



universität
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MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Legitimation Strategies of Autocratic Regimes:
A Comparison of Belarus, China, North Korea
and Vietnam“

verfasst von / submitted by
Manuel Apollonio, BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2018/ Vienna 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 864

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Ostasiens

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Rüdiger Frank

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Context and Relevance

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the infamous nomination of the end of history by Francis Fukuyama was widely discussed.¹ The downfall of Communism proposed the victory of capitalism and the end of the global system's duality. At the same time the protests and the following oppression at Tiananmen Square in Beijing led Western observers and scholars to the conclusion that the decline of the last great bastion of Communism was imminent.² Despite these hasty conclusions the Chinese Communist Party stayed in power and China proved to be a resilient authoritarian regime.³ On the contrary, after a wave of democratization⁴ it seems that autocratic regimes are globally on the rise again. Not only China, now one of the greatest political and economic powers in the world, stayed resilient. There are several other states, scattered all over the globe, with an enduring autocratic regime. From a normative point of view this trend is alarming as autocratic regimes are often seen as coercive and repressive, and in general viewed illegitimate compared to democracies.⁵ Normatively speaking the question remains how these regimes stay in power, as it is argued that "authoritarian systems are inherently fragile because of weak legitimacy, overreliance on coercion, over centralization of decision making, and the predominance of personal power over institutional norms".⁶ The main argument states that the persistence of autocratic regimes is basically dependent on the output side of the political system. The opinion is that especially their economic output is of highest importance and autocracies hence rely mainly on performance legitimacy.⁷

It is true for instance that China's economic transformation in the last three decades has been developing well and shows some achievements, so the economic performance thesis could be a valid argument. This transformation- or reform-period, which began roughly at the end of the 1970s, is now lasting longer than the revolutionary period, when Mao Zedong had the absolute

¹ Fukuyama, Francis: *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York 1992

² Brzezinski, Zbigniew: Disruption without Disintegration, in: *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.9, No.1, 1998, pp.4-5; Waldron, Arthur: The End of Communism, in: *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.9, No.1, 1998, pp.41-47; Oksenberg, Michel: Confronting a Classic Dilemma, in: *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.9, No.1, 1998, pp.27-34

³ Nathan, Andrew J.: Authoritarian Resilience, in: *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.14, No.1, 2003, pp.6-17

⁴ Huntington, Samuel P.: *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Oklahoma 1991

⁵ Dukalskis, Alexander and Gerschewski, Johannes: What autocracies say (and what citizens hear): proposing four mechanisms of autocratic legitimation, in: *Contemporary Politics*, Vol.23, No.3, 2017, pp.251-268, pg.252

⁶ Nathan, Authoritarian Resilience, pg.6

⁷ Huntington, *The Third Wave*, pp.46-58

power over the country and the Chinese Communist Party. During the reign of Mao reforms in China turned out to be magnificent failures, which led to famine and to no actual economic or institutional transformation. In the years following Mao China changed from a centrally planned to a market based economy with annual economic growth rates over 9%.⁸ Along with the economic boost there is not only the steep rise of China's GDP, but transformations in every aspect of life. China has risen from an underdeveloped, mainly agricultural country, with omnipresent famine and poverty, to one of the world's economic giants and is not far away from a so-called “information society”, as consumption of high-tech merchandise suggests.⁹ This transformation had huge impacts on the existing economic and political system, which are changing and adapting to the new challenges of the market based economy. Nevertheless, there are numerous autocratic regimes found everywhere in the world and these regimes have not produced an impressive economic growth as China has, so there obviously exists some other kind of legitimation process or strategy by the respective holders of power. In addition, relying solely on economic performance leaves the regime very vulnerable in times of economic crises. Hence, regime legitimacy has to be built on several different pillars to secure regime survival even in an economic downturn. One argument of autocratic regime research states that repression is, besides economic performance, the second pillar on which autocratic regimes are built. Yet, the proposition that autocratic regimes rely mainly on terror has been criticized frequently because “most scholars working on political stability or transformation would agree that a political regime cannot survive on the basis of coercion and repression alone”.¹⁰ A resilient autocratic regime has to define other strategies of legitimation as “a regime’s claim to legitimacy is important for explaining its means of rule and, in turn, its durability, because relying on repression alone is too costly as a means of sustaining authoritarian rule”,¹¹ so “even very coercive regimes cannot survive without some support”.¹² The question remains from where and how autocratic regimes gain legitimacy. The main source of legitimacy in democracies can be found in free and fair elections, which are absent in autocratic settings, yet it is argued that elections are overrated for the building of legitimacy. It is rather on the contrary because legitimacy is built on the output side of the political system and not on the input side.

8 Xu, Chenggang. (2011) The Fundamental Institutions of China’s Reforms and Development, in: *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol.49, No.4, 2011, pp.1076-1151, pg.1076

9 Xu, Fundamental institutions, pg.1077

10 Haldenwang, Christian von: The relevance of legitimation – a new framework for analysis, in: *Contemporary Politics*, Vol.23, No.3, 2017, pp.269-286, pg.271

11 Soest, Christian von and Grauvogel, Julia: Identity, procedures and performance: how authoritarian regimes legitimize their rule, in: *Contemporary Politics*, Vol.23, No.3, 2017, pp.287-305, pg.288

12 Geddes, Barbara: What do we know about democratization after twenty years? In: *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol.2, 1999, pp.115-144, pg.125

As legitimacy is generated, preserved and devaluated on the perceived output side, it essential to scrutinize the quality and fairness of the government rather than that of the electoral process.¹³

The assumption can be made that autocratic regimes are not necessarily illegitimate but economic performance and suppression provide not enough leverage to stay resilient for these regimes, legitimacy has to be gained through other channels as well. If this assumption is true, it should be possible to detect other viable strategies of legitimation through which any autocratic regime tries to enhance stability and survive in the long term. With this assumption in mind I am able to approach my main research question connecting it to the puzzle of autocratic regime resilience in Belarus, China, North Korea and Vietnam:

“Do autocratic regimes invest in their legitimation and if so, in which ways?”

This thesis will research the political systems of Belarus, China, North Korea and Vietnam as case studies. In progress I will be able to compare their political leadership and to draw conclusions if there is a common pattern in their strategies of legitimization. I choose these regimes due to the fact that they still rely on their communist-socialist heritage, which makes them more comparable to each other as for instance to military or monarchical regimes. Yet for the purpose of being able in drawing a better picture of autocratic regimes in general and for the benefit of generating a better understanding in comparing autocratic regimes I will add a Post-Soviet electoral authoritarian regime in my research – Belarus – as well.

The timeframe will be from 1989 until approximately 2017 as 1989 is characterized as the end of the short 20th century and marks the ending of the bipolar world order. Naturally it is not possible to neglect the strong historical founding narratives but the focus of the analysis will be laid on the past 30 years.

Assuming that the rather prospective communist ideology is not sufficient enough to legitimate authoritarian regimes in present day, the people in the epicenter of power need to present other means of gaining legitimacy. Nevertheless, these different strategies of legitimation must not be inserted into the political system suddenly, which can shock the autocratic system but rather cautiously and casually. Although autocratic regimes are often portrayed as fragile and inflexible, I am proposing that change and adaption within a stable, autocratic regime is not necessarily weakening and threatening its existence, but it is actually possible and conceivable

13 Rothstein, Bo: Creating Political Legitimacy. Electoral Democracy Versus Quality of Government, in: *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol.53, No. 3, 2009, pp.311-330, pg.313

that the regime is strengthened through these changes. Hence I am able to formulate a first hypothesis:

“Autocracies maintain their legitimacy not only because of economic performance and suppression but as well because of constant adaption and reinvention of ideologies. Which concludes that there are different layers and approaches in the legitimation process of these regimes and subsequently that there are different strategies of legitimation in autocratic regimes.”

In order to address the research question and the hypothesis the thesis continues with an overview of the current state of research of regimes and strategies of legitimation. Afterwards I will clarify different concepts and terms which will be used during the thesis through a literature review. In this particular section the focus is laid on the discussion and the specification of the main terms which the thesis uses and operationalizes in the theoretical and methodological approach. The first subsection concentrates on the distinction between “Legitimacy and Legitimation”. The second on the division of objects of power in a political system namely “State, Regime and Government”. At last it is worked out which major “Regime Types” exist in political systems. A political system is generally defined as: “The sum of activity and interaction of the political actors through which values are authoritatively determined and distributed for a society. It thus designates the totality of political life in a society, where state, government, and regime make up some of the core elements”.¹⁴

After the definition of the main terms the focus will be laid on the existing literature debating regime change and opportunities of democratization of autocratic regimes. In a short section I will discuss the actual stage of research concerning my case studies.

In a further step I will elaborate the specific functionality of political systems according to David Easton and connect it with the theory of the legitimation by David Beetham. The analytical framework will concentrate on the explanation of my research criteria, which are defined due to my theoretical approach and try to help to solve the puzzle of autocratic resilience.

After the theoretical and analytical elaboration of the thesis I will firstly give an overview of my case studies and elaborate differences in their regime types. The general analysis will be done with a qualitative research and assessment of secondary literature which should help to

¹⁴ Skaaning, Svend-Erik: Political Regimes and their Changes: A Conceptual Framework, in: *CDDRL Working Papers*, No.55, 2006, pp.1-30

detect patterns of legitimation in the political systems of the case studies. Furthermore, the qualitative research will be supported by quantitative sources, like databases and indices. Finally, my analysis will be complemented by content analysis of primary sources (e.g. Constitution of the People's Republic of China, speeches) and media reports. As there is an inevitable language barrier, my sources will consist solely of English translations and reports.

2. Theoretical and Analytical Framework

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Legitimacy and Legitimation

In a first step a general approach to the concepts legitimacy and legitimation in political systems is defined. It is essential to discuss both terms at first because in recent research there has been a debate about which one of these concepts it is more fruitful to work with.¹⁵

Foremost an advice of caution in the words of Lynn White: "Legitimacy is not easy to define", yet for White the question of legitimacy is "the crucial topic in the history of political philosophy"¹⁶ and according to Gries and Rosen "legitimacy is central to politics everywhere"¹⁷. Generally speaking the concept of legitimacy is according to the Oxford dictionary commonly accepted as "conformity to the rules and law" and in the Encyclopedia Britannica it is described as "popular acceptance of a government, political regime, or system of governance." Nevertheless, legitimacy shows in very different facets and a more nuanced definition is necessary for the purpose of this thesis. T.H. Rigby defines it as follows: "The expectation of political authorities that people will comply with their demands is typically based not only on such considerations as the latter's fear of punishment, hope of reward, habit or apathy, but also on the notion that they have the right to make such demands. This notion both inheres, explicitly or implicitly, in the claims of the authorities, and is reciprocated, to a greater or lesser extent, in the minds of those of whom compliance is demanded. This is what we mean

15 Sandby-Thomas, Peter: How Do You Solve a Problem Like Legitimacy? Contributing to a new research agenda, in: *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol.23, No.88, 2014, pp.575-592; Schubert, Gunter: Political Legitimacy in Contemporary China Revisited: theoretical refinement and empirical operationalization, in: *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol.23, No.88, 2014, pp. 593-611

16 White, Lynn T.: Introduction - Dimensions of Legitimacy, in: White, Lynn T. (ed.) *Legitimacy: Ambiguities of Political Success or Failure in East and Southeast Asia*. New Jersey 2005, pg.1

17 Gries, Peter and Rosen, Stanley: Introduction: popular protest and state legitimation in 21st century China, in: Gries, Peter and Rosen, Stanley (ed.) *State and society in 21st century China: crisis contention and legitimation*. London 2004, pg.6

by the ‘legitimacy’ of political power and authority...”¹⁸ Whereas Rodney Barker defines legitimacy as “the belief in the rightfulness of a state, in its authority to issue commands, so that the commands are obeyed not simply out of fear or self-interest, but because they are believed to have moral authority, because subjects believe that they ought to obey”¹⁹.

But why do people believe in the rightness of a state or dominant power and what makes them to believe that they ought to obey? Lipset sees that as a challenge to the state as he thinks that legitimacy is “the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society”.²⁰ So the people or the society ought to obey because the system maintains the belief that the political institutions are the best for them, from this follows that if people believe a system is legitimate then it is.

In the case of the belief in regime legitimacy, a still popular approach was defined by Max Weber, who detects three different types of legitimate domination and authority, the legal-rational (modern bureaucratic), the traditional (heritage) and the charismatic (aggregation of affects by the ruler followed by disciples).²¹ But these types are originally not connected and rather alternatives than complementary, Weber “elevates each of the three contributory components of legitimacy...into a separate and fully self-sufficient *type* of legitimacy.”²² Hence, for a mutual inclusive and multi-dimensional approach an overarching framework has to be established. Therefore, for the purposes of the thesis a different opinion which is delivered by David Beetham fits better. He defines legitimacy as “a given power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy, but because it can be *justified in terms of* their beliefs.”²³

In democracies this belief is basically reached as the reigning political power is elected through the people and therefore one could say it is legitimate. In autocracies which rarely have free and fair election processes it is nearly impossible to measure the legitimacy of the political power. Yet, if the political power itself thinks its legitimacy is in crisis, shifts in ideology or a slight change of institutions can be detected.

18 Rigby, Thomas H.: Introduction: Political Legitimacy, Weber and Communist Mono-organisational Systems”, in Rigby, Thomas H. and Feher, F. (eds.) *Political Legitimation in Communist States*. London 1982, pg.1

19 Barker, Rodney: *Political Legitimacy and the State*. Oxford 1990, pg.11

20 Lipset, *Political Man*, pg.64

21 Brennan, Catherine: *Max Weber on Power and Social Stratification. An Interpretation and Critique*. Aldershot 1997, pg.81

22 Beetham, David: *The Legitimation of Power*. Houndmills 1991, pg.24

23 Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power*, pg.11

Summing up, legitimacy is a power relationship in which the power holder expects compliance by the other members of the community and this compliance is justified in terms of the member's beliefs.

Yet, the concept of legitimacy bears the problem of measuring and is flawed in regard of grasping the overall concept of legitimate power in a satisfying manner: "legitimacy is a 'soft' category within the social sciences, prone to change over time and difficult to operationalize for quantitative or qualitative research."²⁴ Instead of using the notion of legitimacy, it is rather useful to operationalize the concept of legitimation, it is therefore easier to circumvent possible pitfalls delivered by the understanding of legitimacy.

Legitimation as meant as the means of acquiring legitimacy: "Where power is acquired and exercised according to justifiable rules, and with evidence of consent, we call it rightful or legitimate."²⁵ So as the two concepts of legitimacy and legitimation are often used synonymous there is a very important differentiation. Francois Bourricard argues that legitimacy is a stable and clearly defined state and legitimation rather a process without ever achieving this state.²⁶ Although legitimacy is not as stable in the course of time and is objective to alteration as well,²⁷ it is nevertheless created in the legitimation process as an: "active, contested political process...it involves creation, modification, innovation, and transformation."²⁸

Therefore the thesis works with a concentration on the concept of legitimation as this allows to research different actors in the political system and to highlight different angles from the power holders to the recipients. Furthermore the concept of legitimation enables to check adaptations and change inside the strategy of legitimation of the power holders, whereas legitimacy itself would rather concentrate on the opinion of the people.²⁹

2.1.2. State, Regime and Government

As this thesis investigates the political systems of the case studies but not specifically the states themselves or special governments, it makes sense to focus on the political regimes dominating

24 Schubert, Gunter: One-Party Rule and the Question of Legitimacy in Contemporary China: preliminary thoughts on setting up a new research agenda, in: *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol.17, No.54, 2008, pp. 191-204

25 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.1

26 Bourricard, Francois: Legitimacy and legitimization, in: *Current Sociology*, Vol.35, No.2, 1987, pg.57

27 White, Dimensions, pg.28

28 Barker, Rodney: Legitimizing Identities: The Self-Presentations of Rulers and Subjects. Cambridge 2001, pg.28

29 Sandby-Thomas: How Do You Solve, pg. 585

in these systems. A research of political systems as a whole would go beyond the scope of the thesis,³⁰ so it is essential to specify the distinction of the terms of state, regime and government. David Easton divided the main objects of the political system into political community, regime and government.³¹ For the purpose of the thesis this approach needs to be elaborated more accurately as Easton generally rejects the definition of state due to the equivocality of the term.³² In his analysis of political systems Easton comes probably closest to a definition of state when he converges political community with the notion of territoriality. If members which are identifying each other as a part of a unit, such as territoriality, kinship or citizenship and exclude others, they are establishing a political community.³³

Nevertheless, this approach is obviously insufficient to operate within this thesis, as any “we-group-feeling” and consensual identification is difficult to measure and rather subjectively biased. As the thesis deals with the question of legitimacy and especially the legitimation process in authoritarian regimes the distinction between regime, government and state as commonly accepted terms in scientific research needs to be elaborated adequately. The division between these three objects needs to get more attention as it is not always clear where the distinction is hidden.

The thoughts of Max Weber allow an easier access to this topic as he asserts that: “A state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory...the state is considered the sole source of the 'right' to use violence.”³⁴ Weber’s notion of the state as human community could be deceptive as there is the possibility of a human community with a monopoly of violence over a given territory but not necessarily with the existence of a state.³⁵ Instead it is inevitable to define this human community and so states are rather to be seen as „relatively permanent organizations of territorial-based rule used to generate power via coercion and administration“³⁶ and as a “permanent structure of domination and coordination including a coercive apparatus and the

30 Köllner, Patrick: „Informelle Politik“ und „informelle Institutionen“: Konzeptionelle Grundlagen, analytische Zugänge und Herausforderungen für das Studium autoritärer und anderer politischer Herrschaftssysteme. *GIGA Working Papers*, No.192, April 2012, pg.22

31 Easton, David: An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems, in: *World Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1957, pp.383-400, pp.391-393

32 Easton David: The Political System Besieged by the State, in: *Political Theory*, Vol. 9, No. 3, August 1981, pp. 303-325

33 Easton. Approach, pg.392

34 Gerth, Heinrich H. and Wright Mills, Charles (Eds. and Trans.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. New York: 1946. pg.78

35 Clastres, Pierre: Society against the State. New York 1977, pg.14

36 Waldner, David: Policy History: Regimes, in: N. J. Smelser und P. B. Baltes (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Oxford Elsevier, pp.11547–11553, pg.11548

means to administer a society and extract resources from it".³⁷ These organizations and structures need to be broken up into rather accessible forms of possible research, so the state should be perceived as a "complex of institutions that constitute the organization of political authority".³⁸

The definition of state as the (theoretically) legitimate user of physical force and authority is a good grounding for the continuative elaboration of the three objects of a political system, yet it is in a next step probably more fruitful to differentiate between the origin and the usage of power: "States share a central common feature in that they exercise a monopoly of political power. In other words, the state is the locus of political power."³⁹ So whereas the state is the center of political power the distribution of power has to be located within another part of the political system: in the regime.

A political regime can be defined as subordinated to state actors, who still coordinate power and force, hence a regime is: "an alliance of dominant ideological, economic, and military power actors, coordinated by the rulers of the state".⁴⁰ In this conception actors are highlighted and institutions are sidelined but David Waldner sees a regime as "the formal and informal rules and institutions that both reflect and shape the distribution and organization of political power and that constrain to various degrees the actions of power-holders".⁴¹

Stephanie Lawson argues that the regime defines how the state's power is used and therefore affects the question of the type of rule: "The regime also determines not only the manner in which governments are formed and carry out their functions, but also the basis of their legitimacy as well as the extent to which they are permitted to exercise authority".⁴² A similar approach to the regime's inherent management of power is taken by Robert Fishman: "A regime determines who has access to political power, and how those who are in power deal with those who are not. The distinction between democracy, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism thus deals with the question of *regime type*..."⁴³

37 Fishman, Robert M.: "Rethinking State and Regime: Southern Europe's Transition to Democracy, in: *World Politics*, Vol. 42, No.3, 1990, pp. 422-440, pg. 428

38 Larson, Allan L.: *Comparative Political Analysis*. Chicago 1980, pg. 19

39 Lawson, Stephanie: *Conceptual Issues in the Comparative Study of Regime Change and Democratization*, in: *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 2, January 1993, pp. 183-205, pg.187

40 Mann, Michael: *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 2, The Rise of Classes and Nation States 1760-1914*. Cambridge 1993, pg.18

41 Waldner, Regimes, pg.11547

42 Lawson, *Conceptual Issues*, pg.187

43 Fishman, *Rethinking*, pg.428

According to Peter Calvert a regime is “the name usually given to a government or sequence of governments in which power remains essentially in the hands of the same social group”.⁴⁴ Furthermore a regime represents “the formal and informal structure of state and governmental roles and processes. The regime includes the methods of selection of government (election, coup, decision process within the military, etc), formal and informal mechanisms of representation, and patterns of repression”.⁴⁵

Therefore, the thesis works with the idea that a regime is a set of rules that identifies: “who has access to power; who is allowed to select the government; and under what conditions and limitations authority is exercised.”⁴⁶ Hence, the government is as subordinated to the regime as the regime is to the state: “Regimes embody the norms and principles of the political organization of the state, which are set out in the rules and procedures within which governments operate.”⁴⁷ Whereas the regime works mainly through institutions, the government is more actor-based: “The state is the community organized for political purposes; the government is the individual or team of individuals that takes decisions which affect the lives of their fellow citizens. Governments succeed one another; the state endures.”⁴⁸ In short, a government is “simply the agency through which the state acts in the political community”.⁴⁹

This brief differentiation of state, regime and government helps to further elaborate the question of legitimation strategies in authoritarian regimes and so it is important to note that: “Regimes are more permanent forms of political organization than specific governments, but they are typically less permanent than the state.”⁵⁰ The succession and change of governments does not necessarily change or adapt anything inside the political system, whereas adaptation of institutions and ideology within a regime has impact on the political system as a whole and especially on the regime itself as the distribution of power is adjusted: “There may be a succession of different governments, but state and regime usually remain constant by virtue of

44 Calvert, Peter: Political Succession and Political Change, in: Calvert, Peter (ed.) *The Process of Political Succession*. London 1987, pg.18

45 Collier, David and Collier, Ruth B.: *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*. Princeton University Press 1991, pg.789

46 Kailitz, Steffen: Classifying political regimes revisited: legitimation and durability, in: *Democratization*, Vol.20, No.1, 2013, pp.39-60, pg.39

47 Lawson, Conceptual Issues, pg.187

48 Calvert, Peter: The Theory of Political Succession, in: Calvert, Peter (ed.) *The Process of Political Succession*. London 1987, pg.248

49 Larson, Comparative Political Analysis, pg.19

50 Fishman, Rethinking, pg.428

the fact that the different governments exercise power within the framework of the established regime and without disturbing the fundamental structure of the state.”⁵¹

Therefore autocratic regimes need to carefully adapt and change institutions within this framework as potential incoherence may endanger their existence. So Krasner concludes that: “Change within a regime involves alterations of rules and decision-making procedures, but not of norms or principles; change of regime involves alteration of norms and principles; and weakening of a regime involves incoherence among the components of the regime or inconsistency between the regime and related behavior.”⁵²

2.1.3. Regime Types

There are very different institutions and political actions in any political regime, so for the research of any political regime it is inevitable to firstly classify the regime. In being able to compare different regimes it is necessary to make this distinction to recognize different origins and impacts of the legitimation process. The question of political rule and the classification and typology of different regimes is one of the central topics in political science,⁵³ therefore the investigation of specific regimes and their process of legitimation is well elaborated. Whereas democracies never left the focus of political science, autocracies came recently back into the spotlight.⁵⁴

Three types of regimes have been established by political science, democracy, authoritarian and totalitarian, whereupon the two last types are generally subsumed under the label of “autocracy”.⁵⁵

In a nutshell, democracies are characterized by free and fair elections and therefore legitimized by institutional procedures. Furthermore these elections are used as justification for the legitimacy of the elected holders of power and their authority to issue commands,⁵⁶ as the people in a democratic regime “participated in the process wherein those commands

51 Lawson, Conceptual Issues, pg.186

52 Krasner, Stephen D.: Structural causes and regime consequences: regimes as intervening variables, in: Krasner, Stephen D. (ed.) *International Regimes*. Ithaca 1983, pg.5

53 Lauth, Hans J.: Regimetypen: Totalitarismus – Autoritarismus – Demokratie, in: Lauth Hans J. (Hg.) *Vergleichende Regierungslehre*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2006, pg.95

54 Kailitz, Steffen, Stand und Perspektiven der Autokratieforschung, in: *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Vol.19, No.3, 2009, pp.437-488, pg.438

55 Lauth, Regimetypen, pg.102

56 Kailitz, Classifying, pg.41

originated”.⁵⁷ It follows that if free and fair elections are missing one cannot speak of a democracy.

The separation between the autocratic regime types is not often clear, therefore an elaboration of the history of classification of regime types is necessary. The classification of non-democratic regimes is more difficult as typologies are finely nuanced and therefore contested among political scientists.⁵⁸ The first elaborations of autocracies in modern political science were theories to so-called totalitarian regimes by Hannah Arendt, Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski.⁵⁹ In their works the ideological background is the main aspect of a totalitarian regime, where the pervasive ideology controlled and manipulated everybody and encompassed every day’s life of the political system and society. Totalitarian regimes have normally a relative short lifespan compared to other regimes⁶⁰ and are generally a rather rare phenomenon.⁶¹ Classic examples of totalitarian regimes are Nazi-Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union.⁶²

It follows that democratic and totalitarian regimes represent two poles of the spectrum but for the bigger part of autocratic regimes it is not useful seeing them as totalitarian but rather to classify them as authoritarian regimes. Juan Linz was one of the first scholars who divided authoritarian and totalitarian regimes into two different subtypes of autocracy. Linz describes authoritarian regimes as „political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones”.⁶³ This definition bears the problem of neglecting the existence of ideology in authoritarian regimes and operates with the rather diffuse mention of “mentalities”.⁶⁴

For easier operationalization it is useful to go a step further of these early studies of autocratic regimes and dismiss the notion of ideology as criterion for autocratic regimes and rather concentrate on institutionalized authority. Within this approach Barbara Geddes defines three

57 Barker, Political Legitimacy and the State, pg.69

58 Kailitz, Steffen: Stand und Perspektiven, pp.443-444

59 Arendt, Hannah: The Origins of Totalitarianism. New York Harcourt 1951; Friedrich, Carl J. and Zbigniew Brzezinski: Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy. Cambridge Harvard University Press 1965

60 Linz, Juan J.: Totalitäre und autoritäre Regime. Herausgegeben von Raimund Krämer. 2. überarbeitete und ergänzte Auflage. Berlin 2003, pg.80

61 Dukalskis, A. and Gerschewski, J.: What autocracies say, pg.254

62 Lauth, Regimetypen, pg.104

63 Linz, Juan J.: An Authoritarian Regime, The Case of Spain, in: Allard, Erik and Littunen, Yrjö (eds.) *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems*. Helsinki 1964, pg.255

64 Kailitz, Stand und Perspektiven, pg.450

main groups of authoritarian regimes: personalist, military or single-party regimes: “In military regimes, a group of officers decides who will rule and exercises some influence on policy. In single-party regimes, access to political office and control over policy are dominated by one party, though other parties may legally exist and compete in elections. Personalist regimes differ from both military and single-party in that access to office and the fruits of office depends much more on the discretion of an individual leader.”⁶⁵ She furthermore differentiates the personalist regimes into two subtypes, the first is concentrated directly on one person whereas in the second subtype the focus lies on the dynastic foundation of hereditary succession in a monarchy.⁶⁶ Due to the fact that in recent years a rather new kind of authoritarian regimes have been established, the party regime classification needs some refinement into autocratic one-party regimes and autocratic multi-party regimes.

