up the widest possible support bases in the internal politics. Regime's ability to cope with the Jihadist attacks is the trait which has been flaunted to convince the U.S. of the indispensability of this ally. Retired General Heftar in Libya has embarked on a bid to emulate the el-Sisi model and set out to the confrontation with Islamist militias in Benghazi. Assad of Syria and Maliki of Iraq are to be looked back as precedents of rulers in securitized regimes. In the post conflict arrangement of Gaza war in 2014, Abbas might well be considered as the possible enforcer of another securitized regime in Gaza. If the Yemeni and Tunisian governments follow suits, the realignment of ruling coalitions and the rearrangement of ideological underpinnings of regimes in the Arab world will turn full circle.

Changing Natures of China-North Korea and China-Myanmar Relations? Domestic Political Changes and Foreign Policies in the Two East Asian Authoritarian Regimes

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This paper aims at comparing the China-North Korea relations and China-Myanmar relations since these two China's authoritarian neighbors experienced significant domestic political changes in 2010s. North Korea has experienced a succession process from Kim Jungil to his son Kim Jungeun and intensified its military (nuclear and conventional) provocation without economic open and reform policies while it maintains its traditionally cooperative relation with its patron, China. On the contrary, Myanmar has experienced a political liberalization and democratization along with economic open and reform policies while it decreases political influence from China. Analyzing the relations between domestic changes and foreign policies of these two cases, this paper tries to answer the following questions. How do the authoritarian

regimes' different domestic changes influence on its foreign policies toward its big neighbor/patron? How do these client states' different foreign policies influence the patron state's (China) behaviors? What are the impacts on the security regime of each region—Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia?

Chinese Military: Foreign Policy Instrument or Foreign Policy Actor?

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After a long period in which a “peaceful rise” dominated Chinese discourse and behaviors in international relations, China has adopted a more assertive stance, especially on territorial disputes, which raised the question of whether President Xi’s “China Dream” is coming with a change of foreign and security policies. Chinese assertiveness correlated with a rapid military buildup has led many scholars to the unproven conclusion that the military be behind Chinese aggressiveness, self-confidence and raising nationalism. The idea that the military be pushing for stronger actions and reactions raises serious concerns about their role in shaping foreign policy. This paper examines from a historical perspective the place of the military in Chinese bureaucracy, their interactions with political elites, and the official channels through which they provide their view on foreign and security policies. By analyzing the development of the relationship between the military and political elites in China, the paper will highlight that the role of the military is still undergoing significant changes, especially after the establishment of National Security Commission by the Xi administration.

PANEL 3: AUTHORITARIAN POWER? CHINA MEETS THE WORLD

Chair/Discussant: Martin K. Dimitrov (Tulane University: mdimitro@tulane.edu)

The Modern Strategic Triangle: Energy Security, Economic Development, and the Responsible Stakeholder

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Among scholars of comparative politics and international relations, China is often treated as a special case. Its economic success and integration into the global system have occurred in spite of the many challenges it faces by being a very populous and geographically diverse country. Although it has several seemingly unique features, there are some general lessons that can be learned from studying the Chinese case and many ways it has served as a type of “model” to other developing countries, and specifically to authoritarian states. In this paper I will examine some of the domestic factors driving China’s foreign policy, with a particular emphasis on economic development and the pursuit of energy security. In the reform era, the power and legitimacy of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has become contingent on continued economic prosperity. However, economic growth has been uneven and the pressures to meet the increasing demands of the population are becoming more intense. These challenges are part of the driving force behind China’s pursuit of relations with resource-rich states, as well as what

some see as “expansionist” claims in the South China Seas. The problem is that the CCP’s domestic security interests are met with international obstacles as many states have become skeptical about China’s increased international presence and its position in international institutions. During the Cold War, the strategic triangle of international importance was the relationship among China, the US and the Soviet Union. Today, a new strategic triangle has emerged that includes energy security, economic development and one’s position as a responsible stakeholder in the international community. How China deals with these three issues is of strategic importance not just to the CCP’s own legitimacy and longevity but also to the rest of the world.

Rising Powers in the Third Countries: Comparing China’s and India’s on Investment Strategies in Africa

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Scholarship on China-India relations mainly consists of two views. The first view sees China and India as rising powers in contention with each other, particularly in their search for natural resources to fuel their rapidly expanding economies. The second and opposite view argues for an emerging “Chindia.” In this view, China-India relations are characterized by complementarity and collaboration rather than competition. My study examines these arguments in the light of China’s interactions with India in the developing world, focusing primarily on comparing their investment strategies in Africa. By using both macro trade and investment data, and case studies, my study shows that China and India simultaneously compete and cooperate with each other in Africa. Their respective comparative advantages also allow them to operate in different sectors and different countries in Africa. In the interactions between Chinese and Indian companies, both state-owned and privately-owned, a learning process can be discerned; they learn from each other what works and what does not work in Africa, and adapt their business practices accordingly. Findings from this study suggest that relations between rising powers need not always be zero-sum. There are steps that both China and India can take to ensure a more stable relationship moving forward.

Urban Renewal, Ethnic Identity, and Inter-Ethnic Relations in China: An Examination of Han-Hui Relationships in China’s Cities

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As China’s cities expand, new challenges arise in accommodating its aging urban core. In large cities like Beijing, the redevelopment of old neighborhoods has attracted much attention in both scholarly and popular media. When such urban renewal projects occur in ethnic minority enclaves another, additional dimension arises to further complicate strategic interactions between members of the group and the state: ethnic identity. In these instances, are development projects viewed by group members in ethnic terms? Are urban redevelopment projects viewed as assimilationist? This paper will suggest ways in which the relationship between urban renewal and boundaries of ethnic identity may be observed. It will examine how ethnic Hui residents

perceive urban renewal projects conducted in Hui minority neighborhoods in cities throughout China. Specifically, it will assess the degree to which residents of these Hui districts perceive urban development as “ethnicized,” and assess the impact such projects have on majority-minority relations in China.

State Capitalism and China’s Outbound Direct Investment

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The rapidly increasing direct investments from China challenge the FDI literature from several aspects. First, capital flows from poor to rich countries rather than the other way around; second, state-owned enterprises rather than private firms are dominant players in making purchases abroad; third, political objectives rather than economic rationales appear to be a main driver of investment decisions. This paper will explore how these unconventional characteristics affect China’s outbound investment flows. In particular, it will examine the effects of political and economic factors both in home and host countries (e.g., state ownership, political connections, political risk, and economic integration) on FDI activities. This paper will provide new evidence on the determinants of international investment flows as state-controlled entities in developing countries become increasingly important players in global capital market.