These autocratic multi-party regimes comprise the so called “electoral” or “competitive” authoritarianism.⁶⁷ Steffen Kailitz stresses the importance of the incorporation of this regime type in any scientific work regarding regimes: “Electoral autocracies constitute by far the most common regime type today. A typology that does not include this regime type is not able to address research questions in the qualitative literature on electoral autocracies.”⁶⁸ Electoral autocracies are defined by ostensible democratic institutions and procedures which are not free and fair. The legitimization strategies of such regimes are allowing opposition parties in parliament and to take part in elections⁶⁹ and therefore “operate under an almost entirely separate set of rules compared to one-party autocracies”.⁷⁰

For the classification and analysis of regimes it is important to keep in mind that is essential to have a basic state in which a regime can operate. It is argued that one cannot analyze regimes in failed states as the absence of stateness distorts any attempt in the assessment of these regimes in matters of quality of rule, legitimization and durability. It is useful to distinct failed and functioning states in a first step and ask in a second step for the classification of regime types.⁷¹

65 Geddes, Barbara: What do we know about democratization, pg.121

66 Geddes, Barbara, Wright, Joseph and Frantz, Erica: Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set, in: *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol.12, No.2, 2014, pp.313–331

67 Schedler, Andreas (ed.) Electoral authoritarianism: The dynamics of unfree competition. Boulder 2006
Lynne Rienner 2006; Levitsky, Steven and Way, Lucan A.: Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the cold war. New York Cambridge University Press 2010

68 Kailitz, Steffen: Classifying, pg.43

69 Hadenius, Axel and Teorell, Jan: Pathways from Authoritarianism, in: *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.18, No.1, 2007, pp. 143-157, pg.147

70 Kailitz, Classifying, pg.44

71 Kailitz, Stand und Perspektiven, pg.468

2.1.4. Regime Change and Democratization

In the following section I review on the one hand the main theories of regime change and democratization. On the other hand I discuss the approaches of several scholars to tackle the problem of legitimacy in autocratic regimes. As scientific research on political regimes is huge, there are different theoretical approaches to regime change and democratization. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the explicit research of different autocratic regimes have rather been neglected for a short period of time. As scientific research has been influenced by the “third wave of democratization” and the “end of history”, Scholars rather concentrated on democracies and the transition from autocratic to democratic regimes, until the last two decades, when research on autocratic regime durability was revitalized.⁷²

An influential school of thought in the research of regimes is the so called “modernization theory”, which researches the process of democratization, meant as the change from autocracy to democracy. Seymour Martin Lipset defined the idea that economic development correlates with democratization. Industrialization and modernization of institutions and technologies help to boost the economic development of an autocratic ruled state, with the final goal of democracy. As a result, these new means, wealth and education are establishing the conditions for democratization. In short, economic modernization is the requisite for a following process of democratization. The most important medium of the democratization process is seen in the emerging middle class as it is assumed that the middle class plays a conciliating role in the political processes.⁷³

Socialist regimes have therefore the problem of a contradiction. On the one hand they should fulfill a social utopia and on the other hand they should accomplish economic development, which could lead to democracy.⁷⁴ The dictum of the reciprocity between economic development and democratization has been widely researched,⁷⁵ yet it attracted criticism as well. It is for instance argued by Przeworski and Limongi that democracy does not presuppose economic development, rather on the contrary is economic development helping to strengthen already

72 Köllner, Patrick: Autoritäre Regime – Ein Überblick über die jüngere Literatur, in: *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, Vol.2, No.2, 2009, pp.351-366; Kailitz, Steffen: Stand und Perspektiven der Autokratieforschung

73 Lipset, Seymour M.: Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy, in: *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1, 1959, pp. 69-105

74 Löwenthal, Richard: The Ruling Party in a Mature Society, in: Mark G. Field (ed.) *Social Consequences of Modernization in Communist Societies*, London 1976, pp. 81–118

75 For instance: Burkhart, Ross E. and Lewis-Beck, Michael S.: Comparative Democracy: The Economic Development Thesis, in: *American Political Science Review*, Vol.88, No.4, 1994, pp.903-910

existing democracies. Democracies endure if there are signs of development but democracy could be induced at any stage of development. Generally speaking “the chances for the survival of democracy are greater when the country is richer”.⁷⁶ The main goal of Przeworski and Limongi was to criticize the assumed correlation between economic development and democratization, yet their research can be interpreted as a “revisionist conformation” of the modernization thesis.⁷⁷

The thesis of modernization theory was picked up by Barrington Moore who argues that rather different societal circumstances enforce the path of development and define the establishment of different regimes. He proposes that class structure and feudal legacies determine the taken path. Moore detects critical junctures in the history of Britain, Germany and Russia, which are connected to the arisen paths of democracy, fascism and communism. In this “critical juncture thesis” the bourgeoisie and economic development has as well a highly important impact on the transition to democracy. The struggle between the agrarian elite and the middle class determines the chosen path.⁷⁸ The thesis has been criticized heavily and it has been shown that the bourgeoisie is not a distinct promoter of democracy but supports authoritarian regimes as well.⁷⁹ In a similar vein like Moore and simultaneously totally opposed to modernization theory, Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson, and Yared argue that economic development has no causal effect on democratization and it is rather positively associated with each other because of historical path development. Their main argument is that omitted factors have shaped the paths of different states and therefore, to reevaluate modernization theory, these factors should be researched as they are generally responsible for regime formation.⁸⁰

These analyses concentrate on social structures or on institutional processes as drivers of regime change or resilience but they tend to neglect strategic decisions by individual political actors. In contrast to the institutional theory some researchers see individual actors as promoters of transition to democracy or the preservation of autocracy. These actors are seen as rational individuals trying to maximize personal gains and act following subjective strategies.⁸¹

76 Przeworski, Adam and Limongi, Fernando: Modernization: Theories and Facts, in: *World Politics*, Vol.49, No.2, 1997, pp.155-183

77 Geddes, Democratization, pg.117

78 Moore, Barrington: *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston 1966

79 Therborn, Goran: The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy, in: *New Left Review*, Vol.103, 1977, pp.3–41

80 Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, James Robinson and Pierre Yared: Reevaluating the Modernization Hypothesis, in: *Journal of Monetary Economics*, Vol.56, 2009, pp.1043–1058

81 Merkel, Wolfgang und Wagener, Hans-Jürgen: Akteure, in: Kollmorgen, Raj, Wolfgang Merkel, und Hans-Jürgen Wagener (Hg.) *Handbuch Transformationsforschung*, Wiesbaden 2015, pp.63-77

In the actor-centric research by John Higley and Michael Burton the main focus lies on the elites of a regime as they are the “persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations and movements, to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially”.⁸² Elites are scrutinized as the initiators of regime transition, because they are deciding through their rational strategic thinking what is best for themselves. Nevertheless it must not be forgotten that actors are still constrained by their institutional and social environment.⁸³

Especially the economic development of China and its resilient regime pose problems for modernization theorists. Some scholars have sought the solution in cultural determinants. Originating from the notion of “oriental despotism” coined by Karl August Wittfogel who argues that despotism is determined by historical premises and especially by the access to water for irrigation, which was strictly hierarchical organized.⁸⁴ One of the rather recent and widely discussed works is Samuel Huntingtons “Clash of Civilizations”. This book elaborates the future as struggle between cultural areas – especially the Western, Islamic and Confucian cultures – and not as a dualist fight for hegemony by capitalist democracy and communist autocracy.⁸⁵

Already a hundred years ago Max Weber argued for a correlation between economic development and protestant religion respective protestant work ethics.⁸⁶ With the concept of traditional cultural heritage in mind, Guo Baogang analyzed China and the regime’s legitimation strategies in regard to its Confucian traditional heritage,⁸⁷ whereas Elizabeth Perry detects a return to pre-revolutionary discourses in the ideological legitimation process of the Chinese government.⁸⁸

There is another East Asian approach using cultural explanations for autocratic regime resilience. Initiated by Lee Kuan Yew, former prime minister of autocratic Singapore, it is argued that communitarism and good governance are specific “Asian values”. These values support authoritarian, meritocratic regimes on the one hand and enhance economic growth through discipline on the other hand. Therefore the hypothesis is that Western democracy is not applicable in Asian states. However, Mark Thompson explains that the debate about “Asian

82 Higley, John, and Burton, Michael: *Elite Foundations of Liberal Democracy*. Lanham 2006, pg.7

83 O’Donnell, Guillermo and Schmitter, Philippe: *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Baltimore, 1986

84 Wittfogel, Karl A.: *Oriental Despotism: a Comparative Study of Total Power*. Yale 1957

85 Huntington, Samuel P.: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York 1996

86 Weber, Max: *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*. Tübingen 1934

87 Guo, Baogang: Political Legitimacy and China’s Transition, in: *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, Vol. 8, Nos. 1 & 2, 2003, pp.1-25

88 Perry, Elizabeth: Cultural governance in contemporary China: "re-orienting" party propaganda, in: *Harvard-Yenching Institute Working Papers*, 2013, pp.1-41

values” is mainly discussed between representatives of autocratic regimes in East Asia and members of the opposition and intellectuals from East Asia promoting democracy⁸⁹ - a specific Asian trend towards autocracy is empirically not valid, even as there is no common regional political culture in East Asia.⁹⁰ As insightful these cultural studies may be at first glance, the notion of culture itself is widely discussed and stays vague – in general it can be said that any cultural approach is difficult to apply in research as there are too many uncertainties connected to the term “culture” itself and to the possibilities of analytical pitfalls as culture is often artificially constructed to serve social or political purposes.⁹¹

Still one of the biggest problems is the classification of autocratic regimes as political scientists have no agreement of exact terminology and no clear demarcation between different subtypes of autocracies.⁹² One of the most cited work is by Barbara Geddes, who researched the durability of different regimes. Her conclusion is that one-party regimes are more durable than for instance military regimes, which is especially highly important for the research of East Asia as both regimes can be found in this region.⁹³ Following Geddes, several studies take the approach to regime-classification through the investigation of durability.⁹⁴

Earlier research was mainly concentrating on totalitarianism and the inherent ideology as a sole category of a non-democratic regime.⁹⁵ Another dimension was added several years later through the division into authoritarian and totalitarian regimes by Juan Linz,⁹⁶ but today there are almost no autocracies which could be called totalitarian but there are proposals to incorporate religious regimes.⁹⁷ During the phase of democratization⁹⁸ the interest in autocracies waned, but now they are back in focus as there are several newer forms of regimes

89 Thompson, Mark R.: Whatever happened to “Asian Values”? In: *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.12, No. 4, 2001, pp.154-165

90 Blondel, J. and Inoguchi, T.: *Political Cultures in Asia and Europe. Citizens, States and Social Values*. London 2006.

91 Derichs, Claudia und Heberer, Thomas (Hgs.): *Die politischen Systeme Ostasiens. Eine Einführung*. Wiesbaden 2013, pg.22

92 Kailitz, Classifying

93 Geddes, Barbara: What do we know about democratization

94 Hadenius and Teorell, Pathways from Authoritarianism; Wintrobe, Ronald: *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*. New York 1998; Levitsky, Steven and Way, Lucan A.: *The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes*, in: *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2013, pp. 5-17

95 Arendt, Hannah: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*; Friedrich, Carl J. and Zbigniew Brzezinski: *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*

96 Linz, Juan J.: *Totalitäre und autoritäre Regime*

97 Gerschewski, Johannes: *Weltweites Ende oder Renaissance des Totalitarismus. GIGA Focus*, No.4, 2008, pp.1-8

98 Huntington, *The Third Wave*

in a grey zone, like defect democracies or so-called hybrid regimes, for instance the “electoral” or “competitive” autocracies.⁹⁹

Explanations of legitimacy and legitimation in autocratic contexts have just recently gained more importance again, whereas Steffen Kailitz thinks that the classification of regimes should be done through their legitimation patterns.¹⁰⁰ Yet many studies rather concentrate on the repressiveness of institutions than on legitimacy,¹⁰¹ Johannes Gerschewski however has recently argued that repression alone is too costly for autocratic regimes and suggests that autocratic resilience is best explained through “three pillars of stability”: legitimation, repression and co-optation.¹⁰² Max Weber proposed as first scholar to neglect a normative approach to the concept of legitimacy and he proposes to demonstrate how things are and not how they should be.¹⁰³

A problem in the research of legitimacy is the point of view because some scholars argue that the concept of legitimation is better to operate with, as legitimacy has the problem of the “belief in legitimacy” and is not measureable,¹⁰⁴ yet there are efforts to measure legitimacy on a broad quantitative cross-national basis.¹⁰⁵ However the top-down approach of the legitimation concept is criticized¹⁰⁶ and it is argued that for the research of legitimacy of any political center, scholars must not neglect the periphery. Especially as bottom-up processes proves to be immanent to some authoritarian policy mechanisms, which was demonstrated by Sebastian Heilmann in his elaboration of policy experimentation in the Chinese periphery.¹⁰⁷ In a similar bottom-up argumentation, Ahlers and Schubert suppose that the Chinese local governments are decisive factors in the legitimacy-building of the autocratic regime.¹⁰⁸

99 Schedler, Andreas (ed.) Electoral authoritarianism; Levitsky, Steven and Way, Lucan A.: Competitive authoritarianism

100 Kailitz, Classifying

101 Brownlee, Jason: Authoritarianism in an age of democratization. Cambridge 2007; Gandhi, Jennifer: Political institutions under dictatorships. Cambridge 2008

102 Gerschewski, Johannes: The three pillars of stability: legitimation, repression, and cooptation in autocratic regimes, in: *Democratization*, Vol.20, No.1, 2013, pp.13-38

103 Brennan, Max Weber on Power and Social Stratification

104 Sandby-Thomas, How Do You Solve, pp. 575-592

105 Gilley, Bruce: The meaning and measure of state legitimacy: Results for 72 countries, in: *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol.45, 2006, pp.499–525

106 Schubert, Political Legitimacy in Contemporary China Revisited, pp. 593-611

107 Heilmann, Sebastian: From Local Experiments to National Policy: The Origins of China's Distinctive Policy Process, in: *The China Journal*, Vol.59, 2008, pp.1-30

108 Ahlers, Anna L. and Schubert, Gunter: “Adaptive Authoritarianism” in Contemporary China: Identifying Zones of Legitimacy Building, In: Deng, Zhenglai and Guo, Sujian (eds.) *Reviving Legitimacy. Lessons for and from China*. Plymouth 2011, pp.61-82

As the resilience and stability of autocratic regimes cannot solely be explained through suppression and economic performance, it is important to detect these different strategies and weigh if they are actually important in gaining legitimacy. It has been recognized that legitimacy is important in democratic and in autocratic settings, but the main studies have not examined different legitimization strategies. These studies rather concentrate on the attempt to interpret legitimacy, thus explaining means of rule and persistence.¹⁰⁹ In recent research it is argued that the complex notion of legitimization would fit better for researching political systems as the reduction on legitimacy is just able to focus on government acceptance among citizens.¹¹⁰ Another problem in autocratic regime studies is the concentration on persistence and resilience, they tend to neglect questions of stability.¹¹¹ Although comparative research on autocracies is in the focus of political science, authoritarian structures and institutional developments are frequently disregarded¹¹² because the main bulk of regime research concentrates on actors, which is not helpful in trying to explain the macro-level of political systems.¹¹³

In the case of authoritarian legitimacy or legitimation the main observation object obviously proves to be China. There are several different approaches researching the resilience of authoritarian China, like general ideology,¹¹⁴ innovation¹¹⁵ and revolutionary heritage.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless there are two overarching main arguments in the scientific research of China's regime resilience: on the one side scholars argue that China has a deep legitimacy crisis and expect the Chinese system to crumble,¹¹⁷ whereas others think that the system is stable and is able to effectively act because of an accumulated legitimacy.

David Shambaugh, a representative of the first opinion argues that China stagnates economically and is in a political stall, if this does not change to a modern developed economy

109 Soest, Christian von and Grauvogel, Julia: How Do Non-Democratic Regimes Claim Legitimacy? Comparative Insights from Post-Soviet Countries. *GIGA Working Papers*, No.277, 2015, pp.1-32, pg.5

110 Soest and Grauvogel, How Do Non-Democratic Regimes, pg.8

111 Gerschewski, Johannes, Wolfgang Merkel, Alexander Schmotz, Christoph H. Stefes, Dag Tanneberg: Warum überleben Diktaturen? In: *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, Sonderheft, Vol.47, 2012, pp.1-26, pg.2

112 Patzelt, Werner J.: Was soll und wie betreibt man vergleichende Diktaturforschung? Ein forschungsprogrammatischer Essay in evolutorischer Perspektive, in: *Totalitarismus und Demokratie*, Vol.6, 2009, pp.167–207, pg.1

113 Gerschewski et al., Warum überleben, pg.2

114 Holbig, Heike: Ideology after the end of ideology: China and the quest for autocratic legitimation, in: *Democratization*, Vol.20, No.1, 2013, pp 61–81

115 Göbel, Christian: Das Innovationsdilemma und die Konsolidierung autokratischer Regime, in: *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, Sonderheft, Vol.47, 2012, pp. 132-156

116 Perry, Elizabeth J.: Challenging the Mandate of Heaven. Popular Protest in Modern China, in: *Critical Asian Studies*, Vol.33, No.2, 2001, pp.163-180

117 Dickson, Bruce: The Survival Strategy of the Chinese Communist Party, in: *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.39, No.4, 2016, pp.27-44; Pei, Minxin: The Beginning of the End, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.39, No.3, 2016, pp.131-142

and country he forecasts the probable downfall of the autocratic regime.¹¹⁸ Pei Minxin, a critic of the stability of China as well, asserts that the Chinese regime's main aim is survival instead of a stable and resilient development. He denies that China is able to adapt and learn and is rather steered by individual actors thriving for personal gains. Pei thinks that repression, state-led economy and cooptation are the outdated main keys for Chinese regime survival as the regime needs new sources of legitimacy and other strategies to maintain political monopoly, otherwise the Chinese Party State will decay.¹¹⁹

Dali Yang as an adherent of the thesis that China is stable, argues that the regime was able to strengthen itself through enhancing state capacity through reforms and improved administration.¹²⁰ Vivienne Shue thinks that if there are dangers to regime legitimacy the regime answers with hard repression but the Chinese regime generally targets the citizens and normal people with legitimization strategies. She notes that the Chinese regime has to deal with issues of legitimacy like every other regime and that ambivalence experiences, claims of power and protests are not necessarily a sign of a legitimacy crisis.¹²¹

The other case studies are not as popular in current research of legitimization strategies as it is hard to get official information and facts to analyze for instance North Korea. Scholars have to connect data often with personal experience or have to be creative in research.¹²² Research about North Korea is mainly connected to the Kim family,¹²³ propaganda¹²⁴ and totalitarianism¹²⁵ and seldom it is connected to the question of legitimacy. However, Hassig and Oh try to examine institutions of the DPRK and how the regime tries to connect ideology with beliefs of citizens. They conclude that the North Korean regime is stable at the moment.¹²⁶ On the other hand Haggard and Nolan argue that North Koreans seem to be aware of the repressive state of the regime and seem to be able to assess the regime critically.¹²⁷

118 Shambaugh, David: Contemplating China's Future, in: *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.39, No.3, 2016, pp.121-130

119 Pei, Minxin: Is CCP Rule Fragile or Resilient? In: *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.23, No.1, 2012, pp. 27-41

120 Yang, Dali: Remaking the Chinese Leviathan. Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China Stanford 2004

121 Shue, Vivienne: Legitimacy crisis in China? In: Hays Gries, Peter and Rosen, Stanley (eds.) *Chinese politics: State, society, and the market*. New York 2010, pp. 41-68

122 Frank, Rüdiger: Nordkorea: Innenansichten eines totalen Staates. München 2014

123 Kwön, Hön-ik and Chung, Byung-Ho: North Korea: beyond charismatic politics. Lanham 2012

124 Dukalskis, Alexander and Hooker, Zachary: Legitimizing totalitarianism: Melodrama and mass politics in North Korean film, in: *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol.44, No.1, 2011, pp.53-62

125 Lankov, Andrei: The Natural Death of North Korean Stalinism, in: *Asia Policy*, No.1, 2006, pp.95-121

126 Hassig, Ralph C. and Oh, Kongdan: The hidden people of North Korea: Everyday life in the hermit kingdom. Lanham 2009

127 Haggard, Stephan and Noland, Marcus: Witness to transformation: Refugee insights into North Korea. Washington DC 2011

Nevertheless, any research about the DPRK needs to take several sources, for example propaganda paintings, reports and speeches into account to draw a better picture of the North Korean regime.

Vietnam is not as encapsulated as North Korea but is not in the focus of legitimation studies and opposed to Latin America, Southeast Asia is rather neglected in scientific regime research. Hence there are not so many studies which work with Vietnam, a good starting point for the interested German speaker would therefore be an excellent summary of Vietnam by Aurel Croissant, who is skeptical about the prospects of the regime as he detects growing horizontal and vertical threats to the regime.¹²⁸ Because of the Vietnamese “Doi Moi” initiative – opening to economic reforms – the effects of economic development in communist regimes are of great interest for scholarly research.¹²⁹

Belarus is a similar case as Vietnam, literature is not as abundant as in the case of China. Scholars of Belarus rather concentrate on the failing of democracy¹³⁰ or identity building¹³¹ as on the regime itself, yet Fabian Burkhardt argues that the main factors of regime legitimacy are nationalism and economic performance.¹³²

In general there is an increase of comparisons of different autocracies,¹³³ focusing on various objects of investigation like communism in general,¹³⁴ international sanctions¹³⁵ and international cooperation.¹³⁶

128 Croissant, Aurel: Die politischen Systeme Südostasiens: Eine Einführung, Wiesbaden 2016, pg.576

129 Le, Hong, H.: Performance-based Legitimacy: The Case of the Communist Party of Vietnam and Doi Moi, in: *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.34, No.2, 2012, pp.145–72

130 Marples, David R.: Outpost of tyranny? The failure of democratization in Belarus, in: *Democratization*, Vol.16, No.4, 2009, pp.756-776

131 Ioffe, Grigory: Understanding Belarus: Belarussian identity, in: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.55, No.8, 2003, pp.1241-1272

132 Burkhardt, Fabian: Concepts of the Nation and Legitimation in Belarus. In: Brusiš, Martin, Joachim Ahrens and Martin Schulze Wessel (ed.) *Politics and Legitimacy in Post-Soviet Eurasia*, London 2016, pp 148-171, pg.166

133 Soest, Christian von and Grauvogel, Julia: How Do Non-Democratic Regimes Claim Legitimacy?; Mazepus, Honorata, Wouter Veenendaal, Anthea McCarthy-Jones and Juan Manuel Trak Vasquez: A comparative study of legitimation strategies in hybrid regimes, in: *Policy Studies*, Vol.37, No.4, 2016, pp.350-369; Matveeva, Anna: Legitimising Central Asian Authoritarianism: Political Manipulation and Symbolic Power, in: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.61, No.7, 2009, pp.1095-1121

134 Dimitrov, Martin K. (ed.): Why communism did not collapse: understanding authoritarian regime resilience in Asia and Europe, New York 2013

135 Soest, Christian van and Grauvogel, Julia: Claims to Legitimacy Matter: Why Sanctions Fail to Instigate Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes. *GIGA Working Papers*, No.235, 2013, pp.1-40

136 Erdmann, Gero, Andre Bank, Bert Hoffmann and Thomas Richter: International Cooperation of Authoritarian Regimes: Toward a Conceptual Framework. *GIGA Working Papers*, No.229, 2013

2.1.5. Political Systems according to David Easton

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the following regime transformation of several, former communist states shows that it is more efficient to research these transformations with an analysis of the respective political system. For the research of access to power, internal organization of leadership and the position of rulers and population as well as changing economic development and society the system theory approach is very fruitful.¹³⁷

Because the concept of political systems is tightly connected to questions of legitimation and stability it is advantageous to analyze the functions or dysfunctions of these interconnected parts. The system's stability is dependent on the capability of these different areas to cope with demands of the system's environment.¹³⁸ Hence legitimation is directly connected to the functioning of any political system. Therefore I will firstly discuss David Easton's political systems theory which proposes that a political system is a highly dynamic and adaptive entity. Political systems theory has produced some criticism over the years,¹³⁹ which cannot be properly addressed here, but it is still a good starting point for the thesis.

Nevertheless, for better operationalization the political systems theory has to be refined in a second step, to explain the legitimation process of regimes in a more comprehensible way. Hence, I link the legitimation process in Easton's political systems theory to David Beetham's theory of the legitimation of power¹⁴⁰ because Beetham offers a more accessible approach to the problem of analyzing and explaining different strategies of legitimation in the national and international realm.

David Easton describes a political system as "those patterns of interaction through which values are allocated for a society and these allocations are accepted as authoritative by most persons in the society most of the time."¹⁴¹ The system itself is embedded in its environment from where it gets inputs, which are converted into outputs, which are "decisions and actions of the authorities"¹⁴² (in example policies) and continue to influence new inputs through the so-called feedback loop. For regime survival it is not mandatory to converse inputs into satisfactory

137 Wolfgang Merkel, Julian Brückner und Hans-Jürgen Wagener: System, in: Kollmorgen, Raj, Wolfgang Merkel, und Hans-Jürgen Wagener (Hg.) Handbuch Transformationsforschung, Wiesbaden 2015, pp.31-45, pg.33

138 Merkel et al., System, pg.34

139 Miller, Eugene F.: David Easton's Political Theory, in: Political Science Reviewer, Vol.1, No.1, 1971, pp.184-235

140 Beetham, Legitimation

141 Easton, David: A Framework for Political Analysis. Englewood Cliffs 1965, pg.96

142 Easton, David: A Systems Analysis of Political Life, New York 1967, pg.28

outputs all the time, but lasting inability to fulfill demands from the input side will eventually lead to regime failure and probably to regime collapse.¹⁴³ Figure 1 depicts how a political system functions:

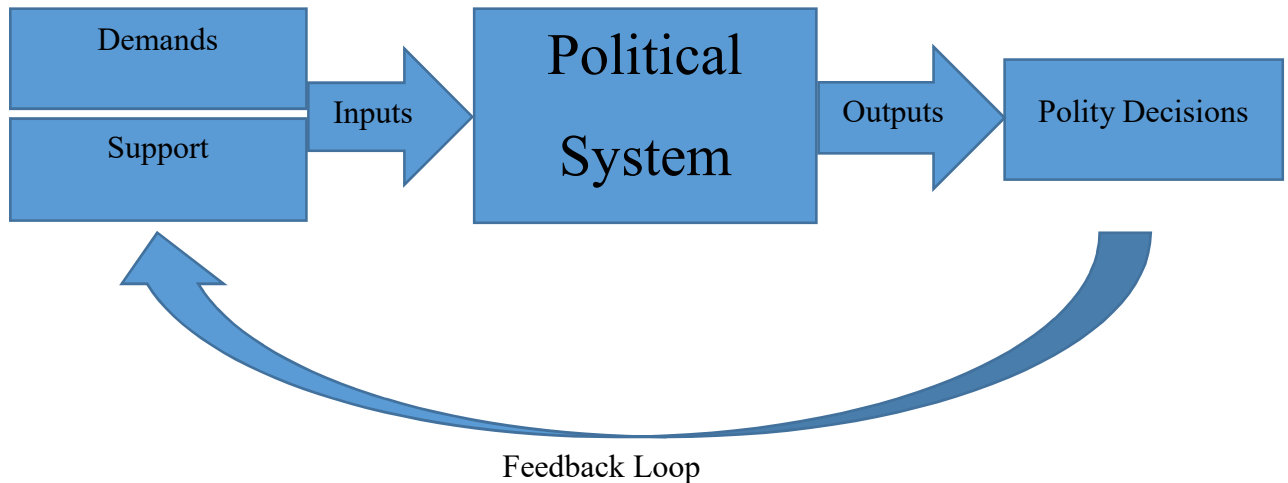


Fig. 1: Own depiction based on Easton's political systems theory

There are two different kinds of inputs which are "demands" and "support". Demands are one of the causes why a political system emerges at all, due to the fact that not all demands by actors of the society can be fulfilled privately.¹⁴⁴ However, demands have another striking feature in political systems as they are also the sources of change "since as the environment fluctuates it generates new types of demand – inputs for the system".¹⁴⁵ It is not necessary to fulfill all the demands of societal members, it is rather most important that the demands of the most influential members are satisfied.¹⁴⁶

The two varieties of support are the so-called specific and diffuse support. Specific support could be channeled on the one hand to a certain political figure and on the other hand to the acceptance or rejection of particular output policies. Therefore, specific support is directly responsible for the responses of a political system through the output.¹⁴⁷

The second variant of support, the so-called diffuse support, can be defined as the so-called "state of mind", which basically means the attitude to act on behalf of other persons.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Easton, Approach, pg.397

¹⁴⁴ Easton, Approach pg.387

¹⁴⁵ Easton, Approach, pg.390

¹⁴⁶ Easton, Approach, pg.396

¹⁴⁷ Fuhse, Jan: Theorien des politischen Systems: David Easton und Niklas Luhmann. Eine Einführung, Wiesbaden 2005,, pg.259

¹⁴⁸ Easton, Approach, pg.390

The “state of mind” as supportive behavior is an essential input for the stability of a political system: “If the members of a political system are deeply attached to a system or its ideals, the likelihood of their participating in either domestic or foreign politics in such a way as to undermine the system is reduced by a large factor. Presumably, even in the face of considerable provocation, ingrained supportive feelings of loyalty may be expected to prevail”.¹⁴⁹ The diffuse support is directed at the system as a whole and the absence of diffuse support would endanger the existence of the particular political system.

It is possible that a government as a part of the political system, not only gains support from consensual engaging but it has always the alternative of using force for the implementation of conflicting demands. The support of a government does not determine the outcomes of regimes or communities, yet if the government fails to yield satisfactory outputs, it could lead to demands for regime change or dissolution of the political community. Therefore the input-output balance is vital for any political system.¹⁵⁰ This balance is established through the feedback loop which gives a political system its dynamic character. The feedback loop is a chain of actions through which outputs and inputs are connected and influence each other directly and indirectly.¹⁵¹ Through the feedback loop a political system can learn and adapt from successes and failures to modify and even change itself to reach its goals.¹⁵²

If the political system fails to constantly process inputs into reasonable output and is not able to rectify the output through the feedback loop it may break down: “Mere survival needs alone will give a distinct advantage to those systems that are sufficiently dynamic and flexible to modify their own behavior.”¹⁵³ It follows that a stable political system has to adapt frequently and constantly through the feedback loop in a never ending flow to survive. It is argued that this important feedback mechanism is absent in autocratic political systems as it is supposed that these regimes do not evaluate the wants and needs of the people.¹⁵⁴ If this is true it would mean that autocratic regimes and their political systems are highly static and therefore instable. Continuously, one can suggest that these systems are not able to learn and adapt, and are rather prone to collapse.

In political systems legitimacy and legitimation stems from the support side, so the regime needs to establish strategies to gain legitimation through the output side and target the supportive behavior of the members of the system. The specific support would therein be

149 Easton, Approach, pg.391

150 Easton, Approach, pg.397

151 Fuhse, Theorien, pg.48

152 Fuhse, Theorien, pg.48

153 Easton, A Systems Analysis, pg.370

154 Merkel et al., System, pg.38-39

targeted through performance-based legitimation strategies, like improvement of societal and economic conditions. But as well through protection of possession and physical security, be it through the supply of goods or through clientelism. Generally speaking, a regime accumulates specific support through achieving stability and prosperity.¹⁵⁵

Diffuse support is what the regime “actually is or represents”.¹⁵⁶ It includes hereditary, religious or ideological claims by the autocratic regime. For example, support of the people through rigged elections would justify rule in electoral autocracies and the existence (real or not) of an external threat would help to boost domestic legitimacy as the regime represents the capability of dealing with this threat.¹⁵⁷

Easton explains that political systems are legitimate if basic political attachments are institutionalized and members believe in the legitimacy of the relevant governments and the regime.¹⁵⁸ Yet, it is difficult for a regime to detect supportive behavior as “members may and normally do simultaneously engage in supportive and hostile behavior.”¹⁵⁹ Therefore legitimacy “derives from the conviction on the part of the member that it is right and proper for him to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the regime. It reflects the fact that in some vague or explicit way he sees these objects as conforming to his own moral principles, his own sense of what is right and proper in the political sphere”.¹⁶⁰ The concrete connection of the political system with legitimacy, is explained by Easton with institutionalization of basic political attachments and the belief in the legitimacy of the relevant governments and regime.¹⁶¹

2.1.6. The Legitimation of Power according to David Beetham

Although Easton’s political systems theory already delivers a concept of legitimation it has to be processed to develop a fitting methodology in regard to the general aim of the thesis. The notions of “specific support” and “diffuse support” would already deliver a sound entry to the analysis of legitimacy and legitimation, but these concepts need more refinement as the mere

155 Burnell, Peter: Autocratic Opening to Democracy: Why Legitimacy Matters, in: *Thirld World Quarterly*, Vol.27, No.4, 2006, pp.545-562, pg.5-6, pg.17

156 Easton, A Systems Analysis, pg.444

157 Burnell, Autocratic Opening, pg.5-6

158 Easton, Approach, pg.400

159 Easton, Approach, pg.395

160 Easton, A Systems Analysis, pg.278

161 Easton, Approach, pg.400

“belief in legitimacy” is not sufficient enough for an analytical framework to work with, especially as the “belief in legitimacy” is intangible and immeasurable. David Beetham proposes an alternative approach as in his theoretical framework legitimacy is bound to actions by the members of the system. These supportive actions are more palpable than the rather tacit belief in legitimacy.

So if the terms of their beliefs change, the dominant power has to change the justification of its legitimacy, be it an adaption of ideology or a change of institutions. David Easton’s theory of political systems follows a similar approach as he highlights the “belief in the legitimacy of the relevant governments and regime”.¹⁶² Easton’s frameworks are adequate starting points but the belief in legitimacy “misconceives the relationship between legitimacy and the beliefs that provide the justificatory basis for rules of power”.¹⁶³ For the analysis of legitimation strategies, the concept of legitimacy and its origination can be refined with David Beetham’s elaboration of the legitimation of power:

“Power can be said to be legitimate to the extent that:

- i) it conforms to established rules
- ii) the rules can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate,
- iii) there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation.”¹⁶⁴

All three levels have to be covered by a certain degree by a ruling power to generate legitimacy¹⁶⁵ and “all provide the subordinate with moral grounds for compliance or cooperation with the powerful”.¹⁶⁶ These three levels not just only give more depth to the question of legitimacy but are also easier and more understandable to handle, especially in contrast to the former arguments, which are seeing legitimacy in the belief of the people.

i) The acquisition of power has to conform to established rules, be it from formal or informal institutions or customs is necessary for legitimacy in a political system“.¹⁶⁷ Rules ensure predictability and “they impose obligations and create corresponding entitlements, which are publicly acknowledged and collectively enforced”.¹⁶⁸ Power and legitimacy cannot be

¹⁶² Easton, Approach, pg.400

¹⁶³ Beetham, Legitimation, pg.23

¹⁶⁴ Beetham, Legitimation, pg.16

¹⁶⁵ Beetham, Legitimation, pg.19

¹⁶⁶ Beetham, Legitimation, pg.16

¹⁶⁷ Beetham, Legitimation, pg.64

¹⁶⁸ Beetham, Legitimation, pg.65

separated in a rule bound system as they are inclusive, so “in acquiring power according to the rules a person also acquires the right to exercise it”.¹⁶⁹ This criterion alone is necessary but not sufficient for legitimate exercise of power. If the holder of power does not meet with established rules his legitimacy may be weakened or even be seen illegitimate, so it has to be recognized that even in autocratic settings established rules have to be followed. Although it has to be recognized as well that there is a gap between “rules in form and “rules in use”.¹⁷⁰

ii) Rules which can be justified in terms of belief as a second criterion “is the most complex, involving in turn an authoritative source for the rules [...] and a common interest that the system of power serves”.¹⁷¹ So the holders of power have to justify legitimacy through the rightful source of authority and through performance. If one of these two is not properly satisfied a deficit in legitimacy will arise.¹⁷²

The authoritative sources which grant legitimacy can derive from external or internal sources. Whereas the external sources mainly stem from a religious-spiritual origin (e.g. divine will) or are deduced from a scientific point of view (e.g. Marxism-Leninism), internal sources develop through society, either from traditions as cultural legacy or from the “people”. The notion of “people” is not easy to characterize, but can be seen for instance as the most influential members of a society (most important among the subordinates) or the working class in Marxism-Leninism. Political systems have to carefully foster these authoritative sources as irregularities will weaken the legitimacy (e.g. Marxism-Leninism in a deeply religious society). Therefore, changes and shifts in belief have to be incremental or a legitimacy deficit will occur.¹⁷³

Furthermore, the system needs to serve common interests and those in power need to fulfill that interest. The dominant has to show that actions do not only help the powerful but serve as well the interests of the subordinate or at least larger social purposes concerning them.¹⁷⁴ Concepts like “welfare”, “social justice” or “economic performance” have to be traced to serve the common interest. Furthermore, the regime needs to demonstrate that it is able to generate these performance criteria. Failing economic performance or unequal distribution of wealth may erode the legitimization process of regimes. Therefore regime performance needs to be carefully steered and presented to the society positively. It has to adapt to changes and even has to be

169 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.65

170 Holbig, Ideology after the End, pg.64

171 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.97-98

172 Holbig, Ideology after the End, pg.64

173 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.70-76

174 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.59

reformed in the face of changing socio-economic circumstances.¹⁷⁵ For this purpose ideology proves to be very helpful as “the leaders employ symbolic means to link their own interest in maintaining power with convincing the citizens that this power is in their best interests and that it serves the realization of a larger social purpose.”¹⁷⁶

iii) The evidence of consent to a given power relationship by the subordinate has nothing to do with any belief in legitimacy but rather is bound to actions: “Consent is not the condition of voluntary agreement, but the specific *actions* that express it; and that these are important because they *confer* legitimacy on the powerful, not because they provide evidence about people’s belief. They confer legitimacy because they constitute public expressions by the subordinate of their consent to the power relationship and their position within it; of their voluntary agreement to the limitation of their freedom by the requirements of a superior.”¹⁷⁷

In democracies elections have to show the level of consent to a power relationship, in autocracies actions of consent have mainly to be steered by the regime. Yet, an important point has to be mentioned as consent “whereby the subordinate demonstrate their commitment to a regime by voluntary actions supportive of its policies, carries no obligation with it, since it involves *no undertaking in respect of the future*”.¹⁷⁸ Hence, consent has to be demonstrated constantly through actions like mobilization of the masses: “ideology in authoritarian contexts has to serve as the main governance mechanism for mobilizing subordinates’ consent and has to be reproduced and adapted constantly by the party-state”.¹⁷⁹

For the legitimization process it is not important if the evidence of consent shown by subordinates is for a cause or followed by self-interest as the action itself and not the quality is crucial for legitimacy.¹⁸⁰ But showing open opposition in any way has delegitimizing consequences for autocratic systems and therefore needs to be prevented. If the whole system is in danger, coercion and repression have to be seen as a necessary feature of the legitimization process and not an alternative. It follows that coercion and repression are not used by illegitimate regimes to hold power but rather serve as means for building of legitimacy.¹⁸¹

175 Holbig, Heike: Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy in China: Challenges in the Post-Jiang Era. *GIGA Working Papers*, No.18, 2006, pp.1-36, pg.14

176 Matveeva, Legitimising, pg.1097

177 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.91

178 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.95

179 Holbig, Ideology after the End, pg.65

180 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.95

181 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.183

2.1.7. Summary

In this section it was the aim to elaborate and clarify the most important terms which will be used throughout the thesis. It has been shown that “legitimacy” is a rather indefinite concept and generally means a stable state where holders of power find themselves accepted by the ruled. Rather more important is the notion of “legitimation” which is the process of gaining legitimacy and in contrast to the steady state of “legitimacy” this process can be analyzed more exhaustively in regard to political systems. In political systems the main objects are “state”, “regime” and “government”. A state is the territory over which rulers have political power, whereas the regime is the institution which defines the distribution of this power to a government, whereas the government is a mostly temporary embodiment of political power.

Regimes can be divided in democratic and autocratic regimes, in which democratic regimes are mainly characterized through free and fair elections. Autocratic regimes have no free and fair elections, the allocation of power is controlled by single persons in personalist or monarchical regimes or by a group of people in authoritarian party regimes. A kind of special case in the realm of autocratic regimes is electoral authoritarianism where the authoritarian regime disguises itself with democratic procedures to gain legitimacy.¹⁸²

I have shown that it is useful to combine the survey of legitimation with political systems theory, to explain how these systems and their inherent regimes are working and operating. A political system is highly fluctuating and responsive, ever changing and adapting to occurring problems. It is processing demands and inputs from the environment to output and hence trying through the feedback loop to reciprocate legitimation for itself.

Yet, legitimacy cannot be explained merely through the belief of people, but rather with justified beliefs shared by all actors, so regimes and holders of power have to conform to established rules and need consent by subordinates to be legitimate. If consent is not expressed constantly or if there is active discontent to be observed a regime may lose legitimacy. These strategies of legitimation have to constantly adapt and actions of consent have to be repeated, otherwise the system will erode and become illegitimate.

182 The thesis uses „electoral“ and „competitive“ authoritarianism synonymously

2.2. Implementation of the Legitimation of Power in Political Systems Theory

This section elaborates the implementation of Beetham's theoretical framework in the political systems theory to depict the stabilization process inside the system through legitimation strategies. Consistent with Beetham's framework I detect five key criteria which will be analyzed:

1. Legality – justification by conforming to established rules
2. Authority – justification by terms of belief
3. Performance – justification by belief of common interest
4. Internationality – justification by external legitimation
5. Consent – justification by evidence of consent

2.2.1. Legality

Legitimation from conforming to established rules basically means legality and the rule of law, which enhance the predictability of the regime. Even autocracies have to follow rules, even if they are designed by the regime itself. The constitution of an autocracy defines the rules which should be followed even by the holders of power, and these rules should circumscribe a level playing field. A sudden change or a break of these rules can cause a slow erosion of legitimacy. One has to keep in mind that there is a gap between “rules in form” and “rules in use” in autocratic settings, but a minimum of “rules in form” has to be observed, “rules in use” are mainly informal but nevertheless have to meet the expectations of the subordinate. Another important differentiation has to be made between “rule of law” – everyone is accountable – and “rule by law” – consolidation of power through law. Whereas “rule of law” targets the elites and the citizens, “rule by law” is an instrument of the elite to control the people. Autocratic regimes with a strong ideological legitimation strategy are rarely compatible with the concept of “rule of law” as the ideology has always the priority if there are any forms of discrepancies, which means that elites always can overrule law.¹⁸³ Whereas a legal system is the formal institution of keeping domestic security, the informal institution of corruption is a direct opponent of the “rule of law”. Especially in autocratic regimes elites have the possibilities to

183 Lauth, Hans-Joachim: Legitimation autoritärer Regime durch Recht, in: *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, Vol.11, 2017, pp.247–273, pg.266

use their power for personal gains.¹⁸⁴ An example for the rule of law would be the fight against corruption, which shows that the regime enforces its authority even to elite members of society. Another prime example of legality would be the institutionalized handover of power. This can be shown by the regime through institutionalized sequencing of government, for example through elections or hereditary power transfer.¹⁸⁵

2.2.2. Authority

Rules need to be justified by terms of belief, so the holders of power have to justify legitimacy through the rightful source of authority. In democracies a free and fair election can serve as the rightful source of authority, understood as authority delivered by the people. In autocratic regimes this legitimation strategy needs to have a more refined approach.

As “historical accounts are significant and contentious precisely because of their relationship to the legitimacy of power *in the present*”,¹⁸⁶ a strong historical explanation of authority is a customary tool in legitimizing autocratic regimes. Especially strong foundational myths are created through violence, which ties people to the regime: “Armed liberation struggle, post-revolutionary state-building, and the violent conflicts triggered by efforts to carry out radical social change [...] enhance authoritarian durability.”¹⁸⁷

Another justification by terms of belief relies on divine sanction or on scientific law, like in monarchical or in communist regimes because “this is a very strong legitimation, with a clear plan of how society should be structured”.¹⁸⁸ These legitimation strategies have to be heavily framed by ideology because: “Ideas and ideologies matter, and institutions play a major role in determining just how much they matter, Ideas and ideologies shape the subjective mental constructs that individuals use to interpret the world around them and make choices.”¹⁸⁹ When the definition of ideology is “a systematic or comprehensive set of values and beliefs (“ideas”) that provide a way of looking at and understanding the world or some aspect of it”,¹⁹⁰ the ruling power must deliver an ideology which is not just accepted by the people but is also a

184 Lauth, Legitimation, pg.264

185 Soest and Grauvogel, How do Non-Democratic Regimes, pg.8

186 Beetham, Legitimation, pg.103

187 Levitsky and Way, The Durability, pg.6-7

188 Kailitz, Classifying, pg.43-44

189 North, Douglass: Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance. Cambridge 1990, pg.111

190 William, Joseph A.: Ideology and Chinese Politics. In: Joseph, William A. (ed.) Politics in China. An Introduction. Oxford 2010, pg.129

representation of the sense of the ruled society to justify its power, even more with this definition of political ideology: “[...] Consists of ideas about power and how it should be distributed, organized, and used, including the goals to which it is directed. Furthermore, ideology has action consequences by shaping political behavior [...].”¹⁹¹ In this sense, there is a direct connection between the people, ideology and the ruling power. Not only ideology can shape the terms of peoples beliefs, but institutions as well. In adapting ideology to current circumstances, institutions have to follow and vice versa. Again, the ruling power cannot just maintain the belief in its institutions, but has to change the institutions to justify its legitimacy.

2.2.3. Performance

Justification in belief of common interest is mainly acquired through the legitimation strategy of good performance. The notion of performance in this context has several meanings. The most important performance which comes to mind first is economic performance, which means that material improvements help to gain legitimacy. Good economic performance is not the only criteria on which a regime should predicate its legitimation strategy as other infrastructural performance is highly important as well. That means for instance equal access to healthcare, welfare, education, recreation but public security and state stability as well.¹⁹²

Though, the performance alone is not enough as the regime has to channel its achievements, trying to enhance legitimacy, which is done through ideological framing: “Economic success is not per se a source of regime legitimacy; instead, it has to be framed in ways conducive to positive subjective perceptions of the regime, so that the latter is seen as, for example, competent, efficient, fair, committed to the realization of the common interest.”¹⁹³ Ideology is the link in framing the economic performance of a government: “Ideology has a potentially crucial function in “framing” the success of transition and the achievements of economic performance, that is, to create a collective framework to perceive and interpret the ongoing transition process.”¹⁹⁴

191 William, Ideology, pg.129

192 Soest and Grauvogel, Identity procedures, pg.291

193 Holbig, Heike and Gilley, Bruce: In Search of Legitimacy in Post-revolutionary China: Bringing Ideology and Governance Back. *GIGA Working Papers*, No 127, 2010, pp.1-35, pg.12

194 Holbig, Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy, pg.13

2.2.4. Internationality

Apart from the multidimensionality of legitimation elaborated by Beetham, his theoretical approach allows to address not only the question of domestic legitimacy but offers an international access as well. Originally this theory was aimed at domestic factors of legitimation but in the present globalized world it is necessary for any regime to recognize the international community for the purpose of gaining domestic legitimacy through external legitimation. All of Beethams criteria can be used for an international approach as well.

2.2.5. Consent

Evidence of consent shown by the subordinate is in democracies gained through taking part in elections, whereas autocracies have to mobilize this consent generally through mass mobilization and target the civil society. Other important targets of steered consent are the relevant elites through the means of cooptation and clientelism.

Cooptation is understood as process of gaining loyalty of relevant members of society, addresses a rather small circle of people who possess relevant means which are important for power, like social influence and financial resources.¹⁹⁵ Whereas Cooptation is a horizontal process targeting elites, clientelism is a vertical process through which a broader level of the population can be reached: “Clientelism is a social equilibrium in which political exchange tends to be characterized far more by concrete punishments and rewards meted out to specific individuals than by broad policies that are not targeted at individuals and that instead impact different parts of society according to relatively explicit, generalized rules“.¹⁹⁶

Open display of opposition and protest erodes the legitimation process, so repression goes hand in hand with strategies of legitimation. Therefore signs of protest and suppression have to be analyzed on the basis of diminishing consent as well. The interaction between cooptation and repression secures the autocratic regime against probable horizontal and vertical threats, which could promote regime change.

195 Gerschewski, Warum überleben, pg.11

196 Hale, Henry E.: Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics: Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia, in: *World Politics*, Vol.63, No.4, 2011, pp.581-617, pg.584

2.2.6. The Autocratic Puzzle

After the elaboration of the diverse theoretical approaches and the discussion of the relevant literature I am able to address the problem of the introduced “autocratic puzzle” in a more precise manner.

The assumption can be made that autocratic regimes are not static but act highly adaptive through the evaluation of people’s needs. The holders of power react to demands of subordinates, in order to gain and reinforce legitimacy. These legitimation processes and the interconnection between demands and reaction stabilizes the regime, respectively the political system. The difference between stability and persistence of systems is of substantial significance as persistence barely describes the absence of change, whereas stability means fluctuation. Stability is able to describe the capacity of solving problems and the adaptability to new circumstances.¹⁹⁷

Scientific research mainly concentrates on legitimacy or uses legitimacy and legitimation interchangeably. The notion of legitimacy is generally difficult to assess and to grasp, therefore the principle element of the thesis will rather work out the “legitimation strategies” of the respective case studies as a fundamental basis of authoritarian regimes. Legitimation is hence defined as the methods of obtaining and justifying the legitimacy by the holders of power. According to David Easton every political system is a changing and adapting political entity, so these strategies of legitimations are in flux and not a point of state. That is why even autocratic settings have to adapt in relevance to the environment to stay stable. Challenging conventional wisdom is the thesis of an “adaptive” authoritarianism, which means that revolutionary party systems have a threefold cycle: transformation of the system and institutions, consolidation of the political system and adaption of institutions.¹⁹⁸ Yet, researchers have to keep in mind that “different kinds of authoritarianism differ from each other as much as they differ from democracy”.¹⁹⁹ So it is important to detect these differences and compare them, to possibly get an understanding if various autocratic regimes still act within a similar framework or if they use different legitimation strategies.

As long as a regime possesses enough legitimacy the political system stays stable. Given that legitimacy is always in flux and a clear state which cannot be measured, one can only observe when legitimacy is lost, which eventually leads the system to collapse. Therefore it is essential

¹⁹⁷ Gerschewski et al., *Warum überleben*, pg.2

¹⁹⁸ Derichs und Heberer, *Die politischen Systeme*, pg.14

¹⁹⁹ Geddes, *Democratization*, pg.121

to invest in legitimacy through legitimation strategies although the outcome is elusive, hence it is crucial to always reinforce these strategies and respond to demands by the targeted population. My argument is that autocratic regimes do invest in legitimacy and show relative adaptability in the process. The system is flexible and even as there is no obvious, sudden change of institutions or legitimation, incremental adaptability is necessary for the stability of the system. In dependence on Easton's system theory and Beetham's legitimation theory Fig. 2 displays this process of legitimation:

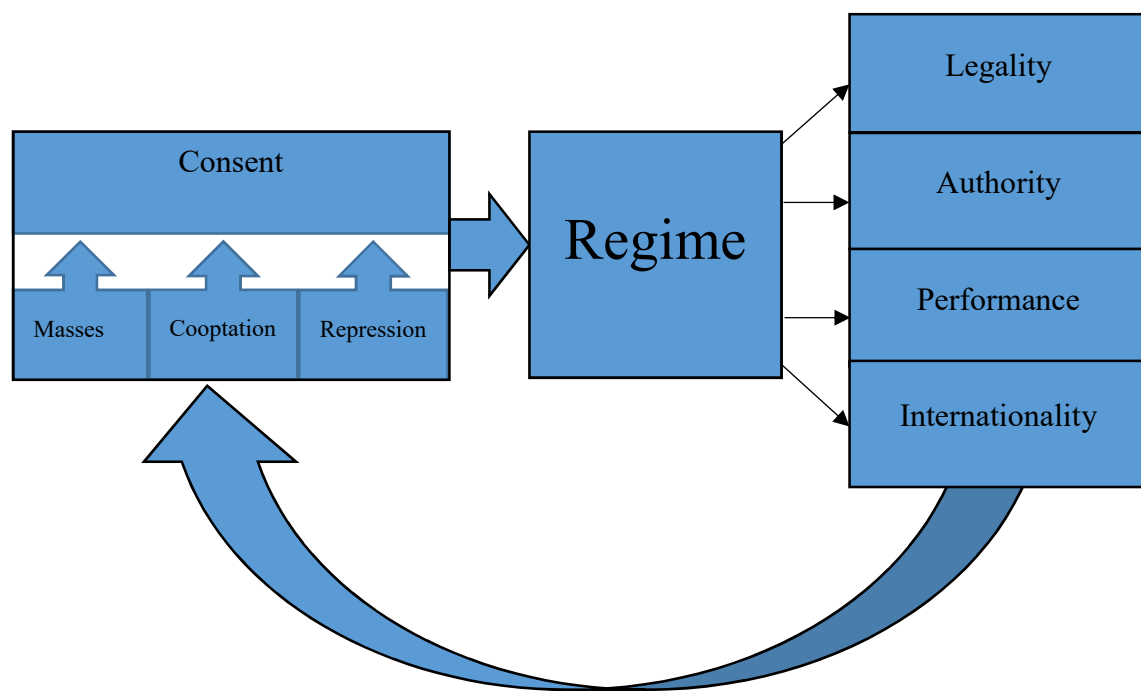


Fig. 2: Own depiction, inspired by Beetham's, Legitimation of Power and Easton's Political Systems Theory

The regime uses legitimation strategies through output, to enhance and strengthen the consent on the input-side of the system. The inputs show if the used strategies on the output side are vital for the systems' stability, or if the strategies have to be adapted to the needs and demands of the people. Through this responsive cycle the system stays stable and the regime accumulates enough legitimacy to stay in power.

2.3. Analytical Approach

In this section of the thesis it will be explained how these theories will be fit together to establish criteria, which will help in a comparing analysis of the chosen autocratic regimes – Belarus,

China, North Korea and Vietnam. The aim of the thesis is to analyze differences and similarities in the legitimization strategies of the respective case studies.

The idea is to address different autocratic settings for detecting variations in their strategies, therefore the first step will be an overview of the regimes of the case studies as it is important to see if legitimization strategies differ in different settings. In general, for the analysis of any regime, the first important step is the classification of the regime as different regimes base their legitimization objectives on different foundations. As the legitimization process works in a dynamic, changing manner one may detect similarities in the legitimization strategies of different regimes but as every regime develops its own aspects of strategy, diverse ways of legitimization should be traceable as well. However, there are manifold ways classifying different regimes and the various types of autocracy are difficult to depict as the methods of measurement cannot reflect reality but are only able to be an approximation. There are different datasets which try measuring regime types through the assessment of the quality of government, yet these datasets concentrate mainly on the grade of democratization. In a first basic approach I consult the Polity IV and the Freedom House datasets as well as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, and compare my case studies to each other concentrating on the timeframe from 1991 until 2016. Although these datasets have to be taken with a grain of salt because they have a Westernized point of view and are presumably democracy-biased, which affects their selection of indicators and variables,²⁰⁰ they are a sufficient starting point of my analysis.

The timeframe for the general analysis will be from around 1989 until the recent years as this point marks the historical watershed when the bipolar world order disappeared and a general time of new order was established and can be seen as a crucial critical juncture for the whole political world-system. Especially for the three Asian regimes, which have similar founding bases, but nevertheless chose somewhat different paths in the past, I will analyze their revolutionary heritage as well. Yet this will only cover a short space of the thesis as the last 30 years are more important for legitimization strategies in a globalized world.

At first glance the Asian regimes are very similar but there are several differences which could be crucial for legitimization strategies especially regarding the international dimension. For instance Korea is still divided whereas Vietnam was again unified in 1976 and North Korea is still one of the secluded countries in the world. China with a communist background became one of the power horses of global economy promoting a multipolar world order, here Vietnam, a communist country as well, can serve as a control variable in terms of legitimization strategies

200 For a critical assessment see: Munck, Gerardo L. and Verkuilen, Jay 2002: Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy. Evaluating Alternative Indices, in: Comparative Political Studies, Vol.35 No.1, 2002, pp.5-34

for its great neighbor in the north. Belarus as a post-Soviet authoritarian regime can deliver some insights in an electoral authoritarian regime for comparison to the nominal communist countries in East Asia.

Generally speaking the thesis follows a top-down approach as legitimation strategies have to be executed by the holders of power to address subordinates, therefore these strategies have to be planned and implemented by the top of the regime and trickled down to the addressee.

Furthermore, the thesis utilizes the comparative method discussed by Arend Lijphart:²⁰¹ a diachronical and inter-national approach, in comparing the legitimization strategies of the autocracies mentioned above from their founding until recently. Firstly it is important to be aware of the interconnection of the legitimation strategies and therefore the regimes need to be considered from an intra-national perspective firstly and to compare them in a second step internationally. The strength of such an approach “comparison of the same unit at different times generally offers a better solution to the control problem...comparative intra-nation analysis can take advantage of the many similar national characteristics serving as controls”²⁰² but also about the weakness: “the same country is never the same at different times.”²⁰³

The output side is consisting of strategies concerning (1) the legality, (2) the authority (3) the performance, and (4) international presence of the regime. These strategies are always framed by the ideological character of the regime as positive outcomes need to present the regime as the benefactor. The strategies are complementary and therefore the regime is dependent on all of them. Weaknesses in one can be absorbed to a certain degree by the others, but in general all the output strategies have to satisfy the demands of the population.

The input side consists of strategies concerning (5) consent. This is, in contrary to Easton’s approach, bound to action and is therefore more concrete than the sole reference to the “belief in legitimacy”. It is nevertheless important to increase consent through several measures: (a) cooptation of elites (b) repression of alleged opposition and (c) mass mobilization of supporters of the regime. Consent needs to be supervised and is often manipulated, hence the autocratic regime is always under pressure as it is never able to gain the absolute support of the population. However, this problem does not differ to democracies, where the majority rule is not always jointly agreed upon. In general the main target group through these outputs is the passive populace, which is mainly characterized through their tacit acquiescence of the regime.

201 Lijphart, Arend: Comparative Politics and Comparative Method, in: *The American Political Science Review*, vol.65, no.3, 1971, pp. 682-693

202 Lijphart, Comparative Politics, pg.689

203 Lijphart, Comparative Politics, pg.689

This thesis aim is to research and elaborate the legitimation strategies of the case studies and subsequently compare them. My initial research questions will be answered through the evaluation of:

(1) The strategy of legitimation through legality can be drawn well through content analyzes of the written form of official rules. This happens through the examination of the constitutions of the case studies, if needed complemented by official documents and speeches. The constitutions themselves may be plain or latent propaganda declarations but they nevertheless represent the “rules of the game” and how this rules *should* be applied. So the constitutions are important stepping stones in analyzing legitimation strategies on a deeper level. In the case of corruption I will firstly consult the Corruption Perception Index and connect it with official documents/speeches to fight corruption.

(2) Authority as legitimation strategy targets the population and I will analyze in a first step the foundational myths and historical narratives inherent to this myths. In a second step I try to find signs of ideological legitimation strategies, yet one must not forget that ideology is the one legitimation strategy which frames the other strategies. Therefore ideological claims can be found in all the other strategies as well.

(3) As already explained the performance legitimation strategy is seen as the crucial strategy in autocratic regimes. This strategy needs to pay special attention to socio-economic development and general social and domestic security. For a positively regarded performance the regime has to concentrate on the provision of physical security and maintaining internal order as well as providing basic necessities like food, housing and electricity. To analyze the performance of the regimes I will use the datasets of the Human Development Reports and the World Development Index. Criteria which are of special interest in researching the performance are for instance the economic development, health care, welfare and education. Yet, another important point is the behavior of the regime representatives in face of crises, like natural disasters or pandemic outbreaks.

(4) International legitimation strategies target the population to show the regimes activities in the international arena. Broken down to Beethams three criteria, a regime can follow several paths to achieve this goal. For example “Legality” and “Authority” can be approached through

active participation in international organizations with binding force, like the World Trade Organization. Ambitions to seek regional cooperation and regional organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or ASEAN would be a legitimization strategy as well.²⁰⁴

“Performance” and “Consent” can be achieved through active reference of a “peaceful rise” or “harmonious” economic and societal development,²⁰⁵ and through the establishment of the “New Silk Road”.

On the other hand external threats can as well serve as a legitimization strategy: “The portrayal of an ‘enemy at the gates’ and manipulation of the ‘other’ (as in the demonization of US imperialism by the leaders of North Korea and Cuba, or of Israel and Zionism by Iran’s rulers) too can contribute a major source of domestic legitimacy.”²⁰⁶

(5) All of these strategies have the aim to gain the consent of the people and therefore to accumulate legitimacy, which can be observed through actions by the population. Consent itself can be steered as well and targets different parts of society.

(a) The elites of a political system are targeted through cooptation and clientelism to bind them to the regime. This criteria is hard nut to crack as cooptation happens mainly through informal channels. As autocratic regimes are mostly controlled through a single party or a supreme leader it is necessary to detect patterns in the appointment of crucial positions like ministries or general managers of state-owned enterprises. Clientelism is the vertical characteristic of cooptation, so it is definitely fruitful to research the affiliation criteria of the parties to detect if heritage or merit is a defining requirement for acceptance.

(b) Repression is – like performance – suspected to be one of the key strategies in keeping an autocratic regime resilient. Repression targets the opposition or potential dangers to the regime. This danger can stem from inside or outside of the regime: for example when groups or individuals of the elites is challenging the leadership. Outside opposition may emerge as well through groups or individuals, like political opposition, religious cults or intellectuals criticizing the regime through art. In a first step repression can be traced by the Political Terror Scale. A second step will be a literature analysis of well-known cases like the repression of the Chinese group Falun Gong.

(c) The last point of how consent can be manipulated, is through mass mobilization. This strategy targets obviously the masses and the population. It may have lost some of its impact in

204 Holbig, Heike: International Dimensions of Legitimacy: Reflections on Western Theories and the Chinese Experience, in: *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, Vol.16, 2011, pp.161-181, pg.171

205 Holbig, International Dimension, pg.171

206 Burnell, Autocratic Opening, pg.5-6

the 21st century, yet it still can be an important tool of legitimation. As the conduct of mass movement campaigns try to establish a sense of unity among the population.

Table 1 shows the legitimation criteria and the corresponding tools for the analysis:

Legality	Constitution; Corruption Perception Index; Rule of law through anti-corruption;
Authority	Founding Myth; Ideology;
Performance	Socio-economic development; Human Development Index; World Development Index; Response to Crises;
Internationality	International Organizations; Regional Cooperation; External Threats;
Consent	Cooptation of elites; Repression of opposition; Mass mobilization of the population;

Table 1: Own depiction according to the criteria of the thesis

3. Analysis

3.1. General Overview

My chosen case studies are conventionally designated as autocratic regimes by Western political leaders, observers and media. There is a truth in the case as autocratic structures have been installed in all of the case studies and to get a grasp of these regimes I present a very short overview of the establishment of the regimes:

After the collapse of the Soviet-Union, Belarus became independent in 1991 and represents a special case in the political landscape of Europe in the post-Soviet era. Designated as “the last dictatorship in Europe”²⁰⁷ the Belarusian regime shows a remarkable resilience and President Aleksandr Lukashenko is ruling since 1994. He is the first and only president of Belarus, and has been reelected in 2015 for his fifth term, with almost 83.5 per cent of the vote.²⁰⁸ According to the observers from the OSCE these elections did not meet the standard of a free and fair democracy.²⁰⁹

In the People’s Republic of China (PRC) the Communist Party of China (CPC) emerged in a revolutionary war as the ruling party in 1949. Since the death of supreme leader Mao Zedong, the CPC has tried to transform itself from a socialist revolutionary party to a governing party. In the 1980s the CPC started reforms of the economic system, which eventually led to the political and economic juggernaut China is today. The CPC dominated regime allows no political pluralism but it in the last two decades an institutionalization of the leadership succession was observable as the presidency has been restricted to two five-year terms. This could change in the future as the present supreme leader of China, Xi Jinping seems to grasp an even more dominant role in the years to come.²¹⁰

The development of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is similar but somewhat different to the Chinese experience of revolutionary war. The North Korean autocratic regime is generally in power since 1945 when the Japanese imperialist intentions came to an end and

207 Rausing, Sigrid: Belarus: inside Europe’s last dictatorship, The Guardian, October 7, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/07/belarus-inside-europes-last-dictatorship> (retrieved April 3, 2018)

208 CIA Factbook, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bo.html> (retrieved April 25, 2018)

209 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Belarus, Parliamentary Elections, 11 September 2016, September 17, 2016 <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/263656> (retrieved April 13, 2018)

210 Li, Cheng and McElveen, Ryan: China’s constitutional conundrum, Brookings, February 28, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/02/28/chinas-constitutional-conundrum/> (retrieved March 22, 2018)

the Japanese were driven off the continental landmass. But the division of the Korean peninsula into two parts – (Soviet influenced) North and (United States influenced) South Korea – is of enormous importance for legitimization strategies today. Another hard blow was the economic crisis after the crumble of the Soviet Union, which led to a dire famine in the mid-1990s. The development is further hindered as North Korea is repeatedly target of international economic sanctions, due to the regimes nuclear program and ambitions in fabricating nuclear weapons. Although they share some kind of socialist heritage likewise and although they are close neighbors, North Korea's regime followed a different path than the Chinese communist regime. Economic reforms are done on a much smaller scale and more importantly a hereditary succession was established. This means that the descendants of supreme leader Kim Il Sung (first Kim Jong Il and now Kim Jong Un) were attributed the highest offices in the state.

As China and North Korea, Vietnam's autocratic regime had its origin from violent struggle. The Vietnam War unified – in contrast to the Korean War – North and South Vietnam in 1976, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), a communist autocratic regime, was established. Like the CPC, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) allows no plurality in political questions but reformed its economy in the 1980s in the direction of a market economy as well. A very important difference to the Chinese system is the de facto limitation of leader administration of five years. Leadership – General Secretary of the party, president and prime minister – itself is separated, therefore a more collective leadership is established and there is less danger of an emergence of a supreme leader.²¹¹

Even from this short sketch some conclusions regarding potential regime typologies can be drawn. The Belarusian regime has no revolutionary or violent struggle background in its establishment, but the president/supreme leader was originally elected and transformed the democratic regime into an autocracy. Since then democratic justifications like elections are held but those are merely used as window-dressing as an autocratic legitimization strategy.

The three Asian regimes have an origin in violent struggles and revolutionary leaders, which is of importance until today. Government succession is formally institutionalized and coordinated by the parties in China and Vietnam, in North Korea a hereditary succession was established as the third generation of the Kim-family is in power. Another feature of the North Korean regime is the ostensible unwillingness of economic reform.

211 Croissant, Die politischen Systeme, pg.547

These helpful features of the regimes will help for the further classification but to draw a better picture of these regimes an analysis of the datasets is beneficial.

	Polity 1991	Polity 2000	Polity 2016	Freedom House 2001	Freedom House 2016
Belarus	7	-7	-7	6	6.5
China	-7	-7	-7	6.5	6.5
North Korea	-9	-10	-10	7	7
Vietnam	-7	-7	-7	6.5	6

Table 2: Own depiction, Sources: Polity IV: 10 maximal democracy, -10 maximal autocracy; Freedom House: The Freedom Score ranges from 1-7; 1 most free, 7 least free

As Table 2 shows, all of my case studies are identified as “Autocracy” by the Polity IV dataset and as “not free” by the Freedom House Index.²¹² With the exception of Belarus there is almost no change in the character of the regime types. In the period from 1991 to 2000 Belarus drops from 7 to -7, what is clearly due to the election of president Lukashenko and his following efforts to build an autocratic regime. In China and Vietnam there is no change in the status of freedom to be seen and they generally stay on the same level of autocracy in the datasets. North Korea's autocracy rating drops from -9 to the even worse -10 which is an outcome of different factors like, economic crisis, the installed hereditary succession and North Korea's pursuit of its nuclear ambitions.

The Bertelsmann Transformation Index²¹³ (Fig. 3) measures a country's probable transition to democracy with 17 different criteria, like “Stateness” and “International Cooperation”. A similar pattern compared to Polity IV and Freedom House can be detected in the BTI as all the case studies are categorized as “hard-line autocracies” and have a similar rating. Belarus, China and Vietnam are in the same measurement area of autocracy, and seemed to improve after the turn of the millennium but nevertheless stay stable as autocracy. North Korea on the other hand dropped from 3.5 in 2003 to 2.1 points in 2016 and is, like in the other two datasets, far behind in every regard and is positioned on place 126 from 129 researched countries.

212 Freedom House, 2018, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018> (retrieved March April 26, 2018); Center for Systemic Peace, Polity IV: Regime Authority Characteristics and Transitions Datasets, 2018, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html> (retrieved April 26, 2018)

213 Bertelsmann Transformation Index, 2018, <https://www.bti-project.org/de/laenderberichte/> (retrieved April 26, 2018)

These datasets deliver some insights in the attempt of a regime typology but it is obviously essential to expand the classification indicators to draw a more nuanced picture of different autocracies, therefore a consultation of the secondary literature to these regimes is necessary.

Transformation of the Regimes

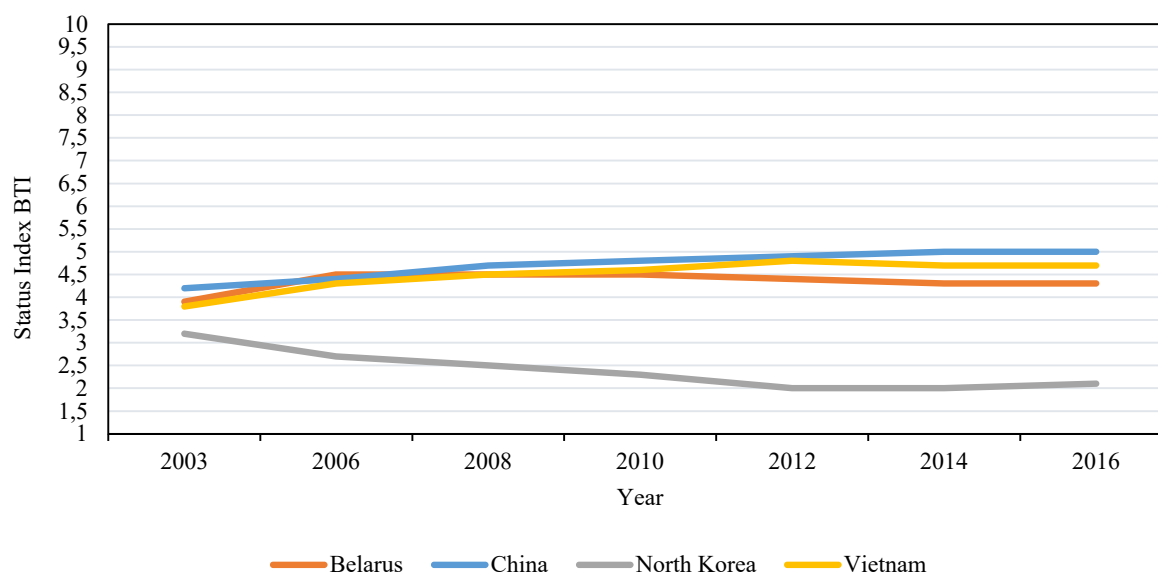


Figure 3: Own depiction, Source: BTI: 1 = worst; 10 = best

Belarus is difficult to classify as the BTI shows a development in an even more autocratic direction. On first guess it would be possible to classify the regime as personalist or electoral authoritarian as each one would have its eligibility. Some signs would militate in favor of a personalist autocracy as a strong indicator of these regimes is the missing ideology²¹⁴ and Belarus has no obvious ideology at the core of the regime Lukashenko rules as a “strongman” with almost no boundaries of his will and without any original justification. Although he is able to change the rules of the political game he is currently not “ruler for life”²¹⁵ but nevertheless he is a ruler without an obvious expiration date. Another problem poses the question of the classification of electoral authoritarianism. Andreas Schedler argues for instance that all regimes with a Freedom House score between four and six should be classified as electoral autocracies.²¹⁶ This approach would put Belarus into the area of a “personalist regime” as it has a Freedom House score of 6.5. Yet even if Belarusian elections are not free and fair, there is a theoretical possibility for the opposition to challenge Lukashenko at the ballot, and according

²¹⁴ Kailitz, Classifying, pg.49

²¹⁵ Kailitz, Classifying, pg.49

²¹⁶ Schedler, Andreas: The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism, in: Andreas Schedler (ed.) Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition, Boulder 2006, pp. 1–26

to Jason Brownlee “some form of multiparty or multi-factional polling must be allowed”²¹⁷ to define a regime as electoral authoritarianism. Furthermore, competitive autocracies “may routinely manipulate formal democratic rules, [but] they are unable to eliminate them or reduce them to a mere façade”.²¹⁸ Levitsky and Way argue that in “competitive authoritarian regimes, by contrast, independent media outlets are not only legal but often quite influential and journalists, though frequently threatened and periodically attacked – often emerge as important opposition figures”.²¹⁹ The media in Belarus is for sure not free but also not illegal, for instance coverage of the last parliamentary election in 2016 was not hindered with violent reprimands.²²⁰ Considering the thesis’ timeframe and the presence of elections and no total repression concerning the media, Belarus is therefore to classify as an *electoral autocracy*.

China and Vietnam show in the BTI similar signs in the transition of the regime, yet both are clearly to be labeled as autocracies. Vietnam has less indications of any emergence of a supreme leader due to the collective leadership, whereas China had several supreme leaders dominating the party and the regime. Both regimes are controlled by a communist party and therefor operate with a strong ideological background. Keeping the ratings of the indices in mind, China and Vietnam could therefore be classified as totalitarian regimes. But if totalitarian regimes are permeating the whole system and society with ideology and rule mainly with terror, these two regimes cannot be classified as totalitarian. The obvious hint of classification is the existence of the single party as according to Geddes a single-party regime is characterized by the fact that “a party organization exercises some power over the leader at least part of the time, controls the career paths of officials, organizes the distribution of benefits to supporters, and mobilizes citizens to vote and show support for party leaders in other ways.”²²¹ The main legitimization strategies in single-party regimes are concerned that “power is usually justified as reflecting the common interest of the ruling and the ruled. In this concept electoral competition of political alternatives is not only unnecessary, but opposition is illegitimate”.²²² Hence I classify both regimes, China and Vietnam, as *single-party autocracies*.

217 Brownlee, Jason: Portents of Pluralism: How Hybrid Regimes Affect Democratic Transitions, in: American Journal of Political Science, Vol.53, No.3, 2009, pp. 515–532, pg.524

218 Brownlee, Portents of Pluralism, pg.524

219 Levitsky, Steven, and Way, Lucan: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism, in: Journal of Democracy, Vol.13, No.2, 2002, pp.51–65, pg.57

220 Freedom House, 2018, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/belarus> (retrieved April 25, 2018)

221 Geddes, Democratization, pg.124

222 Kailitz, Classifying, pg.47

The classification of North Korea bears some problems as the regime shows traits of a strong personalist and totalitarian regime – there is one supreme leader and there is total control over the political, economic and societal sphere. The specification by Geddes would support a personalist regime in DPRK as she defines this kind of regime as “when one individual wins [...] a struggle, successfully continuing to draw support from the organization that brought him to power but limiting his supporters influence on policy and personnel decisions”.²²³ Two problems remain: first, the leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-un, did not win any (obvious) struggle as he inherited his position. Second, in personalist regimes ideology is rather irrelevant, but ideology plays a very important role in the legitimation process of North Korea.²²⁴ So North Korea may be an autocracy with strong personalist tendencies but it is not a personalist autocracy per se.

Although Kim Jong-un inherited his leading position, the DPRK can hardly be classified as a monarchical autocracy. A monarch’s justification is a God-given, natural or established historical legitimacy because of descent.²²⁵ In North Korea this is not exactly the case as it was not always clear that neither Kim Jong-il nor Kim Jong-un will become supreme leader only by descent.²²⁶ Because of the huge importance of ideology, the general single-party control over almost every aspect of political, economic and societal life and a tremendous repression apparatus, it is reasonable to classify North Korea as a *totalitarian regime*.

223 Geddes, *Democratization*, pg.129

224 Frank, *Innenansichten*, pp.51-109

225 Kailitz, *Classifying*, pg.48

226 Köllner, Patrick: Nordkorea nach Kim Jong-il: Ein zweiter dynastischer Machtwechsel? In: *GIGA Focus*, No.1, 2010

3.2. Belarus

“There will be no rose, orange, or banana revolution in Belarus”

– Aleksandr Lukashenko, 2005²²⁷

Overview of State Institutions²²⁸

Belarus is officially a unitary, democratic republic with a president as the head of state who is elected, in a theoretically democratic process, on the basis of free and fair suffrage for a term of five years. The political power of the president is encompassing as he is able to directly issue decrees and bills which have the force of law (Art.85). He has immunity and his honor and dignity are protected by the law. The constitutional rights of the president include for instance the appointment and dismissal of government, the prime minister and all judges in Belarus (Art.84). As commander-in-chief of the armed forces he is furthermore able to appoint and dismiss the supreme command of the armed forces (Art 84).

The legislative branch is represented by the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, a bicameral parliament consisting of the lower chamber – the House of Representatives – and the upper chamber – the Council of the Republic, and is elected for four years (last election in 2016). The House of Representatives has 110 seats, which are virtually all taken by pro-Lukashenko candidates, whereas the Council of the Republic has 64 seats, of which 56 are elected by regional councils and 8 are appointed by the president. The National Assembly is heavily restricted as it is only granted to consider drafting laws (Art.97), whereas the final decision lies in the hands of the president (Art. 100). In the political decision making process the House of Representatives in a first step is able to draft a bill, which needs to be approved by the Council of the Republic in a second step. The president nevertheless stays the last and highest organ of decision making. In this process the Council of the Republic basically serves as a policy stopper for and constitutional protection of the president and as a control of the House of Representatives (Art. 100).

227 Korosteleva, Elena: Was There a Quiet Revolution? Belarus After the 2006 Presidential Election, in: Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, Vol.25, No.2-3, 2009, pp.324-346, pg.324

228 Facts and Organization of the state: CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bo.html> (retrieved April 2, 2018); Official Internet Portal of the President of the Republic of Belarus: <http://president.gov.by/en/> (retrieved April 2, 2018); An unofficial translation of the English Version of the 1994 Constitution of Belarus (amendments 1996 and 2004): International Labor Organization: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_127420.pdf (retrieved April 3, 2018)

The executive power is performed by the government the central body of state administration, consisting of the head of government, the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, which are all appointed by the president with the consent of the House of Representatives. If the House of Representatives for instance does not agree to the appointment suggestions of the president, he is able to dismiss the chamber (Art.106). The government is generally accountable to the president and the parliament and is responsible for the elaboration of domestic and foreign policies and implement it (Art. 107).

3.2.1. Legality

The Belarusian constitution is divided in a preamble and nine sections with 146 articles, it was adopted first in 1994 and amended in 1996 and 2004. The main aim is to detect legitimization strategies inside the official legal framework, so in this section will follow a short elaboration of the constitution of the Republic of Belarus.

The preamble stresses the responsibility of the people for the present and future Belarus. It emphasizes the assertion of the rights and freedoms of every citizen, the desire of maintaining civic concord, stable foundations of the government and the rule of law. The first section of the constitution presents the regime's legitimization strategy of legality as Article 4 and 6 guarantee political pluralism and highlight the division of power between legislature, executive and judiciary. Article 7 and 8 concentrate on the principle of supremacy of law, and the supremacy of the universally acknowledged principles of international law and ensure that its laws comply with such principles. Whereas natural resources belong to the state, private property is protected and equal opportunities for private economic activities are guaranteed as well as workers are allowed to participate and form unions (Art.13). Article 17 determines the official languages as Belarusian and Russian.

Section 2 concentrates on the inter-dependence between individuals, society and the state. Articles 21 and 60-62 underline the states' responsibility of safeguarding the rights and liberties of the citizens and the right to a dignified standard of living. The constitution is concerned with performance legitimization as the aim of the state is continuous improvement of necessary living conditions. In addition the provision of education, personal development of children and the equality of men and women is guaranteed (Art.32). Furthermore it is stated that the state has the responsibility to provide sufficient health care facilities and offer free health care (Art.45), social security especially in case of disablement (Art.47) and appropriate housing (Art.48). The

articles 23-29 are concerned with the state's responsibility to deliver domestic security and the guarantee of every individual to be protected by law. The state shall strive for full employment and deliver the possibility for every citizen to choose work according to personal needs (Art.41). The integration of personal freedoms in the constitution gets a prominent position as every citizen has the freedom of thought and belief, which is supported by the freedom of the media (Art.33). The freedom to demonstrate in accordance to the law (Art.35) and the freedom of association (Art.36) is likewise guaranteed as is the possibility of free vote according to democratic principles (Art.38). Moreover it is mentioned that the preservation of traditions (Art.54) and the protection of the environment (Art.55) are duties of every citizen.

Table 3 shows legitimation strategies detected in the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus:

Authority	no ideological constraints
Performance	economic and domestic security; improvement of general living conditions and welfare;
Internationality	supremacy of international law
Consent	political pluralism; freedom of thought, demonstration and association

Table 3: Own depiction, Source: Constitution of Belarus

The constitution of Belarus promotes democratic values and performance-legitimation but especially in the beginning of Lukashenko's reign the abuse and the adjustment of the constitution was an important tool of regime consolidation.²²⁹ The constitutional change of term of office of the president and the new possibility of a third reelection in 2004 have in this respect the most impact for regime resilience. In the wake of these changes the legislative has been disempowered and the division of power is increasingly subordinated to the president.²³⁰ Whereas these changes certainly helped to stabilize the regime, it is argued that the significance of further manipulation of the constitution should not be exaggerated, because the power is directly focused on the president anyway.²³¹ So the original legitimation of Lukashenko is that he was elected in an institutionalized process. This formal process was used for his personal

229 Bredies, Ingmar: Verfassungen ohne Konstitutionalismus – Quasikonstitutionelle Institutionalisierung des Autoritarismus in Osteuropa, in: Totalitarismus und Demokratie, Vol.8, 2011, pp.133–153, pg.149

230 Lindner, Rainer: „Präsidentchaftswahl“ in Belarus: Autoritäres Regime, abhängige Staatswirtschaft, internationale Isolation, SWP Studie S6, 2006, pp.1-27, pg.7

231 Bredies, Verfassungen ohne Konstitutionalismus, pg.149

gain as Lukashenko changed the constitution in a way that allowed him to stay in office without limitation and dissolved the division of power in his favor.

Although the constitution is prone to change and the division of power is not guaranteed, Fig. 4 shows that the trust in the rule of law is rising, but from a low level.²³² Likewise is the perception of corruption high but decreasing, nevertheless both scores are rather poor and could endanger the legality legitimization strategy. Yet the Corruption Perception Index in 2016 places Belarus on rank 79 getting past other post-Soviet countries like Russia and Ukraine and losing one point to Turkey and Bulgaria.²³³ In fact Belarus' pundits reject the notion of a highly corrupt Belarus as they dismiss the Corruption Perception Index as politically motivated and therefore flawed.²³⁴

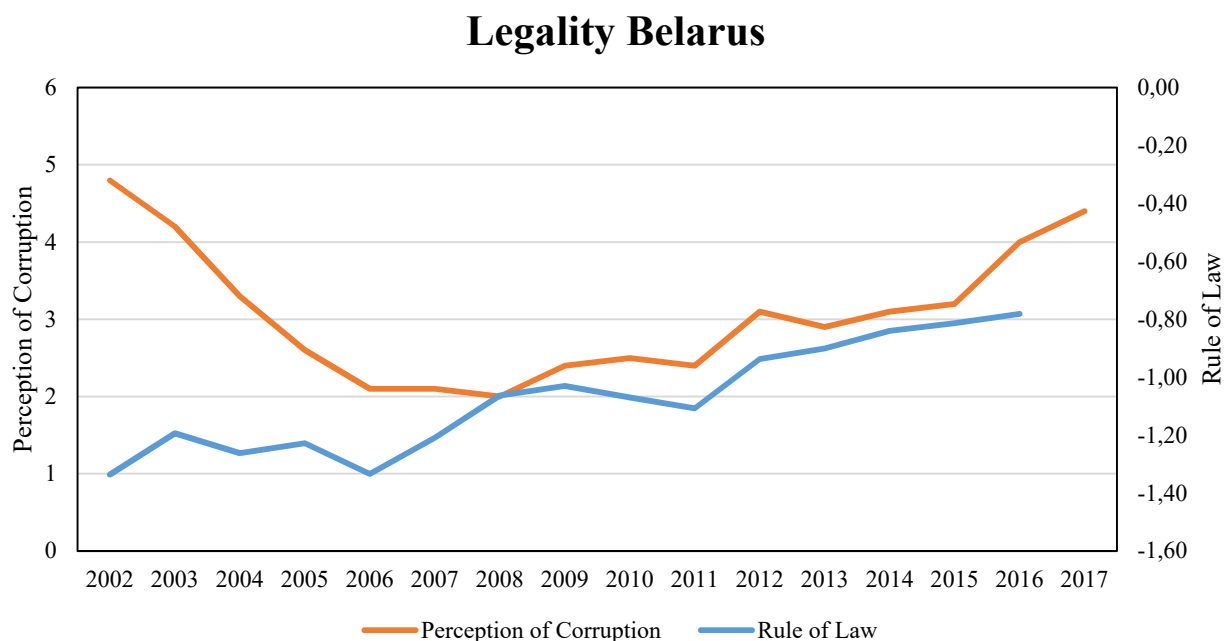


Fig. 4: Own depiction, Sources: Transparency International: evaluates the perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople. 0=highly corrupt, 10=very clean;

World Bank Index: evaluates the perceived confidence of agents in the rules of a society regarding the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, the courts and the likelihood of crime and violence. -2.5=no Rule of Law, 2.5=high Rule of Law

²³² World Bank Index, 2018, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

²³³ Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index, 2016: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016 (retrieved April 4, 2018)

²³⁴ Ioffe Grigory: Machtsicherung in Belarus. Der kulturelle Faktor, in: Belarus-Analysen, Vol.23, 2015, pp.6-7, pg.7; Yarashevich, Viachaslau: Political Economy of Modern Belarus: Going Against Mainstream? In: Europe-Asia Studies, Vol.66, No.10, 2014, pp.1703-1734, pg.1726

The measurement by Transparency International indeed seems biased as the worsening of the perception of corruption in the years 2003-2006 correlates with the tightening of Lukashenko's authoritarian power in the same timeframe. Yet the extension of his power does not necessarily correlate with an expansion of corruption. Especially as the regime generally tries to curb corruption as Lukashenko's first election program in 1994 was clearly focused on pledges for an anti-corruption policy and he stylized himself to an anticorruption crusader.²³⁵ Petty corruption involving low level officials is small²³⁶ and so this is not the main problem in establishing an effective "Rule of Law" legitimation framework. The regime's intention to fight corruption can be seen for instance in the increase of registered cases of corruption and the adoption of the "State programme on combating crime and corruption for 2017-2019".²³⁷

If there are official cases against corruption it can be seen that the root of the problem lies in high level corruption, which often have a political dimension.²³⁸ The fight against corruption does not only target the legitimation strategy of legality, but anti-corruption strategies are a measure to control horizontal threats to the regime as well. This can be observed as high profile corruption cases are often not subject of legal action. These cases are rather used for gaining political leeway in coopting or repressing high ranking officials. This is done to prevent the possible emergence of a regime endangering, political opposition among the elites.²³⁹ Through this kind of cooptation Lukashenko achieves two aims, on the one hand he is able to present himself as the president who fights against corruption, and on the other hand he retains the grip on the elites in politics and economy. One feature of this strategy is that some culprits are rehabilitated soon after their conviction and are reintegrated in the system.²⁴⁰ The fight against corruption is used by the regime to enhance legitimacy in two different ways. On the one hand Lukashenko presents himself as anti-corruption crusader, who embraces the rule of law and does not tolerate criminal activity. On the other hand is the actual or impending prosecution of

235 Marples, David: Color revolutions: The Belarus case, in: *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol.39, 2006, pp.351-364, pg.355; Way, Lucan A.: *Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave: The Cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine*, in: *World Politics*, Vol.57, No.2, 2005, pp.231-261, pg.251

236 Freedom House: Belarus. Nations in Transit, 2017: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/belarus> (retrieved April 5, 2018)

237 Council of Europe: Anti-corruption digest of Belarus, February 2018 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/corruption/anti-corruption-digest/belarus> (retrieved April 5, 2018)

238 Astapenia, Ryhor: Fighting Corruption in Belarus: Barking up the Wrong Tree? Belarus Digest, April 15, 2014, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/fighting-corruption-in-belarus-barking-up-the-wrong-tree/> (retrieved April 5, 2018)

239 Porotnikov, Andrej: Wie man an der Macht bleibt: Lukaschenkas Rezept, in: *Belarus-Analysen*, Vol.23, 2015, pp.12-13, pg.13

240 Leukavets, Alla: Machtgruppen in der belarussischen Politik, in: *Belarus-Analysen*, Vol.29, 2016, pp.2-5, pg.4

high-level corruption a means to coopt and repress elites, whose strengthening would be a danger to regime resilience.

3.2.2. Authority

The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus does not deliver any obvious ideological background of Lukashenko's regime, yet there is a reference to the "centuries-old history of development of Belarusian statehood" in the preamble. This refers to the two main problems in Lukashenko's ideological legitimization strategy: "history" and "nation-building". Belarus had almost no chance to build an own distinct identity as it has never been independent and has always been under a strong Russian influence. The Czars abolished Belarusian culture and language and during the Second World War the elites of Belarus were decimated.²⁴¹ Therefore Lukashenko needed to establish a specific legitimization strategy as he could not rely on a strong foundational myth respective a strong national tradition.

The regime's legitimization strategy of "Authority" is generally under scrutiny within the academic world. David Marples for instance bluntly classifies Lukashenko's legitimization strategy as an aimless "national nihilism, the only conceivable purpose of which is to extend indefinitely the personal power of one individual, Alyaksandr Lukashenka".²⁴² Grigory Ioffe on the other hand argues that "Belarus is a country with an unfinished nation-building"²⁴³ and that Lukashenko's legitimacy is high in this regard as he "embodies a strand of Belarusian nationalism that is aligned with the self-perceptions, mentality, and aspirations of many ordinary Belarusians".²⁴⁴

However, during Lukashenko's rule are in this regard two different legitimization strategies detectable, the first pursued an approach to Russia marking a Soviet heritage and from 2003 on, the second strategy, which is characterized by an emphasis on Belarus sovereignty.²⁴⁵

At the beginning of his rule Lukashenko was presenting himself with two distinct features, one was his image of the anti-corruption crusader, the other was that he is a representative of a

241 Backes, Uwe: *Geschichtspolitik als Kernelement der Herrschaftslegitimation autokratischer Systeme*, in: *Totalitarismus und Demokratie*, Vol.6, 2009, pp.271–292, pg.284

242 Marples, David R. : *Elections and Nation-Building in Belarus: A Comment on Ioffe*, in: *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol.48, No.1, 2007, pp.59-67, pg.65

243 Ioffe, Grigory: *Unfinished Nation-Building in Belarus and the 2006 Presidential Election*, in: *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol.48, No.1, 2007, pp.37-58, pg.55

244 Ioffe, *Unfinished Nation-Building*, pg.54

245 Leshchenko, Natalie: *A fine instrument: two nation-building strategies in post-Soviet Belarus*, in: *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol.10, No.3, 2004, pp.333–352

glorified, Soviet heritage.²⁴⁶ Lukashenko used the weak Belarusian cultural identity after his election in 1994 and soon started to thwart the short-lived attempts in Belarusian identity-building from 1990-1993 in praising the past within the Soviet Union. Russian language was promoted, Belarusian symbols like the Pahonia or the white-red-white flag abolished. The Independence Day was changed from the 27th of July, the date of Belarusian sovereignty, to the 3rd of July, the day Minsk was liberated from Nazi-Germany by the Red Army in 1944.²⁴⁷ Lukashenko's legitimation completely relied on the Russian heritage, promoting the foundational myth of Belarus as part of the Slavic family and the Second World War as the identity-building moment in history. He stood for the "golden past" and projected the West as enemy to the new state.²⁴⁸

The approach to Russia came to a hasty halt, when Lukashenko's advances for a union with Russia backfired. Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed to include Belarus into the Russian Federation, which would have ended Lukashenko's leadership and power ambitions. Therefore Lukashenko's legitimation strategy switched suddenly from "neo-Sovietism" to a nationalist strategy, emphasizing Belarusian sovereignty.²⁴⁹ This turn of attitude is shown in several measures which were implemented soon after the pivot to gain legitimation through the strengthening of Belarusian sovereignty, like adaption of the national anthem, adding the attribute "national" to institutions like "National Library" or the changing of schoolbooks which locate the nation of Belarus back to the 15th century.²⁵⁰

Yet the two main patterns of the new legitimation strategy are the emphasis on state-building rather than nation-building and an incremental development of cultural consciousness.²⁵¹ Due to coherence and resilient rule, Lukashenko did not abolish all Soviet values as Leshchenko argues that: "Unchallenged authority of the leadership and domination of the state in most spheres of social life, evasion of responsibility and discouragement of independent initiative [are] principles which make Lukashenka's rule possible."²⁵² The focus on development of cultural consciousness serves two purposes, one is to tie the civil society to the state, but the more important one is the attempt to discredit the opposition which uses national narratives to propagate against the regime.²⁵³ This is for instance done through the promotion of the

246 Rudling, Per A.: Lukashenka and the "Red-Browns": National Ideology, Commemoration of the Past and Political Belonging, in: *Forum für osteuropäische Ideen- und Zeitgeschichte*, Vol.15, No.1, pp.95-125, pg.105

247 Backes, *Geschichtspolitik als Kernelement*, pg.284-285

248 Leshchenko, *A fine instrument*, pg.339-340

249 Burkhardt, *Concepts of the Nation*, pg.159

250 Leshchenko, *A fine instrument*, pg.341-343

251 Burkhardt, *Concepts of the Nation*, pg.160-161

252 Leshchenko, *A fine instrument*, pg.346

253 Leshchenko, *A fine instrument*, pg.346

Belarusian language and the accentuation of the role of Belarusian fighters in winning the Second World War.²⁵⁴

3.2.3. Performance

The relative weak gain of legitimation in the field of “Authority” needs to be balanced by a focus on the other possible legitimation strategies. An important one in this regard is the performance-based legitimation. Therefore, the constitution of Belarus is highlighting at several instances the importance of the improvement of general living conditions and the obligation by the state to provide health care and social security. A research of the basic performance indicators shows the following²⁵⁵: The literacy rate is at an estimated 99.7% and the state’s education expenditure was 4.9% of GDP in 2015, which placed Belarus at rank 71 from 173 countries. The approximately 9.5 Million Belarusians have an average life expectancy at birth of 73 years and Belarus is on a rather bad rank of 141 out of 224 researched countries. The life expectancy is higher than in Russia (71) or Ukraine (72.1) but lower than in the Baltic States Latvia (74.7), Lithuania (75) and Estonia (76.9). Though a low infant mortality rate and a high health worker rate would suggest that the healthcare sector is relatively well developed. The infant mortality rate of 3.6 deaths/1000 live births in 2017, ranks Belarus on 200 out of 225, with Monaco best at rank 225 with 1.8 deaths/1000 live births. Belarus had in 2014 approximately 4.07 physicians/1000 population which is more than sufficient as the World Health Organization suggests that 2.3 health workers/1000 population is the critical point of insufficiency. The rather high development is furthermore reflected in the HDI, which was improving in Belarus and is shown in Fig. 5.²⁵⁶ Belarus ranks, with a score of 0.796 in 2015, at place 52 of 188 surveyed countries. The human development is on a higher level as Ukraine’s, which is placed on 82 with 0.743 and comparable to Russia’s, with 0.804 on rank 49. In this survey, the Baltic States Latvia (0.83/44), Lithuania (0.848/37) and Estonia (0.865/30) are on a better level again, so there is obviously room for improvement. But it is argued that Belarus generally performs well in this regard as it has “the lowest levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality among former USSR republics, and has managed to preserve high levels of social

254 Burkhardt, Concepts of the Nation, pg.162-163

255 CIA Factbook, 2017: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bo.html> (retrieved April 6, 2018)

256 United Nations Development Program, Human Development Index, 2017 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

security for its citizens”.²⁵⁷ So the human development is a good basis for performance legitimization but the downside is that excessive social spending and too high wages in state-enterprises, in contrast to the low productivity, is beyond Belarus’ means and not sustainable.²⁵⁸ This problem can furthermore be observed as education and health services are nominally free of charge but in recent years a decrease of subsidies in these areas can be witnessed.²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, since Lukashenko is in power the overall GDP was constantly increasing what can be seen in Fig. 5, but the steep rise in 2009 was slowing down in 2009.²⁶⁰ Apart from the 2008 world financial crisis, this slow-down was influenced by two factors. In 2009 Russia imposed an export tariff on oil exports to Belarus²⁶¹ or at least market prices for the delivered energy resources were implemented.²⁶² This hit Belarus’ economy hard because the Belarusian economy was built on underpriced energy subsidies from Russia, which accounted annually for approximately 13% of GDP.²⁶³ The other factor can be attributed to the overspending of the state, missing domestic savings and the outflow of hard currency due to a trade imbalance, which led to an enormous inflation.²⁶⁴ Since then the economy did not recover as growth is not as impressive as before and GDP is even declining in recent years.

257 Yarashevich, *Political Economy of Modern Belarus*, pg.1704

258 Ioffe, Grigory and Viachaslau Yarashevich: *Debating Belarus: An Economy in Comparative Perspective*, in: *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol.52, No.6, 2011, pp.750-779, pg.751

259 Preiherman, Yauheni: *Mandatory Placement: A Soviet Remnant of Belarusian Higher Education*, *Belarus Digest*, May 7, 2012, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/mandatory-placement-a-soviet-remnant-of-belarusian-higher-education/> (retrieved April 9, 2018); *Belarus Digest: Is Healthcare in Belarus Free?* May 30, 2011, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/myths/is-healthcare-in-belarus-free/> (retrieved April 9, 2018)

260 World Bank Development Indicators, 2017 <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

261 Ioffe and Yarashevich, *Debating Belarus*, pg.751

262 Marples, *Elections and Nation-Building in Belarus*, pg.60

263 The World Bank: *Belarus country economic memorandum : economic transformation for growth*, 2012, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/938441468206681722/Belarus-country-economic-memorandum-economic-transformation-for-growth> (retrieved April 8, 2018)

264 Veselova, E.Sh.: *The Market-Socialist Country*, in: *Problems of Economic Transition*, Vol.58, No.6, 2016, pp.546-555, pg.549

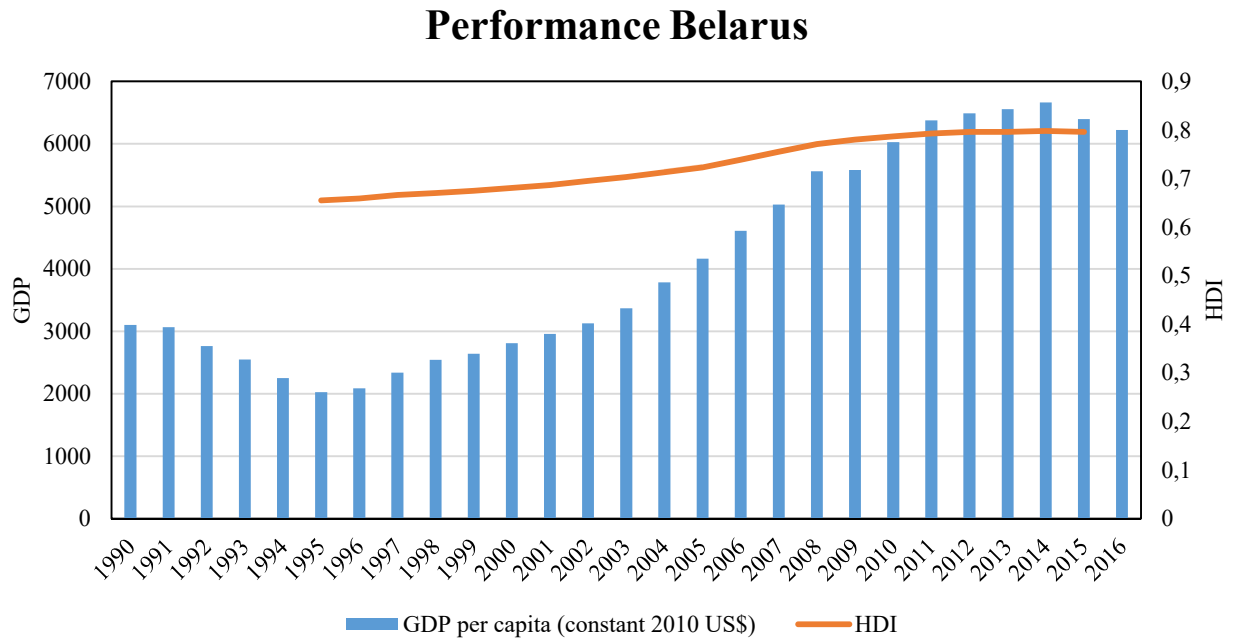


Fig. 5: Own depiction, Source: GDP per capita in constant 2010 US\$ from World Bank Development Indicators; HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living (measured by GNI); 1 is the highest value

The economic performance of the regime can be divided in two different trajectories: economic growth from 1994-2008, and a deceleration of growth and even a decrease of GDP from 2009-2016. The foundation for the good economic performance was laid during the period in the Soviet Union, when Belarus was transformed from an agricultural into a modernized and industrialized state. It developed into an important manufacturing region, with the focus on oil refinement and machinery construction, but emphasizing on textiles and high tech industry as well and was for instance processing microchips.²⁶⁵ Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the attempt to transform to a market economy with a shock therapy, the economy of Belarus was on its knees. The sudden change from a planned to a market economy resulted in an economic crisis and a decreasing standard of living and was on a low point in 1994/95 as seen in Fig. 5.²⁶⁶

From 1994 on the economic measures of Lukashenko concentrated on creating a so-called market socialist system but these measures are free from ideological undertones and rather serve the regime to retain control over means of production and the population.²⁶⁷ The Belarusian

²⁶⁵ Ioffe, Grigory: Understanding Belarus: Economy and Political Landscape, in: Europe-Asia Studies, Vol.56, No.1, 2004, pp.85–118, pg.86

²⁶⁶ Marples, Elections and Nation-Building in Belarus, pg.60

²⁶⁷ Bohdan, Siarhei: The European Myth of Belarusian Socialism, Belarus Digest, June 12, 2012, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/the-european-myth-of-belarusian-socialism/> (retrieved April 10, 2018)

economic system of market socialism is characterized by state-ownership of agriculture and industry, suppression of private business and heavy state intervention in the economy.²⁶⁸ Yet, this system proves to have serious flaws like a constant overemployment and a low level of productivity in state-companies, as well as failed modernization and lack in technological progress caused by bad planning.²⁶⁹ The relative good industrial foundation of the Soviet-Era was soon used up and industrial output broke down as the former high-tech industry could not compete any longer with the general advancements in the field and the light industry could not compete with cheap-producing competitors on the global market.²⁷⁰

The mismanagement of the state economy and general overspending of the state resulted in a trade deficit and a financial situation which could not be balanced by Belarusian banks and culminated in a high inflation and an economic crisis in 2011. The crisis was stabilized in 2014 but the aftermath and the outlook for the economic system is yet to see.²⁷¹ In this light there is justified doubt in the validity of Belarus' impressive numbers of GDP growth. It seems that the domestic economy was not able to achieve this growth by its own merit and was mainly fueled by the large Russian subsidies of energy resources.²⁷² Another argument is that interferences in the market distort GDP numbers as prices are set and restricted by the state and do not correlate with real market prices.²⁷³ Therefore, in order to enhance performance legitimization, the regime has to tackle several problems like, diminishment of Russian dependency, stabilization of the balance of trade and attraction of foreign investment.²⁷⁴

3.2.4. Internationality

The international legitimization strategy of the Lukashenko regime is mainly characterized by a rather strained relationship to the Western community and inconsistent relations to Russia. Another important benefactor for Belarus' regime resilience has been the so-called "color revolution" in 2004 in the Ukraine. After the turmoil which has arisen in the Ukraine as a

268 Zlotnikov L.K.: Can the Belarusian Model Provide Growth? In: Problems of Economic Transition, Vol.58, No.6, 2016, pp.556-570, pg.559-561

269 Veselova, The Market-Socialist Country, pg.549

270 Zlotnikov, Can the Belarusian Model, pg.561

271 Veselova, The Market-Socialist Country, pg.550

272 Marples, Elections and Nation-Building in Belarus, pg.61

273 Zlotnikov, Can the Belarusian Model, pg.561-565

274 Shirov, A.A., K.E. Sabchishina and V.V. Potapenko: Development of the Belarusian Economy, in: Problems of Economic Transition, Vol.58, No.6, 2016, pp.487-498, pg.497-498

consequence of the Orange Revolution, the sole argumentation that only a strong leadership is able to preserve peace in Belarus was a boost to Lukashenko's legitimization.²⁷⁵

The mostly good relations to Russia are very important for regime legitimization as cheap energy resources flowing to Belarus are essential for the domestic performance legitimization strategy, which is crumbling without Russian subsidies, especially as Russia is the main trading partner of Belarus as well. In 2016 Russia imports were counting for 55.5% and exports for 46.3% of overall trade.²⁷⁶ Through good relations with the Eurasian Economic Community, Belarus companies were able to exploit benefits like free trade on the Russian market and fill economic niches, like agricultural products and machinery. These niches were left vacant after the Russian-Ukraine ties declined, and stimulates the Belarusian economy.²⁷⁷ Politically Belarus and Russia have similar interests as they both share a critical stance to NATO and Western influence in Eastern Europe. They are strategic allies performing military maneuvers and Russian military is even allowed to have facilities on Belarusian soil.²⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Lukashenko seems trying to diversify his international options and does not solely rely on Russia as the regime is able to profit from but is likewise vulnerable to Russian interests. Especially the economic and political loss of the regime will be high, if Russia circumvents Belarus with new gas-pipelines, resulting in the cut off of Belarus' political leeway.²⁷⁹

The relations to the West are mainly strained because of the authoritarian traits and the development into an autocracy of the regime. Lukashenko turned away from the pro-Western course of the Belarusian government in the early 1990s and started to promote sovereignty and independence with Neo-Soviet means. After the U.S. and the European Union issued economic sanction against Belarus, Lukashenko discredited them as enemies to the Belarusian nation and alleged that they want to subdue Belarus.²⁸⁰ Generally, Think-Tanks and Experts advise that Western sanctions are counter-productive and consequently they support a less restrictive

275 Marples, David und Uladsimir Padhol: Warum Lukaschenka an der Macht bleibt und die Konsequenzen für Belarus, in: Belarus-Analysen, No.23, 2015, pp.9-10, pg.10

276 CIA Factbook, 2017: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bo.html> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

277 Shirov et al., Development of the Belarusian Economy, pg.494

278 Marples, David: Outpost of tyranny? pg.766; Higgins, Andrew: Russia's War Games With Fake Enemies Cause Real Alarms, New York Times, September 13, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/world/europe/russia-baltics-belarus.html> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

279 Bohdan, Siarhei: Losing Russian transit, Belarus looks for European and Chinese alternatives, Belarus Digest, January 26, 2018, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/losing-russian-transit-belarus-looks-for-european-and-chinese-alternatives/> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

280 Leshchenko, Natalie: The National Ideology and the Basis of the Lukashenka Regime in Belarus, in: Europe-Asia Studies, Vol.60, No.8, 2008, pp.1419-1433, pg.1426

approach to Belarus.²⁸¹ It is argued that sanctions would lead Belarus into more isolation and deeper into Russian's arms.²⁸²

Belarus is anyway interested in building solid ties to all international actors, be it for economic benefits or to balance Russian influence. This can be observed in the rather pro-Europe stance taken in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis and civil war in 2014.²⁸³ Another Belarusian long-term strategy is visible concerning relations to China which have been intensified. The main aim in this relationship is the attempt of attracting Chinese FDI inflow to Belarus and promoting the strategical benevolent position of Belarus for the Chinese "New Silk Road Project".²⁸⁴

3.2.5. Consent

The resilience of Lukashenko is not based on organizations like a party, but rather by the cooptation of certain elites and after the de facto elimination of parliament power the state is basically run by these bureaucratic elites. These elite-networks are subject to the patron Lukashenko and the delegacy of top-posts are often shuffled in order to prevent the accumulation of power by individuals.²⁸⁵ The elite and top-bureaucracy are mainly shaped by two distinctive groups, consisting of the conservative security apparatus and pragmatic technocrats.²⁸⁶ The group controlling the security apparatus is characterized by the fact that these elites are mainly born outside of Belarus and were educated in Moscow, whereas the technocrats stand for a more distanced relationship to Russia and rather favor a liberalization of the economy.²⁸⁷ These differences are an important factor in the exercise of power in the Belarusian regime. At the beginning of Lukashenko's autocratic reign, the consolidation of

281 Preiherman, Yauheni: Why the EU Should Engage With Belarus, Carnegie Europe, April 3, 2017, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/68495> (retrieved April 11, 2018); Hett, Felix and Stephan Meuser: The European Union and Belarus, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, February 2016, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/12343.pdf> (retrieved April 11, 2018)

282 Korosteleva, Elena A.: The European Union and Belarus: democracy promotion by technocratic means? In: *Democratization*, Vol.23, No.4, 2016, pp.678-698, pg.690

283 Shraibman, Artyom: Europe's Last Dictator Comes in From the Cold, Carnegie Moscow Center, April 6, 2016, <http://carnegie.ru/commentary/2016/04/06/europe-s-last-dictator-comes-in-from-cold/iwp6> (retrieved April 11, 2018)

284 Bohdan, Siarhei: Minsk wants China's help countering Russian and Western pressure, *Belarus Digest*, April 26, 2017, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/minsk-wants-chinas-help-countering-russian-and-western-pressure/> (retrieved April 11, 2018)

285 Leukavets, Machtgruppen in der belarussischen Politik, pg.4

286 Bohdan, Siarhei: Who Rules Belarus? *Belarus Digest*, May 31, 2013, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/analytical-paper-who-rules-belarus/> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

287 Liakhovich, Andrei: Belarusian elites – change and authoritarian rule, in: *Back from the cold? The EU and Belarus in 2009*, Chaillot Paper, No.109, 2009, pp.37-48

power was the main focus of the president and he therefore needed the security apparatus to repress potential opposition. The well-established contacts to Russia by the conservatives helped to obtain Russian energy resources to distribute wealth among the elites and use Russian resources for the provision of performance legitimizing measures.²⁸⁸ Around the mid-2000s when Russian subsidies began to diminish, the influence of the conservative elites decreased as well and the more liberal group of younger technocrats could extend their influence.²⁸⁹ This change to the rather liberal faction shows that Lukashenko is trying to diversify his legitimization strategies and does not want to rely solely on Russian benevolence and more importantly he wants to decrease Russian influence in domestic politics.

So the main threats to the regime were horizontal ones and came from elites close to Lukashenko. In 1996 when the power of the parliament was diminished, members of Lukashenko's inner circle switched sides and openly tried to oust him but Lukashenko was able to retain control and the head of the mutiny, Viktor Hanchar, disappeared.²⁹⁰ In the course of the change to the economically more liberal group there were open discrepancies as well. In 2011 for instance some elites challenged Lukashenko's economic program, yet it is noteworthy that these arguments were made public but did not end in a rigorous repression of the dissident voices.²⁹¹

The general consent of the population is difficult to assess because Lukashenko is repeatedly reelected. Whereas the original election in 1994 was in a democratic way, he soon changed the constitution and disempowered almost all state institutions which allowed him to remain president until now (2018). His reign is not limited and he has clearly changed the political landscape in his favor but an encompassing dissent within the society is not detectable. Opinion polls even suggest that the support of the population and the trust in Lukashenko is rather high. In 2014 the majority of interviewees (53.5%) had trust in the president, 37.9% pinned their hopes on the president in taking care of economic development, which was second to FDI inflow (43.5%) and 73.6% thought that life will become worse or does not change if the president retires.²⁹² It is probably well known by the majority of people that Lukashenko is responsible for the disappearance of oppositional politicians, manipulation of the constitution and elections and although he is using a restrictive security apparatus the population still supports him, at least to some extent. Anyway, all the elections after 1994 are seen as not free

288 Liakhovich, *Belarusian elites*, pg.38

289 Leukavets, *Machtgruppen in der belarussischen Politik*, pg.3

290 Bohdan, *Who Rules Belarus?* pg.6

291 Bohdan, *Who Rules Belarus?* pg.11-12

292 Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies: *Atta Boy! That's how a President Should be!* 2014, <http://www.iiseeps.org/?p=893&lang=en> (retrieved April 13, 2018)

and fair due to measures carried out by the regime ranging from restricted media coverage, over no pluralistic election commissions, to procedural irregularities and general lack of transparency.²⁹³ The election process can therefore serve as a tool for legitimating the legality of Lukashenko's rule but as well as mass movement in uniting the nation around the leader and in the same way discredit potential opponents to show that there is no valid alternative to his reign.²⁹⁴

The thinned out and weak political opposition is still a result of actions by Lukashenko as well, because political dissidents get repressed, incarcerated or forced into exile.²⁹⁵ Yet, it is furthermore argued that the weak political opposition and the weak society is not only the result of repression but the root is likewise to be found in the failed nation-building because the population is rather concerned about individual advantages than trying to invest in the common good through political participation.²⁹⁶ It generally could be stated as well that the regime is not as repressive as the scores in Freedom House, Polity IV and BTI suggest. The Political Terror Scale suggests for instance that Belarus scores 2 out of 5, describing the regime as: "There is a limited amount of imprisonment for nonviolent political activity. However, few persons are affected, torture and beatings are exceptional. Political murder is rare."²⁹⁷

It seems that the regime rather favors soft repression and especially learns from other countries, which can be observed in the prevention of a "color revolution" after the 2006 elections in Belarus. Prior measures concentrated on the expulsion of potentially dissident students from universities, monitoring workers in state-owned enterprises and the infiltration of oppositional groups by security forces.²⁹⁸ Generally it can be attested that Belarus did not see a "color revolution" because of the already thinned out opposition and mainly because the outcome of the election was not doubted by the population. The main opinion seems to be that Lukashenko would have been elected anyway, just with less votes.²⁹⁹

293 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Belarus, Parliamentary Elections, 11 September 2016, September 17, 2016 <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/263656> (retrieved April 13, 2018)

294 Preiherman, Yauheni: Why Does the "Last Dictatorship in Europe" Hold Elections? Belarus Digest, March 26, 2012, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/why-does-the-last-dictatorship-in-europe-hold-elections/> (retrieved April 13, 2018)

295 Konstantin Ash, Konstantin: The election trap: the cycle of post-electoral repression and opposition fragmentation in Lukashenko's Belarus, in: *Democratization*, Vol.22, No.6, 2015, pp.1030-1053, pp.1035-1037

296 Maćków Jerzy und Margarete Wiest: Dimensionen autoritärer Systeme in Osteuropa, in: *Totalitarismus und Demokratie*, Vol.2, 2005, pp.179–200, pg.197

297 Political Terror Scale, 2017: <http://www.politicalterroryscale.org/Data/Datatable.html> (retrieved April 13, 2018)

298 Lysenko, Volodymyr V. and Kevin C. Desouza: The Use of Information and Communication Technologies by Protesters and the Authorities in the Attempts at Colour Revolutions in Belarus 2001–2010, in: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.67, No.4, 2015, pp.624-651, pg.627

299 Marples, Color revolutions, pp.362-363

3.3. China

“It doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice.”

– Deng Xiaoping³⁰⁰

Overview of State Institutions³⁰¹

The political system of the People's Republic of China as a single-party autocracy is characterized by the duality of party and state institutions and the total permeation of the state by the party. In this division of labor the party is responsible for the provision of the framework in which the state institutions and the bureaucracy work and furthermore make all personnel appointments and therefore has practically the control over all decisions concerning the organization of the state. In this duality the state institutions are responsible for the proper implementation of the party's guidelines and is solely considered as the executive branch of the party, so the state institutions exist rather on a pro forma basis and hold no real political power.³⁰² The party's main decision-making body is the National Congress meeting every 5 years, electing the Central Committee, which nominally elects the Politburo of the Central Committee consisting of 25 members and the General Secretary. In between the meetings of the National Congress and the yearly conventions of the Central Committee, the Politburo and its Standing Committee consisting of 7 members³⁰³ is the highest decision-making body of the party.

The state institutions are divided in a legislative, executive and judicial branch. The legislative's highest organ is formally the National People's Congress with 2987 members, who all have to be approved by the CPC and are indirectly elected by Congresses on lower levels and serve 5-year terms. The NPC elects the executive branch of the state institutions: the president, the vice-president and the President of the Supreme People's Court (Art.57-62). Theoretically the NPC is not only the decision-making body in the appointment of the highest positions in the executive branch but is also able to remove all holders of office (Art.63). The president appoints

300 China Daily: In quotes: Deng Xiaoping, August 20, 2014, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-08/20/content_18453523.htm (retrieved April 20, 2018)

301 Facts and Organization of the state and party: CIA Factbook, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html> (retrieved April 15, 2018) English Translation of the Constitution of the PRC, amended in 2004: Official Internet Presence of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China: NPC, 2018, http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm (retrieved April 12, 2018)

302 Heberer, Thomas: Das politische System der VR China im Wandel, in: Derichs und Heberer, Die Politischen Systeme, pp.39-232, pg.80-81

303 Miller, Alice: The 19th Central Committee Politburo, China Leadership Monitor, No.55, 2018, <https://www.hoover.org/publications/china-leadership-monitor/winter-2018-issue-55> (retrieved April 15, 2018)

the premier as head of government and the ministers which is confirmed by the National People's Congress (Art.80). The government – the State Council – is the highest organ of state power (Art.85). The duties of the State Council includes for instance administration and adoption of all domestic affairs concerning the likes as economics and civil life as well as foreign affairs, like treaties (Art 89). The State Council is responsible to the NPC or respectively to the Standing Committee of the NPC (Art.92). Whereas the State Council is furthermore responsible of domestic security and in the building of national defense (Art.89), the armed forces of the PRC are presided over by the Central Military Commission which is likewise responsible to the NPC (Art.93 and 94).

The entanglement between the CPC and the state institutions are obvious as Xi Jinping for instance unites the positions of General Secretary of the CPC, President and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, likewise is the Premier, Li Keqiang, in the Standing Committee of the CPC's Politburo.³⁰⁴ The President of the Supreme People's Court, Zhou Qiang, is not in the absolute inner circle of the party, but he still is a member of the Central Committee of the CPC.³⁰⁵

3.3.1. Legality

The PRC has adopted several constitutions with the present version adopted in 1982 and superseding the former constitutions of 1954, 1975 and 1978. The constitution of 1982 was amended several times, namely in 1988, 1993, 1999, 2004 and the most current amendment was in 2018. The constitution contains a detailed Preamble and 143 articles, divided in four chapters and organizing “General Principles”, “The Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens”, “The Structure of the State” and national Symbols. An English version of the 1982 constitution, incorporating the 2004 amendments can be found on the official internet presence of the NPC of the PRC, whereas the English translation of the 2018 amendments still are to be obtained by other sources.³⁰⁶ The following short discussion of the constitution intends to detect legitimization strategies concerning the “Legality” concept of the legitimization process.

304 Miller, The 19th Central Committee Politburo

305 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: China Vitae, 2018, <http://chinavitae.com/biography/651> (retrieved April 15, 2018)

306 Official Internet Presence of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China: NPC, 2018, http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm (retrieved April 12, 2018) For a comparison with the 2018 Constitution: University of Southern California, USC US-China Institute: Chinese Communist Party, 2017 Resolution On Amending The CCP Constitution, October 24, 2017, <https://china.usc.edu/chinese->

The Preamble of the Constitution highlights the glorious Chinese culture and the revolutionary past in overcoming the feudal and imperialist suppression through tedious and arduous, armed struggles. A further point is the underlining of the achievements in the area of human development. Through Mao's great victory, China gained domestic security and the socialist system provided "a marked increase in agricultural production. Significant advances have been made in educational, scientific and cultural undertakings, while education in socialist ideology has produced noteworthy results. The life of the people has improved considerably".

In the seventh paragraph the Preamble points out the ideological background of the PRC and in this paragraph some recent changes of the Constitution can be detected. Whereas the 2004 version stresses the importance of "The leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents" the 2018 amendment adds "The Scientific Outlook on Development, and the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era". In the new version Xi Jinping is on an equal footing with former paramount leaders Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, whereas the names of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, the creators of the "Three Represents" and "Scientific Outlook on Development" are not mentioned. The incorporation of ideas of the PRC-leaders is not new as in almost every amendment of the constitution the ideological background was extended. Outgoing from Marxism-Leninism in the 1956 Constitution, to Mao Zedong Thought in 1982, Deng Xiaoping Theory (1997), in 2004 the "Three Represents" and finally the "Scientific Outlook on Development" in 2012.³⁰⁷ This shows the flexibility and pragmatism of the Party in dealing with problems of development, what suggests that the Party is not in an ideological deadlock but rather adaptive to the circumstances.

In the same paragraph the Preamble highlights the importance of the "Rule of Law" and delivers the future aims which should and turn China into a "strong modern socialist country that is prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful, and to realize the great rejuvenation for the Chinese nation". Chinese nation in this sense incorporates Taiwan which is made clear in paragraph nine which states that reunification is the duty of all Chinese people. The "International" legitimization strategy is emphasized in the 12th paragraph by the notions of "Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-

communist-party-2017-resolution-amending-ccp-constitution-oct-24-2017 (retrieved April 17) NPC Observer: Translation: 2018 Amendment to the P.R.C. Constitution, March 11, 2018, <https://npcobserver.com/2018/03/11/translation-2018-amendment-to-the-p-r-c-constitution/> (retrieved April 17, 2018)

307 Heberer, Das politische System der VR China , pg.64

interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence" and China "Following a path of peaceful development, and pursues a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up".

The incontestable position of the CPC in exercising the political power is determined in Article 1 of the Constitution: "The defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the leadership of the Communist Party of China." Any interruption of this principle is prohibited be it by an organization or individual. Article 1 clearly states that the PRC is a one-party state and any opposing interference is therefore unconstitutional. Nominally the power belongs to the people (Art.2) and the rights of minorities are protected by the Constitution as well as the development of harmony between all Chinese nationalities is supervised and encouraged by the state (Art.4).

Furthermore, the Constitution points out that all natural resources (Art.9) and land (Art.10) belong to the State. The PRC is a socialist market economy (Art.15), which means that the state-owned economy is the leading force of the economy and its growth is ensured (Art.7) but private sectors in the economy are not only allowed but encouraged and supported by the State (Art.11), the investment by foreign enterprises or individuals is likewise welcome (Art.18). Other performance legitimization criteria, especially in regard to human development, which are detectable in the Constitution would be the promotion of education (Art.19), health and social services (Art.21 and 45) and protection of the environment (Art.26). In targeting the "Consent" legitimization strategy the Constitution theoretically grants several freedoms to the people, like "Freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration" (Art.35), freedom of religion (Art.36) and freedom and protection of private correspondence (Art.40). Though the State reserves the right to censor (Art.40) and may respond if people "Infringe upon the interests of the State" (Art.51).

The change of Article 79 was of certain interest, especially for Western observers and Western media.³⁰⁸ The new adaptation cancels the two five year term limits of presidency and enables the president to serve longer. This change clearly bypassed the established formally institutionalized handover of power and therefore questions the rule of law and possibly even the legality legitimization strategy. Yet, the president is a rather ceremonial position, whereas the

308 Philips, Tom: 'Dictator for life': Xi Jinping's power grab condemned as step towards tyranny, *The Guardian*, February 26, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/26/xi-jinping-china-presidential-limit-scrapped-dictator-for-life> (retrieved April 12, 2018) Ryan, Manuel: Xi, unlimited? *Eastasiaforum*, March 18, 2018, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/03/18/xi-unlimited/> (retrieved April 12, 2018) Buckley, Chris and Steven L. Meyers: China's Legislature Blesses Xi's Indefinite Rule. It Was 2,958 to 2. *The New York Times*, March 11, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/11/world/asia/china-xi-constitution-term-limits.html> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

real power lies in the hands of the General Secretary of the CPC and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission, which basically has no term limits and these power transfers have never been in relation to the presidency. Furthermore it is argued that these changes intend to stabilize inner-party struggles and forestall factional infighting for the anticipated handover of power.³⁰⁹

Table 4 shows legitimization strategies detected in the Constitution of the PRC:

Authority	founding myth, violent struggle; Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, Three Represents, Scientific Outlook, Xi Jinping Theory;
Performance	human development, modernization; general social services
Internationality	mutual benefit, peaceful development and coexistence; support of foreign investment in China;
Consent	protection of minorities; free speech, free press and right to demonstrate; no infringement against the interests of the State; State's right to censor;

Table 4: Own depiction, Source: Constitution of the PRC

Although the rule of law is constitutionally enshrined, the perception of the rule of law in China is rather bad as Fig. 6 depicts.³¹⁰ The lowest point in recent years being in 2006 and rising from 2012 on, when Xi Jinping became General Secretary of the CPC who follows an anti-corruption course and targets low level corruption as well as high-level officials.³¹¹ Whereas the perception of the rule of law is always difficult to translate into a valid argumentation and analysis it can for instance be observed that in the previous years leading to the lowest point in 2006 an above

309 Babones, Salvatore: China's Constitutional Amendments Are All About The Party, Not The President, Forbes Magazine, March 11, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/salvatorebabones/2018/03/11/chinas-constitutional-amendments-are-all-about-the-party-not-the-president/#4691c3751615> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

310 World Bank Index, 2018, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index, 2016: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016 (retrieved April 4, 2018)

311 Li, Cheng and Ryan McElveen: Debunking Misconceptions About Xi Jinping's Anti-Corruption Campaign, Brookings, July 14, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/debunking-misconceptions-about-xi-jinpings-anti-corruption-campaign/> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

average number of journalists have been imprisoned.³¹² The rise of the perception of the rule of law after 2006 correlates with the adoption of the Property Protection Law in 2007.³¹³

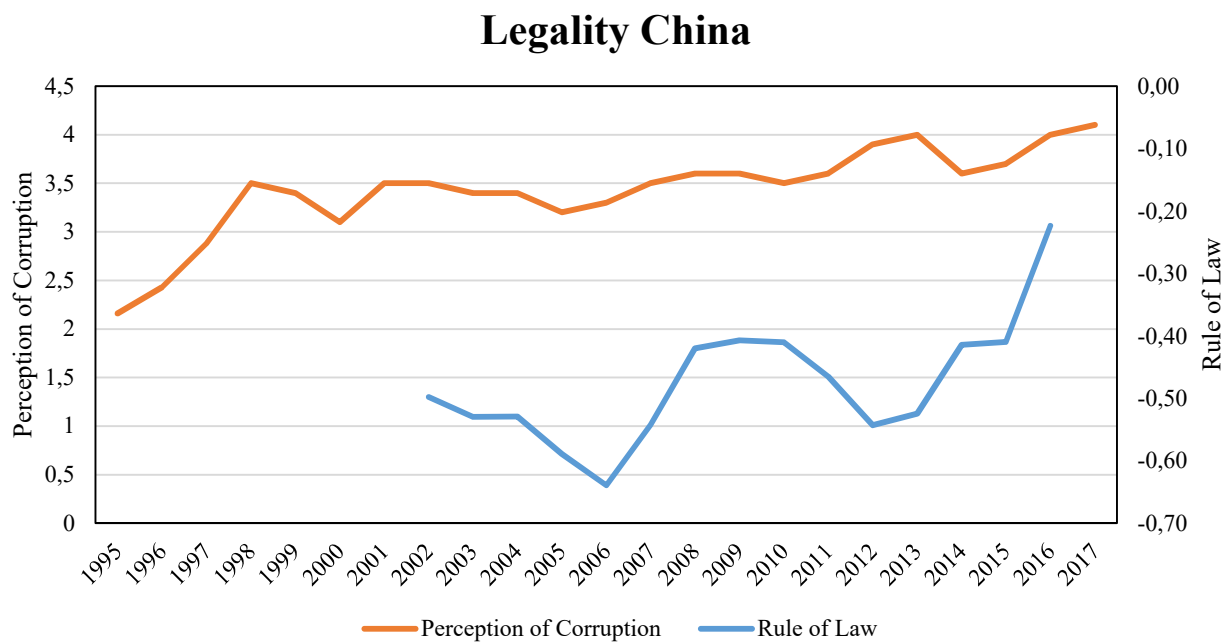


Fig. 6: Own depiction, Sources: Transparency International: evaluates the perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople. 0=highly corrupt, 10=very clean;

World Bank Index: evaluates the perceived confidence of agents in the rules of a society regarding the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, the courts and the likelihood of crime and violence. -2.5=no Rule of Law, 2.5=high Rule of Law

The Perception of Corruption is still very high and therefore endangers the legitimacy of the regime, yet it is possible that with the successful implementation of the anti-corruption campaign the legitimation of legality is rising. A key development in this context can probably be seen in the next years as a new state-institution, the National Supervision Committee was formed in 2016 and constitutionally enshrined in the 2018 amendment. The Supervision Committee is not only an institution to fight against corruption but a central institution to control the local governments as well (Art.107, 123-127). The recent developments show that structural problems in the legal real could lead to a diminishment of legitimacy, so the leadership accordingly reacts and tries to counteract in an effort to enhance the legality-legitimation.

312 Committee to Protect Journalists: Attacks on the Press 2006: Countries That Have Jailed Journalists, February 5, 2007, <https://cpj.org/2007/02/attacks-on-the-press-2006-countries-that-have-jailed-journalists.php> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

313 BBC: China passes new law on property, March 16, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6456959.stm> (retrieved April 12, 2018)

3.3.2. Authority

The Constitution shows that the regime is investing heavily in the ideological legitimation strategy and demonstrates the capacity to pragmatically adapt the ideology to modern circumstances. Nevertheless, the founding myth has a prominent place in society and the regime unambiguously refers to the legacy of Mao Zedong, so to understand today's ideological legitimation strategies one has to have a look at the lineage of the CCP ideology.

Mao came to power and established CCP rule in 1949 through a bloody civil war against the forces of the Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-Shek. Another enemy in China have been the Japanese who were invading China in 1937 and consequently driven of the continent. A victorious rebellion leading to a stable leadership was nothing unusual in the history of China, quite the contrary is the case as it was very usual that a rebellion led to a new dynasty and gained the "Mandate of Heaven" after its victory. From this point of view Mao achieved a revolutionary legitimacy after he successfully took the ruling power.³¹⁴ The problem of this concept of legitimization was that in light of economic failures and ideological missteps, like the Cultural Revolution, this moral capital turned out to be exhausted quickly.³¹⁵ After Mao's death in 1976 it was obvious that the new leaders had to change and adapt their political ideology and justification to maintain the people's favor and stay in charge. Though this has been a big challenge as this meant that the former legitimization strategy had to be changed. Yet, the successor of Mao, Deng Xiaoping proved to be capable of doing so. Deng revitalized legitimacy with reforms in the administration, and an approximation to principles of market economies.³¹⁶ These changes eroded former legitimation strategies of the CCP and Deng had to balance the performance with an ideological reinforcement, so he smoothly adapted the official ideology to justify his slight capitalist way.

For that purpose he proclaimed the economical "Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" and the political "Four Cardinal Principles"³¹⁷, which merged under the umbrella of "Deng Xiaoping Theory" in the constitution. Mao Zedong Thought was not neglected but Deng Xiaoping Theory was added to Maoism under the new circumstances. The ideological explanation of this shift was that China is in the first stage of socialism and it is

314 Holbig and Gilley: In Search of Legitimacy, pg.7

315 Guo, Political Legitimacy and China's Transition, pg.11

316 Friedman Edward: Theorizing the Democratization of China's Leninist State, in: Dirlik, Arif and Meisner, Maurice (eds.) Marxism and the Chinese Experience: Issues in Contemporary Chinese Socialism, Armonk 1989, pp.171-189, pg.181

317 Upholding the socialist road, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the Communist Party and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, in: Guo, Political Legitimacy, pg.13

therefore inevitable and necessary to use capitalist means for development.³¹⁸ Therefore it is noticeable that Deng was well aware of the problem of the ideological disillusion and balanced the economic reforms with the accentuation of the socialist ideology but made clear that economic reform does not implicate political reform, so the modernization and development is only applicable under the guidance of the CCP. Anyway, the economic and individual freedom clashed with the autocratic state at the end of the 1980s. The economic reforms led to hard-budget constraints and layoffs, inflation and corruption were flying, the income gap between urban and rural areas, entrepreneurs and intellectuals became more and more apparent.³¹⁹ The legitimacy of Deng and the CCP was in deep crisis and finally cumulated in the infamous incidents in 1989 with the violent repression of demonstrations and protests at Tiananmen and Beijing.

The successor of Deng, Jiang Zemin, had no revolutionary past or major personal achievements to his score, so he had to prove his ability by his actions to win back the trust of the people.³²⁰ Jiang had to quickly organize the problems which occurred before he took over. He “realized that in order for the CCP to survive [...] the Party must accelerate the process of transforming itself from a revolutionary party to a ruling party. The “Theory of Three Represents” that he proposed [...] is part of the ideological reconstruction of the CCP”.³²¹ The “Three Represents” basically incorporates the emerging capitalist class into the CCP and enhancing the legitimation through representation of “the demands for the development of advanced social productive forces, the direction of advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the greatest majority of the people”.³²² In official discourse the advanced productive forces, the entrepreneurs and capitalists, were circumscribed as “workers who have changed their jobs”.³²³ This adaption of party ideology “marked a theoretical breakthrough by expanding the ideological concept of the “working class” in a way that allows to include the new economic elites”.³²⁴ The CPC was not the vanguard of workers and peasants anymore, but representing the “whole Chinese nation”, consisting of elites as well.³²⁵ Jiang, therefore goes one step further as Deng and not only allows

318 Hjellum, Torstein: On the Legitimacy of the Dengist Regime, in: *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.11, 1996, pp.51-72, pg.56

319 Zhao, Dingxin: The Mandate of Heaven and Performance Legitimation in Historical and Contemporary China, in: *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol.53, No.3, 2009, pp.416-433, pg.423-424

320 Guo, Political Legitimacy, pg.14

321 Guo, Political Legitimacy, pg.16

322 Holbig, Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy, pg.17

323 Holbig, Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy, pg.21

324 Holbig and Gilley, In Search of Legitimacy, pg.20

325 Holbig, Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy, pg.21

capitalists or “workers who have changed their jobs” into the system but he even allows them into the party.

These radical changes in ideological legitimation were reinterpreted by Jiang Zemin’s successor, Hu Jintao. He concentrated on the downsides of the spectacular growth: “Inequitable income distribution among people and regions; unemployment; and inadequate public services, particularly health care. Special emphasis is placed on combating rural problems and the necessity for sustainable development.”³²⁶ Hu did not concentrate on the “first represent” the “advanced productive forces” but laid the emphasis on the “Third Represent” the majority of the people. He presented a new interpretation to official discourse of the “Three represents”: “The party must exercise its power for the people, have passion for the people, and seek benefits of the people”³²⁷ and “establishing a party that is devoted to the public interest and governing for the people.”³²⁸

In order to reach a more tranquil, egalitarian society, Hu proposed two concepts: “The Harmonious Society”, which features democracy, the rule of law, justice, sincerity and a solid social balance,³²⁹ and “The Scientific Outlook on Development”, which concentrates on the balance between economic development and social respectively ecological considerations.³³⁰ The concrete idea is that “the Party must more purposefully make promoting economic and social development the top priority, take putting people first as the core requirement, make pursuing comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development the basic requirement”.³³¹ In an anticipatory manner the party realized that the enormous economic growth cannot hold on forever and that the societal stability is the key factor for enduring legitimacy. In controlling, organizing and most importantly promoting the change to a more equal society, the government made clear that the party is the only force which is able to do that.

As the leaders before him, Xi Jinping came up with his own thoughts and ideological ideas for the PRC, which were enshrined in the recent constitutional amendments. Especially that Xi Jinping is mentioned alongside Mao and Deng, strengthens his position, concluding that Mao

326 Joseph, William A.: Ideology and Chinese Politics. In: Joseph, William A. (ed.) Politics in China. An Introduction, Oxford 2010, pp.129-164, pg.159

327 Renmin Ribao, February 19, 2003. Cited in: Holbig, Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy, pg.24

328 Renmin Ribao, July 2, 2003. Cited in: Holbig, Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy, pg.24

329 Heberer, Thomas and Gunter Schubert: Political Reform and Regime Legitimacy in Contemporary China, in: ASIEN, No.99, 2006, pp.9-28, pg.20

330 Holbig and Gilley, In Search of Legitimacy, pg.18-19

331 Xinhua: Scientific Outlook on Development becomes CPC's theoretical guidance, November 8, 2012 http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/2012-11/08/content_15892786.htm (retrieved April 18 2018)

liberated China, Deng made it wealthy and Xi leads it into a prosperous future.³³² The main points of “Xi Jinping Thought” concentrate on the future and it seems that utopist ideas interpreted in Marxism have definitely yielded to a utopia with Chinese characteristics and it is clear how this future should look like. The leadership of the Party is unimpeachable by any means but focus is laid on economic reform and scientific development as well as human development and protection of the environment. “Rule of Law” should be strengthened and party discipline, in example fight against corruption, should be enforced. Yet, not only domestic issues are addressed in the “Xi Jinping Thought” China’s self-perception emanates on the international level likewise. The idea is to strengthen national security, reaffirming national unity and highlighting China’s role in a peaceful international development.³³³

3.3.3. Performance

The strong ideological legitimation strategy is supported by a firm performance, especially since the Deng-era reforms. Elementary performance indicators show the following³³⁴: In 2017 the estimated population was around 1.379 billion and the PRC is therefore the most populated country in the world. The 2015 estimation of the literacy rate suggests that 96.4% of the population over 15 can write and read and school life expectancy is 14 years. The life expectancy at birth is 75.7 years which places China on rank 102 out of 224 surveyed countries, India for instance ranks on 164 with a life expectancy of 68.8 years. The 2017 infant mortality rate was evaluated at 12 deaths/ 1000 live births which is rank 122 out of 225 and compared to India’s rank 47 with an estimated 39.1/1000 rather well for a developing country. The general health care system provides in 2015 around 3.6 physicians/1000 population, which is well too as at least 2.3 health workers/1000 are recommended by the World Health Organization. Fig. 7 shows the overall human development, which is according to the HDI rising and delivered some genuine improvement in the last 20 years. From 0.499 points in 1990 to 0.738 points in 2015, which places China in 2015 on rank 90 out of 188 surveyed countries, for instance outperforming India, on rank 131 with 0.624 points in the HDI, but still improvable compared

332 Buckley, Chris: China Enshrines ‘Xi Jinping Thought,’ Elevating Leader to Mao-Like Status, The New York Times, October 24, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/world/asia/china-xi-jinping-communist-party.html> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

333 BBC Monitoring: His own words: The 14 principles of 'Xi Jinping Thought', October 24, 2017, <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c1dmwn4r> (retrieved April 18, 2018)

334 CIA Factbook, 2017: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html> (retrieved April 18, 2018)

to Japan's rank 17 with the score of 0.903 and the United States on 10 with 0.92 points in the HDI.³³⁵

China's economic performance legitimization is relatively good, as can be detected in the GDP per capita growth, which is presented in Fig. 7 as well.³³⁶ It can be attested that the reforms started by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s built a good foundational base for the economic growth in the last 30 years, which can be seen in the almost tenfold increase of GDP per capita from 1989 to 2016. The main driver of economic development and therefore a main component of the performance legitimization is foreign trade³³⁷, in 2017 accounting for exports of \$2.157 trillion and \$1.731 trillion in imports.³³⁸ The ascent of this enormous numbers are found in the special circumstances in which China opened itself to the world economy and especially attracted foreign direct investment.³³⁹ The Chinese economy benefited from an over-accumulation of capital in the centers of the world economy, resulting in a steady flow of capital to China which led to a high productivity growth and modernization. In addition the centers stimulated the export strategy of China's economy which is still the main vibrant part of China's economy.³⁴⁰ Another important piece of this economic development is China's huge labor force: "For decades, several hundred millions of low-paid people, often migrant workers in dire need of jobs, formed the backbone of Chinese economic development. The ensuing low labor costs acted as "pull factors" for foreign direct investment."³⁴¹ These two main benefits for the performance legitimization are also two big problems, on the one hand the economy needs to diversify as an overreliance in foreign trade makes the economy vulnerable. On the other hand could this huge work force cause problems for the regime, especially if employment does not stay stable and the workers cannot benefit from the development, therefore the economic performance needs to be closely monitored by the regime.

335 United Nations Development Program, Human Development Index, 2017 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

336 World Bank Development Indicators, 2017 <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

337 Branstetter, Lee and Nicholas Lardy: China's Embrace of Globalization, in: Brandt, Loren and Thomas G. Rawski (eds.) *China's Great Economic Transformation*. Cambridge 2008, pp.633-682, pg.633

338 CIA Factbook, 2017: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

339 McNally, Christopher A: Sino-Capitalism: China's Reemergence and the International Political Economy, in: *World Politics*, Vol.64, No.4, 2012, pp.741-776, pg.755

340 ten Brink, Tobias: Paradoxes of Prosperity in China's New Capitalism, in: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, Vol.42, No.4, 2013, pp.17-44

341 ten Brink, Paradoxes of Prosperity, pg.23

Performance China

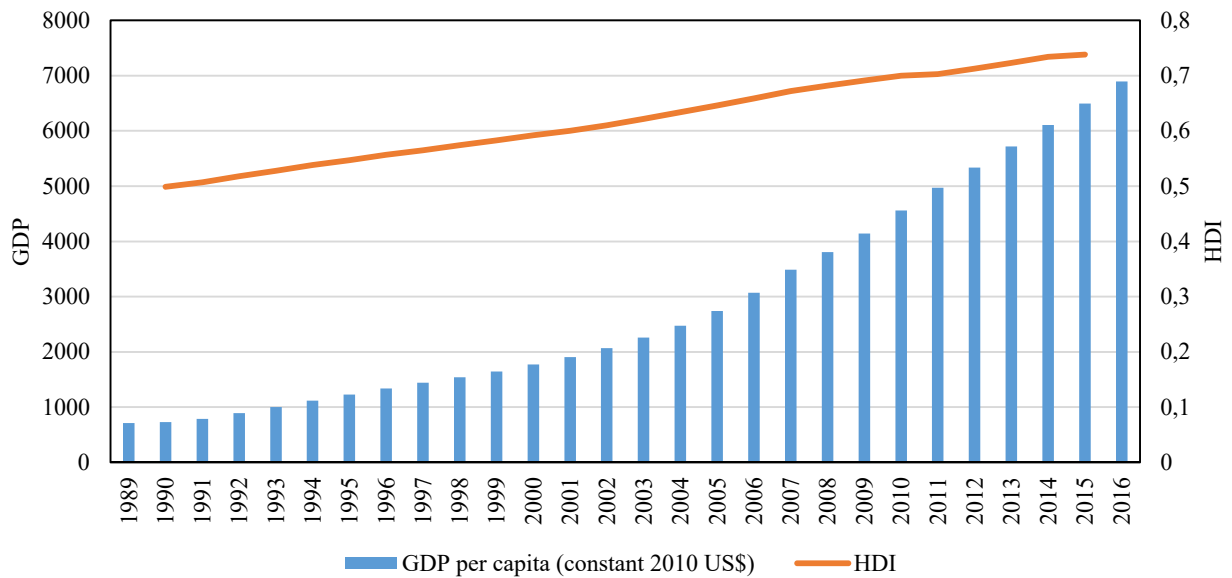


Fig. 7: Own depiction, Source: GDP per capita in constant 2010 US\$ from World Bank Development Indicators; HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living (measured by GNI); 1 is the highest value

Whereas the economy is thriving another important part of performance based legitimization is the actual management of crisis. The regime has the duty to fulfill the social contract – the regime delivers security, the people support the regime – especially in time of crisis to stay legitimate. Crisis management is a good way to observe the reaction of the regime as there is not always a clear strategy behind the management of an actual crisis as the regime has no possibility to prepare for sudden happenings. The calm and appropriate reaction to a crisis may enhance the legitimacy as the people trust in management capabilities of the regime and in this regard, the party's evaluation is not solely satisfactory but a process of learning can be attested. In the course of the SARS outbreak at the beginning of the 2000s the weakness of the Chinese autocratic regime was exemplified. The regime's first reactions to the virus were referred to as secretive and irresponsible.³⁴² From the outbreak in November 2002 the official line was that the virus is no danger and under control until April 2003 although it was not. Only in April it was classified as epidemic in China whereas the WHO already had issued a global warning in March.³⁴³ There are two main causes for the delay in the acceptance of a danger: the entangled

³⁴² Leung, Christine C.M. and Huang, Yu: The paradox of journalistic representation of the other: The case of SARS coverage on China and Vietnam by western-led English-language media in five countries, in: *Journalism*, Vol.8, No.6, pp.675–697, pg.683

³⁴³ Saich, Tony: SARS: China's Chernobyl or Much Ado About Nothing, in: Kleinman, Arthur and James L. Watson: *SARS in China: Prelude to Pandemic?* Stanford 2006, pp.71-104, pp.74-77

relationship of the central-local bureaucracy and leadership contention.³⁴⁴ First, China's bureaucratic fragmentation was the reason that the central government just partly has been informed about the virus as local governments wanted to deal with the problem without disturbing the center. Anyway, the party has the last decision in publicizing matters of national security as which the outbreak of SARS was seen, so any attempts in this regard by the Ministry of Health was overruled by party departments to keep it secret in an attempt to cause no panic and to keep the economy going.³⁴⁵ Furthermore, the competences were not clearly regulated for instance to whom and under what circumstances to report, as well as the low incentive on a local level to bear bad news to upper levels.³⁴⁶ Second, the outbreak of SARS coincided with China's political high-season as the power handover from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao was prepared and it is alleged that factional infighting caused the delay in fighting the outbreak as well. Whereas the leadership around Jiang tried to sweep the matter under the carpet, the new leaders around Hu could not yet afford to discredit the outgoing old guard.³⁴⁷ An example of how factional infighting was interfering with the fight against SARS can be seen in the turning point of the official perception of the outbreak. After an ally of Hu was sacked – the mayor of Beijing Meng Xuenong – one of Jiang's protégés – Health Minister Zhang Wenkang – was removed from his post as well. These two scapegoats helped Jiang to save face and the new leadership could start to concentrate on the outbreak and in succession the officials worked together with the Chinese public and the WHO to stop SARS.³⁴⁸ This short episode of crisis management shows where some of the performance problems of the CCP lie and to what extent political features can endanger performance legitimation. The need for counterbalancing mismanagement is a crisis of one's own fault and should be a warning for the party's legitimation strategy. In the wake of the dealing with SARS one can detect several missteps and learning possibilities for the regime: recognizing global integration, which means that viruses can travel and cannot be held secretive. The need for incentives to report bad news bottom-up and a better dealing of information flows among the different political players.³⁴⁹ Therefore it is important to note that performance-based legitimation does not only concern economic performance but rather a wide variety of regime output to demonstrate the ability to cope with all kinds of potential crises.

344 Leung and Huang, *The paradox of journalistic representation*, pg.683

345 Zheng, Yongnian and Liang F. Lye: SARS and China's Political System, in: Wong, John and Yongnian Zheng: *Sars Epidemic, The: Challenges to China's Crisis Management*, Singapore, 2004, pp.45-76, pp.57-58

346 Saich, *SARS: China's Chernobyl*, pg.73

347 Saich, *SARS: China's Chernobyl*, pg.85

348 Leung and Huang, *The paradox of journalistic representation*, pg.683

349 Saich, *SARS: China's Chernobyl*, pg.90

3.3.4. Internationality

China's emergence to a global superpower has several implications for the international political realm, especially in the question of international relations as the intentions of China are not quite clear and tensions emerge for instance in the question of border demarcation in the South China Sea, where several resource-rich islands are disputed among several states. Another example of implications for international relations is the question of national unification with the Republic of China, which subsequently raises the general question if the rise of a single country to a superpower can be peaceful at all.³⁵⁰ Therefore China has to walk a tightrope in getting external legitimation and the CCP regime does so through several options. One is to stress the ideological legitimation framework as the peaceful rise and cooperation between states and general human development is constitutionally enshrined and China even incorporates the ideological approach of a harmonious society to a global scale. For instance the mediation in the 2017/2018 conflict between North Korea and the international community proves that the regime is trying to transport the concept of peaceful development. In this context one must not forget that China does not want to have any warfare at its borders but the success on the international diplomatic arena is a boost for internal and external legitimation.³⁵¹

The PRC further tries to enhance international recognition in accepting international law through accession into international organizations. High importance in this regard, especially in respect to domestic performance legitimation, has been the accession to the WTO in 2001. Although the benefits for the West of this accession are not recognized by all members, the PRC legitimation profited in any way.³⁵² Even longer ago, international legitimacy was gained when the PRC received a seat on the UN Security Council in 1971 and started to participate in international peacekeeping operations.³⁵³ But recognition through law is not the only way which the regime gains international legitimation. For instance events like the Olympic Games 2008 in Beijing and the Expo 2010 in Shanghai reinforce domestic legitimation as well. Through these events the regime can be present to the population that the international community thinks

350 Mearsheimer John J: China's Unpeaceful Rise, in: *Current History*, Vol.105, No.690, 2006, pp.160–162

351 Huang, Cary: Kim Jong-un and Xi Jinping take centre stage in diplomatic drama on the Korean peninsula, *South China Morning Post*, April 3, 2018, <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2139925/kim-jong-un-and-xi-jinping-take-centre-stage-diplomatic> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

352 Rothman, Andy: China's accession to WTO has been a boon, not an error, *Financial Times*, February 16, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/9ebf9e36-1271-11e8-940e-08320fc2a277> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

353 Hellström, Jerker: *Blue Berets Under the Red Flag: China in the UN Peacekeeping System*, Swedish Defence Research Agency, Stockholm 2009

it is capable of organizing such events and even more foundational that it is a vital part of this international community.

On the other hand is China's incorporation in the international community a distribution for domestic performance legitimization. China adopted a multilateral diplomatic approach in recent years, although originally there have been resentments against multilateralism because of fears of interference in China's sovereignty but China has realized that multilateralism in foreign policy can be used to its own advantages.³⁵⁴ As the Western world gets wary about China's real intentions and China itself always stresses the notion of its "peaceful rise", multilateralism proves to be a key instrument in China's future foreign policy.³⁵⁵ Yet several rather aggressive moves, especially in the South China Sea, show that in the end securing energy resources and open access to shipping lanes have clearly first priority for China. Nevertheless, China rather tries to engage its neighboring countries with soft-power than hard-power and this happens through several multilateral institutions to build for instance the "maritime silk road" and the "new silk road". The PRC tries to bind its neighbors to the Chinese economy to raise the cost of confrontational policy and therefore trying over time to enforce its own agenda.³⁵⁶

An example of the multilateral approach is the SCO, which was originally founded in 2001 by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (India and Pakistan joined in 2017) as security cooperation with the aim to curtail separatism, terrorism and extremism but has evolved into an economic, diplomatic and military partnership as well.³⁵⁷ For China the SCO offers several important advantages: to contain extremism, access to the vast energy resources in Central Asia, access to important trade routes on land and sea, as well as reducing U.S. and NATO influence in the area. This multilateral approach can be seen as essential for China's performance-based legitimization and furthermore the engagement in diverse organizations helps in the establishment of an international legitimization framework.

354 Kuik, Cheng C. (2005) Multilateralism in China's ASEAN Policy: Its Evolution, Characteristics, and Aspiration, in: *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.27, No.1, pp. 102-122

355 Zheng, Bijian: China's Peaceful Rise to "Great-Power" Status. *Foreign Affairs*, Essay September/October 2005, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2005-09-01/chinas-peaceful-rise-great-power-status> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

356 Glaser, Bonnie S. and Deep Pal: (2014) Is China's Charm Offensive Dead? In: The Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, Vol.14, No.15., July 31, 2014 [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=42691&no_cache=1#.VfMaSvQzG-c](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=42691&no_cache=1#.VfMaSvQzG-c) (retrieved April 20, 2018)

357 Carroll, William E.: China in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Hegemony, Multi-Polar Balance, or Cooperation in Central Asia, in: *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol.1, No.19, 2011, pp.1-8, pg.1

3.3.5. Consent

The Chinese regime has shown a rather pragmatic and flexible approach in its ideological legitimization strategy, especially with formulation of the “Three represents” and the incorporation of capitalists into the party. This dogmatic change was no hasty decision it had its roots in much longer developed circumstances. In the 1980ies private businesses had no secure political basis and in contrast to state owned businesses they had to suffer from poor regulations, in terms of taxes and loans, and private businesses were for instance just allowed to consist up to eight employees. A possibility to avoid this regulation was to “wear a red hat”, disguising a private company as a collective enterprise.³⁵⁸ This caused a flourishing corruption as local-cadres exploited the situation in controlling the registration of collective enterprises and could accept or extract registration fees from entrepreneurs.³⁵⁹ At this point there already were private Chinese entrepreneurs, cadres and higher ranked party members interlaced in the practice of “wearing a red hat”. Due to these circumstances, Premier Zhao Ziyang announced already in 1987 that “cooperative, individual and private sectors of the economy in both urban and rural areas should all be encouraged to expand. [...] [W]e must formulate policies and enact laws governing the private sector as soon as possible, in order to protect its legitimate interest.”³⁶⁰ The party had already accepted that there is the informal practice of running private enterprises under the cloak of state authority. In 2001 Jiang Zemin formulated his “Theory of Three Represents”, integrating these (“red”) capitalists into the official ideology of the CPC. Instead of banning capitalists from the Party, the ideology shifted to embracing them. This could only be justified through the informal rules of the game, which already existed in practice, hence informal institutions forced the CPC to adapt the ideology.³⁶¹ Therefore, it is noteworthy that the incorporation of the “Theory of Three Represents”: “Marked a theoretical breakthrough by expanding the ideological concept of the “working class” in a way that allows to include the new economic elites.”³⁶²

Whereas factional infighting sometimes disturbs the daily political business, like in the case of the SARS outbreak, the party’s factionalism generally does little to endanger the regime itself.

358 Tsai, Kellee S.: Adaptive Informal Institutions and Endogenous Institutional Change, in: World Politics, Vol.59, No.1, 2006, pp.116-141, pg.128

359 Tsai, Adaptive Informal Institutions, pg.130

360 Beijing Review, November 9-15, 1987, cited in: Malik, Rashid: Chinese Entrepreneurs in the Economic Development of China. Westport 1997 pg.51

361 Tsai, Adaptive Informal Institutions, pg.135

362 Holbig, Heike and Gilley, Bruce: In Search of Legitimacy in Post-revolutionary China: Bringing Ideology and Governance Back. GIGA Working Papers, No 127, 2010, pp.1-35, pg.20

Even though some observers stress that Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign's main targets are rather his political enemies than a concentration on actual corruption and that these repressive actions even hurts the economy than rather help the regime,³⁶³ it is unlikely that horizontal threats from within party could induct a regime change. Rather on the contrary, it is argued that an attack by the leadership on different party factions could lead to crisis.³⁶⁴ Hence, repression and cooptation in the inner circles do not have the goal of enhancing regime legitimacy but often rather serve the purpose of personal gain.

Yet, on the other hand vertical repression does target potential threats to regime legitimation. The Political Terror Scale is classifying China with "4", which means that: "Civil and political rights violations have expanded to large numbers of the population. Murders, disappearances, and torture are a common part of life. In spite of its generality, on this level terror affects those who interest themselves in politics or ideas."³⁶⁵ This bad rating seems to be slightly exaggerated as demonstration-like gatherings were not only tolerated but actually had impact on decision-making. In 2007 for instance, citizens gathered in Xiamen to conduct a "stroll" to protest against a chemical plant which should be built in the outskirts of the city. After some consideration and as a reaction to the obvious discontent by the population officials decided to move the plant to a remote area.³⁶⁶

Nevertheless, the CCP uses repressive strategies if it sees regime legitimacy in danger as can be witnessed with the handling of the Falun Gong group. Originally the group has been regarded as no harm and rather as a welcome filling of a spiritual vacuum.³⁶⁷ Yet, as the group grew fast and in 1999 several thousand members of Falun Gong demonstrated in Zhongnanhai the regime reacted quickly and crushed the organization. The increase of members and the open dissent were seen as a danger to regime legitimacy what caused the regime to use hard repression tactics which was followed by thousands of Falun Gong members got incarcerated, killed, and ended in the ban of the organization.³⁶⁸

In recent years the regime intensified attempts to strengthen the ties between party and the population to mobilize popular consent. There were for instance great efforts made to increase

363 Li, Cheng and McElveen, Ryan: Debunking Misconceptions About Xi Jinping's Anti-Corruption Campaign, Brookings, July 14, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/debunking-misconceptions-about-xi-jinpings-anti-corruption-campaign/> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

364 Lungu, Andrei: Interpreting the party's anti-corruption campaign, RISAP, September 27, 2017, <http://risap.ro/en/interpreting-the-partys-anti-corruption-campaign/> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

365 Political Terror Scale, 2017: <http://www.politicalterroryscale.org/Data/Datatable.html> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

366 Perry, Cultural Governance in Contemporary China, pg.21

367 Zheng and Lye, SARS and China's Political System, pp.47-48

368 Perry, Challenging the Mandate of Heaven

the service orientation of cadres, to connect the Party with the people on a local level. Finally the “intra-party democracy” was one of the legal reforms, which could prove to be fruitful. Ordinary party members should be given more power in selecting cadre members and more possibilities to influence party policy. This efforts were made to present the Party more attractive to the emerging middle class and therefore having a better connection to the “elites” of the country.³⁶⁹ In the course of Xi Jinping’s anti-corruption campaign, the “mass line” campaign was started in 2013, to ensure a positive image of party cadres, especially on a local level and to stop working features like “formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance”.³⁷⁰ In the course of the campaign several thousand party cadres have been punished and it can be assumed that the attempt in enhancing popular consent has at least partially been satisfied, this is especially important as it is argued that civil society supports authoritarian rule if the state is well institutionalized.³⁷¹

369 Schubert, *One-Party Rule*, pp.198-199

370 News of the Communist Party of China: CPC's "mass line" campaign not a short-term movement, July 15, 2013, <http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/206972/206976/8325279.html> (retrieved April 20, 2018)

371 Holbig and Gilley, *In Search of Legitimacy in Post-revolutionary China*, pg.24

3.4. North Korea

“Under the army-first revolutionary leadership of the great general, we have completely annihilated the schemes of the imperialists who try to lure us into “reforms” and “openness” in order to infect us with the reactionary bourgeoisie liberal ideas.”

– Rodong Sinmun, 2016³⁷²

Overview of State Institutions³⁷³

North Korea is one of the most secluded countries in the world with very few or almost no information getting out. Any assessment is hard to achieve and has to be taken with a grain of salt as for example a lot of studies base their findings on interviews with defectors who could follow their own agenda.

The DPRK's state organization is characterized by the tripartite of the state institutions, the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and the military, which are interwoven and tightly linked to each other.³⁷⁴ The DPRK is dominated by the guiding ideologies of “Juche”, which basically means “self-reliance” and “Songun”, which can be translated as “precedence to military affairs”.

In general, the shadows of the deceased former leaders, Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-il loom large over present North Korea. The state organization has distinct positions for them as Kim Il-sung is the eternal president of the DPRK and eternal leader of the WPK, whereas Kim Jong-il is the eternal General Secretary of the WPK, the eternal Chairman of the DPRK National Defence Commission and the eternal leader of the WPK. Today Kim Jong-un, son of Kim Jong-il, is the supreme leader of the DPRK. His most important official functions are Chairman of the WPK, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission (until 2016, this Commission was called National Defence Commission) and he is as Marshal of the Korean People's Army the supreme commander of the military. The WPK penetrates the whole political and socio-economical life in North Korea as the highest form of the political organization. Therefore the state institutions

372 Cited in: Lankov, Andrei: Is Byungjin Policy Failing? Kim Jong Un's Unannounced Reform and its Chances of Success, in: The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis, Vol.29, No.1, 2017, pp.25-45, pg.27

373 Facts and Organization of the state and party: CIA World Factbook, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html> (retrieved: March 03, 2018) and the Official internet presence of the DPRK: Naenara, 2018, <http://naenara.com.kp/en/politics/> (retrieved: March 03, 2018)

374 Frank, Rüdiger: Nordkorea: zwischen Stagnation und Veränderungsdruck, in: Derichs und Heberer, Die Politischen Systeme, pp.431-503, pg.476

are strictly connected and controlled by the party and its leader, Kim Jong-un. These state institutions are organized as follows:

The legislative branch consists of an unicameral parliament called Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), which is according to the Constitution of the DPRK the highest organ of state-power. Elections are held every 5 years and the 687 members will be elected directly, whereupon all members are selected by the WPK. The nominal chief of state is the president of the SPA– Kim Yong-nam – yet his duties mainly concentrate on representative tasks.

The State Affairs Commission (SAC) is the highest polity-oriented leadership body of the DPRK and therefore the executive branch of the state. The Chairman of the SAC is (theoretically) elected by and accountable to the SPA. The Chairman of the SAC has several duties and authorities, for example: directing the overall affairs of the state, appoint or remove key cadres, deal with international relations and proclaim a state of war or mobilization order. The cabinet is the state institution responsible for general administrative and executive duties. It consists of the Premier – Pak Pong-ju – several Vice-premiers, chairmen and other members, which are not specified. The highest organ of the juridical branch is the central court and has subdivisions on provincial, municipal and local level. The courts are responsible to the respective higher level and the central court is responsible to the SAP.

3.4.1. Legality

The English version of the Constitution of the DPRK can be found on the official internet presence of North Korea,³⁷⁵ it is organized in a preamble and seven chapters with 172 articles. The first Constitution dates back to 1948 but has been changed several times, namely in 1972, 1992, 1998, 2013 and 2016.

The Preamble of the Constitution glorifies the achievements of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il: “Comrade Kim Il Sung authored the immortal Juche idea and, by organizing and leading the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle under its banner, created the glorious revolutionary traditions and achieved the historic cause of national restoration.” It is describing the aim of the ideology of Juche as “strengthening and developing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea into a socialist country centred on the masses, into a socialist State which is independent, self-sufficient and self-reliant in defence.”

375 Naenara, 2018, <http://naenara.com.kp/en/> (retrieved March 05, 2018)

The ideology of Songun describes the self-concept and the focus on the legitimation of the regime as Kim Jong-il “developed the DPRK into an invincible politico-ideological power, a nuclear state and an unchallengeable military power, and opened a broad avenue for the building of a powerful socialist country”. It seems that the Korean “native” ideologies of Juche and Songun have supplanted “communism” as the main ideological justification as in comparison to the Constitution of 1998 the newest amendment of the Constitution erased the notion of “communism” in all articles (Art.29, 40, 43).³⁷⁶ Although it affects just three articles it is worth to mention that the DPRK has obviously been emancipating itself from foreign ideological dicta.

In the preamble the regime is clearly pointing out the main aims and the addressees of its legitimation claims. An important source of legitimacy is apparently the founding myth and the concomitant violent struggle. The leaders as inventors of Juche are the origin of performance-based criteria like economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance. They are able to provide inside and outside security through the military and nuclear power, furthermore they maintain the truth of their ideology, compared to other possible inferior and imperialist opinions.

Another point for the self-perception of the DPRK is the claim to be the rightful leader of Korean reunification as “the great Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il are the sun of the nation and the lodestar of national reunification. Regarding the reunification of the country as the supreme national task, they devoted all their efforts and care for its realization”. Interestingly the 9th article of the Constitution (inconsistently to the preamble) stresses the realization of socialism as the explicit aim for the *northern* part of Korea and expresses the will for “peaceful reunification and great national unity”. In the articles 13 and 14 the DPRK explicitly refers to implementing the mass line and to conduct mass movements “to accelerate the building of socialism to the maximum”.

The economy of North Korea is covered in the constitution as well: The main means of production belong to the state and collective cooperative organizations, Article 24 officially allows and protects private property, which could stem from “individual sideline activities including those from kitchen gardens as well as income from other legal economic activities”. This article makes it likewise possible to inherit private property. Foreign investment seems to be desirable as Article 37 encourages North Korean organizations to run joint ventures with foreign companies in designated “Special Economic Zones”. Accordingly to the material

376 For comparison see: International Labour Organization, 2018, <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/56761/95661/F1832741191/PRK56761.pdf> (retrieved April 25, 2018)

welfare free healthcare and free education is regulated in the Articles 47 and 56. Furthermore the State is responsible for clothing, food and housing of all workers (Art.25).

Table 5 shows legitimization strategies detected in the Constitution of the DPRK:

Authority	founding myth, violent struggle; strong ideological background with Juche and Songun
Performance	economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance; internal security; protection of private property; social welfare; special economic zones; education
Internationality	anti-imperialist; self-defense; joint ventures
Consent	centered on the masses and mass movements; collective property and control

Table 5: Own depiction, Source: Constitution of the DPRK

According to the value surveys of Transparency International, North Korea has one of the most corrupt systems in the world. Whereas the perception of corruption got better, the confidence in the rule of law is waning and on a historical all-time low (Fig. 8).³⁷⁷ These number have to be read cautiously, even more when concerning North Korea. Generally, little information gets outside of the country, but these numbers draw an acceptable overview of the general state of affairs. The even lower drop in the perception of the rule of law in 2013, is for instance explicable because of the purge of Kim Jong-un's uncle and the following consolidation of Kim Jong-un's power.³⁷⁸

377 World Bank Index, 2018, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index, 2016: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016 (retrieved April 4, 2018)

378 Branigan, Tania: North Korea's Kim Jong-un purges his uncle in spectacularly public fashion, The Guardian, December 9, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/09/north-korea-kim-jong-un-purges-uncle> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

Legality North Korea

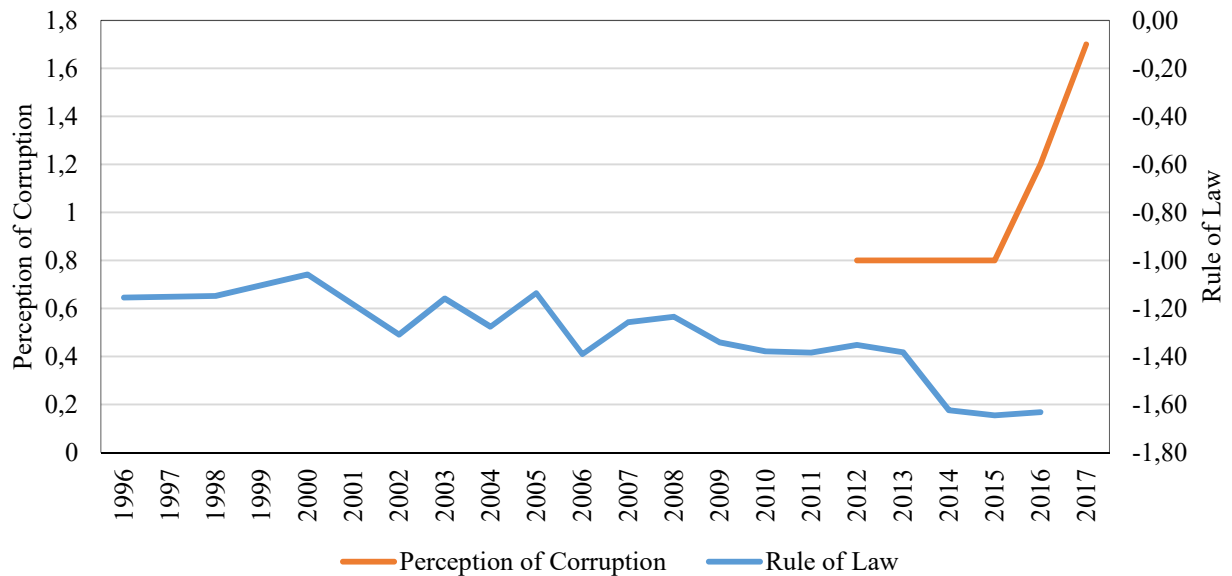


Fig. 8: Own depiction, Source: Transparency International: evaluates the perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople. 0=highly corrupt, 10=very clean;

World Bank Index: evaluates the perceived confidence of agents in the rules of a society regarding the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, the courts and the likelihood of crime and violence. -2.5=no Rule of Law, 2.5=high Rule of Law;

As there is almost no reliable data on corruption and research has mainly to concentrate on interviews of defectors. Therefore I will explain in this short section the emergence of a market economy parallel to the centrally planned state economy and how this effects and influences corruption.

The overall assessment is that bribery and petty corruption are omnipresent in today's North Korea,³⁷⁹ although there is a specific law that calls for punishment if officials are entangled in bribery schemes.³⁸⁰ Economic crises in the mid-1990s resulted in the fact that the regime is not able to pay sufficient wages to officials which is the cause of their indifference to punishment for corrupt behavior.³⁸¹ The pervasive corruption and bribery of officials has its roots in the North Korea's informal marketization which was established due to the problems of the centrally planned economy and the failure of the regime to allocate basic necessities. This regime failure led to an immense famine in the course of which the population had to turn to private farming

379 Dukalskis, Alexander: (2016) North Korea's Shadow Economy: A Force for Authoritarian Resilience or Corrosion? In: Europe-Asia Studies, Vol.68, No.3, 2016, pp.487-507

380 Kim, Byung-Yeon: Markets, Bribery, and Regime Stability in North Korea, in: Asia Security Initiative Working Paper, No.4, 2010, pp.1-38, pg.19

381 Lankov, Andrei: The Natural Death, pg.112-114

and entrepreneurial behavior to survive.³⁸² At the same time the regime planned a reform of the economic system which was initiated in 2002 but retrenched in 2005 and the public distribution system was reinforced.³⁸³ Although the regime seems to return to the centrally planned economy the parallel shadow economy prevails in a technically illegal way.³⁸⁴ Furthermore it is argued that these market activities are eroding regime legitimacy as they are in contrast to official ideology and represent a gathering point of political activities.³⁸⁵ At first glance it seems that the regime tacitly complies with the parallel markets but political control is still all-embracing and punishments for illegal market activities are harsh and measures to curtail these activities are imminent.³⁸⁶ Yet it is possible that the repression of market activities leads to corrupt officials as market vendors want to evade punishment and are dependent on official's discretion.³⁸⁷ Therefore it seems plausible that the tacit acquiescence in combination with repression are rather signs of getting the sprawling informal market activities back under central control than attempts of going back to the strict centrally planned system. Officially managed markets seem to be rather the rule and not the exception which leads to the case that formal markets are growing and not being dissolved.³⁸⁸ The legality of the regime's actions gets apparently circumvented by the public and officials, and marketization and corruption could obviously challenge the legitimacy of the North Korean regime, but at this point the answer is a mixture of a performance-based and repressive legitimization strategy to get the economy under state control.

3.4.2. Authority

North Korea's ideological legitimization strategies have enormous ties to its past and it is therefore essential to analyze the history of the DPRK and the connection of the present to the former supreme leaders Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-il. Already in the Constitution it is detected easily that the regime of North Korea has a strong ideological legitimization strategy,

382 Kim, Markets, pg.6

383 Haggard Stephan and Noland, Marcus: Reform from Below: Behavioral and Institutional Change in North Korea, in: Peterson Institute for International Economics Working Paper 09-8, 2009, pp.1-31, pg.3

384 Dukalskis, Shadow Economy, pg.496

385 Haggard, Stephan and Noland, Marcus: The Winter of Their Discontent: Pyongyang Attacks the Market, in: Peterson Institute for International Economics Working Paper 10-1, 2010, pp.1-11, pg.10

386 Kim, Markets, pg.20

387 Haggard and Noland, Winter, pg.10

388 Silberstein, Benjamin K.: Growth and Geography of Markets in North Korea. New Evidence of Satellite Imagery, in: US-Korea Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies Working Paper, 2015, pp.1-40

with heavy accents on the violent, revolutionary struggle. The ideological legitimization is mainly based on a personality cult and an idealization of the supreme leader's dynasty and on the ideas of Juche and Songun.

As the Preamble of the Constitution states, the violent anti-Japanese struggle for independence under Kim Il-sung is an important point of origin of the regime's legitimization. Nevertheless it was not clear from the beginning of the victorious struggle against colonial Japan that Kim Il-sung will be emerge as supreme leader. In fact, North Korea's regime was at the start rather characterized by a power-sharing leadership with several different guerilla groups who fought against the Japanese. It was not until the end of the 1950s when Kim Il-sung has purged all his political rivals and consolidated his power under the banner of the mass-based WPK.³⁸⁹ The personality cult of Kim Il-sung was slowly established during his lifetime but after the Korean War he firstly relied on an economic performance-based legitimization strategy. The focus of the main legitimization strategy was incrementally changed to a more nuanced ideological legitimization.³⁹⁰ This was caused by controversies with the Chinese and the Soviet regimes, so Kim Il-sung tergiversated his spiritual efforts to an autonomous North Korean path of ideological legitimization.³⁹¹ In the absence of capital and technological know-how Kim Il-sung had to establish a strong bond between the populace and the leader to establish a sense of collectivism and nationalism.³⁹² This emerged monolithic system is metaphorically a society reflecting an organic entity with the supreme leader as its head.³⁹³ This idealization of the supreme leader is virtually attended by a quasi-religious worshipping of Kim Il-sung as he is attributed with supernatural and extraordinary abilities.³⁹⁴

The handover of power from father to son and the establishment of a dynasty was not prearranged from the beginning. There are arguments that the choice of suitable successors was not very abundant as the legitimacy of the regime was channeled specifically to Kim Il-Sung. In the wake of probable regime collapse after the death of Kim Il-sung, it seems that continuity was the most promising path in securing regime resilience, hence Kim Jong-il became the supreme leader of the DPRK.³⁹⁵ Because of nuclear crisis with the United States and an

389 McEachern, Patrick: Comparative authoritarian institutionalism, regime evolution, and stability in North Korea, in: *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 2018, pp.1-19, pg.6

390 Frank, Rüdiger and Park, Phillip H.: From Monolithic Totalitarian to Collective Authoritarian Leadership? Performance-Based Legitimacy and Power Transfer in North Korea, in: *North Korean Review*, Vol.8, No.2, 2012 pp.32-49, pg.38

391 Frank, Innenansichten, pg.60

392 Frank and Park, From Monolithic Totalitarian, pg.39

393 Frank, Innenansichten, pg.59

394 Frank, Nordkorea, pg.456

395 Frank, Nordkorea, pg.461

economic crisis leading to the devastating famine it is argued that during Kim Jong-il's reign the North Korean regime's legitimacy suffered badly and waned.³⁹⁶ Nevertheless after his death there are efforts in amalgamating the reminiscence of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il as the central symbols of North Korea.³⁹⁷

After his father's death Kim Jong-un had the disadvantage of the missing grooming period, so he had to sharpen his profile immediately. On the one hand this is done through references to his bloodline respectively to his deified grandfather and on the other hand in setting own priorities.³⁹⁸ He revitalized for instance the annuals New Year's address, from which his father had abstained.³⁹⁹ Furthermore there are already signs detectable which suggest the establishment of a personality cult directed towards Kim Jong-un.⁴⁰⁰

According the Constitution, Juche and Songun are the guiding ideologies of the DPRK. Generally speaking, the idea of Juche is relatively unsubstantial but the centralization as state ideology means a degradation of Marxism-Leninism and the installation of a native North Korean ideological legitimation strategy. This was a consequence of disparities with the Chinese and Soviet regimes in the 1950s-60s when Kim Il-sung needed on the one hand an ideological explanation for not following Moscow and Beijing, but likewise did not want to cut all ties with other socialist regimes. Juche basically describes the difficulty of the establishment of socialism as this needs to be done under consideration of different requirements in different countries. These difficulties are only understood by the supreme leader, which makes the leader indispensable.⁴⁰¹ At its heart Juche was a redefinition of North Korean nationalism in combination with a marginalized socialism. In this sense, Juche is the ideology emphasizing North Korean independence and nationalism.⁴⁰²

Similar to Juche the idea of Songun is a native North Korean ideology propagating the independence from and a reinterpretation of Marxism-Leninism, which was established during Kim Jong-il's reign in the 1990s. Songun basically transports the idea of the proletariat as the main driver of socialist revolution onto the military. In essence this means that there would be no ideological pitfalls, if North Korea would introduce a market-based economy as the focus on the military class avert the ideological problem of proletarian and bourgeois antagonism in

396 McEachern, Comparative authoritarian institutionalism, pg.7

397 Frank, Innenansichten, pg.84

398 Frank, Nordkorea, pg.464

399 McEachern, Comparative authoritarian institutionalism, pg.8

400 Frank, Innenansichten, pg.93

401 Frank, Nordkorea, pg.466

402 Frank, Innenansichten, pg100-101

the course of socialist revolution.⁴⁰³ The ideological legitimization strategy of the DPRK is all-embracing and the classification of a totalitarian regime is striking.

3.4.3. Performance

According to the Constitution, the main aim of the regime in reinforcing the performance-based legitimization is to become a powerful country. This can be achieved in the securing of economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance, which happens through the protection of private property, internal security, social welfare and education. Strengthening the general economy is attempted in accumulating capital in Special Economic Zones where ties to the global economy are knotted. As it is often the case in researching North Korea, there is almost no data available, so it is necessary to evaluate the performance legitimization on several, different ways.

However, essential features of performance-based legitimacy are soon to be discovered:⁴⁰⁴ The educational system of the DPRK seems to fulfill basic requirements as the literacy rate of the population is regardless of sex, at 100%. The population of 25.2 Million reaches an average life expectancy at birth of 70.7 years, which positions North Korea at place 157 out of 224 with Chad at lowest with 50.6 years and neighbor South Korea at rank 11 with 82.5 years of life expectancy at birth. The Infant Mortality Rate of 22.1 deaths/1000 live births, places North Korea at 73 out of 225 surveyed countries, compared for instance to Afghanistan at rank 1 with 110.6/1000 and South Korea with 3/1000 at rank 215. It is estimated that in 2014 North Korea had 3.51 physicians/1000 population, which is according to the World Health Organization sufficient as it is estimated that 2.3 health workers/1000 population is the critical point of insufficiency.

The regime is additionally trying to deliver recreational facilities like amusement and water-parks and there is even a newly built skiing resort.⁴⁰⁵ It is furthermore observable that the usage of mobile phones is increasing: from 0 mobile phone subscriptions in 2008 to 14.3 subscriptions/100 people in 2016.⁴⁰⁶ These numbers may be relatively low compared to other

403 Frank, *Innenansichten*, pg.105-108

404 CIA Factbook, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

405 Frank, *Innenansichten*, pg.88

406 The World Bank: World Development Indicators, 2018, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

countries but nonetheless a development is detectable which can be positively attributed to performance-based legitimization.

Yet the most basic need of the population is obviously the adequate supply of nutrition but the food situation in North Korea remains somewhat unclear. North Korea allegedly sold fishing rights to China, therefore observers argue the supply of fish is dropping.⁴⁰⁷ One sign is that in the last months several abandoned fishing vessels of North Korean descent were washed ashore in Japan. Observers argue this is due to the fact that fishermen have to go far out in the ocean to find adequate fishing grounds. In the attempt of getting food they consequently drown or starve to death. Others think that the marketization of the DPRK tempts fishers to go out far as they would be able to sell the surplus of fish at the local markets for personal gain. So the question remains if these incidents happen out of distress or out of profit-seeking.⁴⁰⁸

The question of agricultural output is driven in a similar fashion. Although the North Korean regime started an agricultural reform, real output and agricultural success remain dubious. Reports suggesting possible food shortenings appear on a regular basis, on the other hand there is the argument that North Korea does not starve and that the agricultural reform takes effect and delivers more crops.⁴⁰⁹ Although international sanctions are targeting the economy and therefore the food supply as well, there are signs that North Korea is reasonably able to feed the population and hence perform on a sufficient, but a relative low basis. Rice prices as an indicator of inflation, stay stable and there are signs of rice smuggling from China, so it seems supply of food is secured and trade even flourishing.⁴¹⁰ The markets are probably flourishing as well, as it is alleged that in course of the agricultural reform farmers are allowed to retain a

407 Ahn, JH: North Korea sold fishing rights to China for \$30 million, lawmaker claims, Nknews, July 1, 2016, <https://www.nknews.org/2016/07/north-korea-sold-fishing-rights-to-china-for-30-million-lawmaker-claims/> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

408 BBC: What's behind the N Korean 'ghost ships' washing up in Japan? December 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34981195> (retrieved March 20, 2018); Rich, Motoko: Ghostly Boats Carry North Korean Crews, Dead and Alive, to Japan. The New York Times, December 7, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/07/world/asia/japan-north-korea-ghost-ships.html> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

409 Cohen, Roberta: World Food Day: The Challenge of North Korea. Brookings, October 8, 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/world-food-day-the-challenge-of-north-korea/> (retrieved March 20, 2018); Choi, Sung-jin: N. Korea's food shortage 'worst since 2011'. The Korea Times, June 20, 2016, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/06/116_207393.html (retrieved March 20, 2018); Lankov, Andrei: N Korea and the myth of starvation, Aljazeera, March 27, 2014, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/03/n-korea-myth-starvation-2014319124439924471.html> (retrieved March 20, 2018); Lankov, Andrei: Reforming North Korea, Aljazeera, November 30, 2014, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/11/reforming-north-korea-20141117121917871925.html> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

410 Kang, Mi Jin: Rice demand down, price steady in North Korean markets, DailyNK, March 7, 2018, <http://english.dailynk.com/english/read.php?num=15045&cataId=nk01500> (retrieved March 20, 2018); Silberstein, Benjamin K.: "Maximum pressure" and the North Korean economy: what do market prices say? North Korean Economy Watch, March 9, 2018, <http://www.nkeconwatch.com/2018/03/09/maximum-pressure-and-the-north-korean-economy-what-do-market-prices-say/> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

part of their harvest to liquidate privately.⁴¹¹ Hence it can generally be assumed that North Korea's food situation is half-decent, regarding that 20 years ago it had a serious famine.

For agricultural output and the aim of economic self-sufficiency, energy is needed. Through this indicator it is possible to detect some evidence regarding North Korea's strengths and weaknesses in the economic realm. In his 2018 New Year's Speech Kim Jong-un insinuated that the provision of energy poses a problem for the regime as he wants new power sources to be developed. Furthermore he wants to "drastically increase thermal power generation, and lower the loss of electric power and increase its production as much as possible by maintaining and reinforcing imperfect generating facilities".⁴¹²

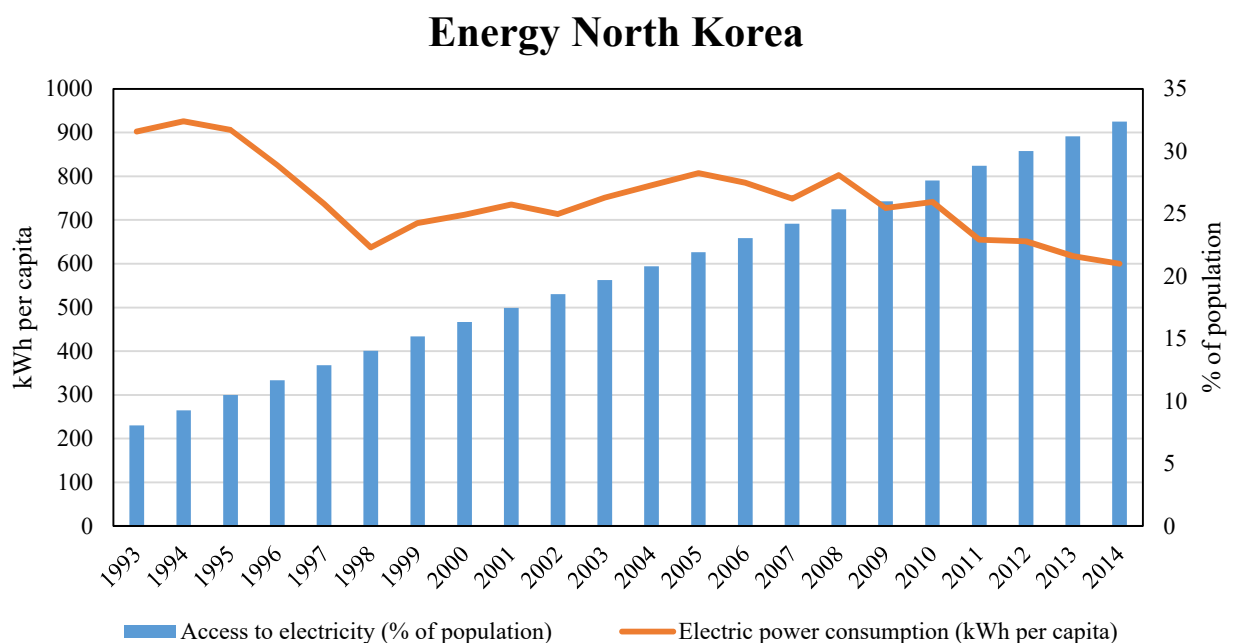


Fig. 9: Own depiction, Source: World Bank Development Indicators

Fig. 9⁴¹³ shows that the power consumption per capita rapidly decreased in the mid-1990s and never quite reached the height of the early 1990s again. This has a correlation with the decreasing imports of crude oil from the Soviet Union after its collapse and the subsequent drain of access to subsidized spare parts and technical expertise, which caused that the energy

411 Lankov, Is Byungjin Policy Failing, pg.28

412 NCNK: Kim Jong Un's 2018 New Year's Address, The National Committee of North Korea, January 1, 2018, <https://www.ncnk.org/node/1427> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

413 World Bank Development Indicators, 2017: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

sector could not be revitalized to date.⁴¹⁴ This leads to the dilemma that existing power plants solely generate approximately 40 per cent of their potential output and therefore the industrial growth and consequently economic development is seriously hampered.⁴¹⁵ The supply of energy to the population is likewise rather imperfect as roughly a mere third of the population has steady access to electricity. This number is steadily growing but whoever is able tries to afford a solar panel for private generation of electricity.⁴¹⁶ So it can be stated that the energy supply is a great weakness of regime legitimation as the supply of electricity and the performance of energy generating utilities is seriously disappointing. But according to the New Year's Speech this problem has not only been identified but the regime admits the deficits, and potentially tries to reinforce the energy sector as far as possible.

Kim Jong-un's performance-based legitimation strategy is sometimes described as "bread and circus" policy, but at the same time it is somewhat unclear how he plans to finance these policies.⁴¹⁷ As already mentioned, amusement parks are built, mobile phone subscriptions grow and solar panels are available, which leads to the conclusion that an emerging middle class is able to afford consumer goods.⁴¹⁸ In view of massive energy problems and international sanctions banning trade, it is hard to imagine how the regime wants to attract capital and foreign investment. An important factor in North Korea's attempt of economic development is the accumulation of capital through SEZ, which should attract foreign investment and stimulate the stagnating domestic economy. Generally speaking these zones could prove to tip the scales in favor of the DPRK as China was able to boost its economic development because of SEZ. But apart from the international sanctions, which seriously harm any of North Korea's economic intentions, the SEZ suffer from flawed domestic structures as well. The regime has for instance missed the opportunity to create institutional structures which support capitalist behavior by its managers.⁴¹⁹ Another example is the absence of institutionalized rule of law and therefore general mistrust by possible foreign investors.⁴²⁰ The potential achievements of SEZ in North Korea

414 AFP: While North Korea pushes ahead in missiles, barely one in three citizens has access to electricity, The Straits Times, October 5, 2017, <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/while-north-korea-pushes-ahead-in-missiles-barely-one-in-three-has-access-to> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

415 Gray, Kevin and Lee, Jong-Woon: Following in China's footsteps? The political economy of North Korean reform, in: The Pacific Review, Vol.30, No.1, 2017, pp.51-73, pg.55

416 Frank, Rüdiger: Consumerism in North Korea: The Kwangbok Area Shopping Center, 38North, April 6, 2017, <https://www.38north.org/2017/04/rfrank040617/> (retrieved March 20, 2018)

417 Frank, Rüdiger: Can North Korea Prioritize Nukes and the Economy at the Same Time? In: Global Asia, Vol.9, No.1, 2014, pp.38-42, pg.42

418 Frank, Consumerism in North Korea

419 Frank, Nordkorea, pg.496

420 Lankov, Byungjin, pg.30

can just be guessed as sanctions and ideological constraints hinder deployment. But as the case of China shows, it certainly could be a means of promoting economic growth and therefore strengthen the performance-based legitimation.

3.4.4. Internationality

A strong legitimation strategy of the North Korean regime is the ambition to become a nuclear power, therefore international relations of North Korea are mainly strained by the conflict with its neighbors South Korea and Japan and the international community. Due to the nuclear program North Korea is sanctioned by United Nations, whereas the most recent harsh sanctions started in 2016.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, China became the main trading partner from the 1990s up to recently. In 2016 more than 85% of exports were going to and even more than 90% of imports were coming from the PRC.⁴²¹ The main commodities of this trade were coal, textiles, ore and seafood on the export side and machinery and oil on the import side.⁴²² Because of North Korean nuclear ambitions the international sanctions target the economy of North Korea through a trade ban of these most important commodities.⁴²³

The probability that the regime will totally abandon the nuclear program, respectively totally denuclearize is very unlikely as its nuclear ambitions are even inscribed in the constitution and the accomplishment of becoming a nuclear power would greatly enhance the ideological legitimation of the regime. Another point in this regard is the dilemma that North Korea sees its nuclear program as an insurance against imperialist intentions as the regime has for instance seen how Muammar Gaddafi's reign has been brought down, after he gave up his nuclear weapons program.⁴²⁴

One argument against the overall significance of sanctions is the ambivalent approach of China and Russia towards the situation. These two countries benefit the most of a flourishing and the least of a diminishing, not to speak from a collapsing, North Korea. Whereas especially for

421 CIA Factbook, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

422 Frank, Rüdiger: Economic Sanctions and the Nuclear Issue: Lessons From North Korean Trade, 38North, September 18, 2017, <https://www.38north.org/2017/09/rfrank091817/> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

423 Albert, Eleanor: What to Know About the Sanctions against North Korea, Council on Foreign Relations, January 3, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-know-about-sanctions-north-korea> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

424 Lankov, Byungjin, pg.36

China the stakes are high as war and chaos on the Korean peninsula and mass migration is not in Beijing's will.⁴²⁵ Russia's investments in North Korea are generally lower but nevertheless has an interest in the security development in East Asia, mainly due its own geopolitical concerns.⁴²⁶

International observers and North Korea pundits generally assume that sanctions will not help in the de-escalation of the situation.⁴²⁷ Instead, some argue that it would be more fruitful to develop strategies to deal with a nuclear armed North Korea, than to answer with counter-threats.⁴²⁸ Yet a more pessimistic approach depicts a dire picture of a North Korean regime needing to go into the offense, missing crucial energy supplies and compare the situation to Japan's in 1941 before the attack on Pearl Harbor.⁴²⁹ Academic research states that sanctions are generally inefficient if the targeted regime has a strong legitimization strategy as these sanctions can be channeled as an unjust attack on the domestic population: "If comprehensive sanctions – which affect the economy and/or the population as a whole – are imposed on regimes with compelling legitimization strategies, they regularly trigger unintended rally-round-the-flag effects. Such narratives are also easier to uphold when only weak ties to the entity that is the sender of sanctions exist".⁴³⁰

3.4.5. Consent

The formation of leadership and the inner circle of North Korean elites remain somewhat unclear, although there are several signs of factionalism and several cooptation strategies. The origins of factions inside the regime can be traced back to the consolidation of power by Kim Il-sung in the 1950s. At this time he has purged all the other groups who fought against Japanese

425 Lind, Jennifer: Will Trump's hardball tactics work on China and North Korea? CNN, August 7, 2017 <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/07/opinions/china-north-korea-opinion-lind/index.html> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

426 Lukim, Artyom: Russia's Role in the North Korea Conundrum: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution? Foreign Policy Research Institute, March 4, 2016, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2016/03/russias-role-in-the-north-korea-conundrum-part-of-the-problem-or-part-of-the-solution/> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

427 Roth, Richard: UN Security Council imposes new sanctions on North Korea, CNN, August 6, 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/05/asia/north-korea-un-sanctions/index.html> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

428 Swaine, Michael D.: Time to Accept Reality and Manage a Nuclear-Armed North Korea. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 11, 2017 <http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/09/11/time-to-accept-reality-and-manage-nuclear-armed-north-korea-pub-73065> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

429 Baron, Jeff: What if Sanctions Brought North Korea to the Brink? "Well, in 1941..." 38North, September 7, 2017, <https://www.38north.org/2017/09/jbaron090717/> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

430 Grauvogel and von Soest, Claims to Legitimacy Matter, pg.18

imperialism and emerged as supreme leader relying on his group of guerilla fighters.⁴³¹ The elites of North Korea are still recruited out of the families and descendants of these fighters or of the groups which were on the North Korean side in the Korean War and pledged loyalty to Kim Il-sung.

Other groups and families which are rather neutral or in the extreme case hostile to the regime do not receive benefits but have to expect harsh repressions.⁴³² These benefits for loyalty include material items like more and better nutrition, an apartment in Pyongyang and better jobs.⁴³³ However, people of the lower societal classes have to endure repressions like prevention of a professional career, refusal of party membership or harder legal decisions in case of crime.⁴³⁴

The institutional relationships are rather opaque as well. It seems that the state institutions like the legislative and the executive branch have a minor standing compared to the Party and the Military. Inside of these two institutions the influence of the mentioned families is the major driver of factionalism and of the struggle over influence within the regime. Therefore a power struggle between party and military seems in the North Korean case unlikely as both are permeated with similar opinion leaders.⁴³⁵

For a better understanding of the inner workings of elite formation and cooptation it is useful to have a closer look at the two power-transfers because through the following consolidation of power the inner structures of the regime became more visible.

When Kim Jong-il was slowly established as heir at the end of the 1970s, Kim Il-sung's brother was purged out of the Party and his second wife Kim Song-ae descended in hierarchy, furthermore Kim Tong-kyu, an old guerilla fighter, vanished. This exemplifies the different ties in the inner power structure of the regime as Kim Il-sung's bloodline, other relatives and fighters of the guerilla group.⁴³⁶ It is alleged that behind the curtains Kim Ki-nam, son of another guerilla fighter and a student colleague of Kim Jong-il, orchestrated the weakening of Kim Song-ae's position, in scheming the plan of cutting the side branches of Kim Il-sung's wider family.⁴³⁷ So, whereas family ties could guarantee admission to the inner circles of power, own political ambition can be interpreted as threat to leader legitimation.

431 Frank and Park, *From Monolithic Totalitarian*, pg.37

432 Collins, Robert: *Marked for Life Marked for Life: Songbun. North Korea's Social Classification System*. Washington/DC 2012, pg.15

433 Frank, *Nordkorea*, pg.494

434 Collins, *Songbun*, Chapter V

435 Frank, *Nordkorea*, pg.488

436 Frank, *Nordkorea*, pg.462

437 Gause, Ken E.: *North Korean House of Cards. Leadership Dynamics under Kim Jong-un*, Washington/DC, 2015, pg.298

A similar horizontal threat to the legitimacy of the Kim leader came up during the power transfer to Kim Jong-un. Given that Kim Jong-un missed the grooming phase, during which he could grow into his position as supreme leader, he had to consolidate his power and fill the positions in his staff with confidants. At first he was assisted by regents coming from his own family, namely his aunt Kim Kyong-hui and his uncle in-law Jang Song-taek.⁴³⁸ As Jang Song-taek was building up an own political and economic power base, relying on military units and threatening Kim Jong-un's power, he was purged and executed whereas the situation of his aunt stays unclear.⁴³⁹ Elite repression is a generally and frequently used tool in Kim Jong-un's legitimization process as it is for instance alleged that he ordered the execution of 64 top-officials in the first nine months of 2016,⁴⁴⁰ and in 2017 he presumably ordered the killing of his half-brother Kim Jong-nam in Malaysia.⁴⁴¹ Like his father, it seems that Kim Jong-un is cutting off the side branches of the family tree.

But for all that it seems that Kim Jong-un was relative successful in coopting the relevant elites as he was nominated and accepted as Chairman of the KWP in 2016, which leads to the conclusion that: "Kim Jong Un and the Korean Workers' Party had a mutually-reinforcing relationship, but no single party member could constrain Kim."⁴⁴² Nevertheless, it follows that Kim Jong-un has more grip on power and is more adept in the realm of political intrigue as he was credited before the purge of his uncle-in-law.⁴⁴³

Whereas the legitimization strategies concerning the relevant elites is a mixture of cooptation and repression, the repression targeting the populace is partially tremendous. According to the Political Terror Scale, measuring political terror and violence, the DPRK is attributed with the worst conclusion, defining the regime as: "Terror has expanded to the whole population. The leaders of these societies place no limits on the means or thoroughness with which they pursue personal or ideological goals".⁴⁴⁴ The North Korean coercive apparatus classifies the population in regard to the affiliation to the regime and subsequently denies or approves needs and wishes

438 Kim, Jack: The Pyongyang power couple behind dynastic dictator Kim, Reuters, April 25, 2013, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-korea-north-family/the-pyongyang-power-couple-behind-dynastic-dictator-kim-idUSBRE93O1C220130425> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

439 Choe Sang-Hun and Sanger, David E. Korea Execution Is Tied to Clash Over Businesses, The New York Times, December 23, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/24/world/asia/north-korea-purge.html> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

440 Lankov, Byungjin, pg.33

441 BBC: North Korean leader's brother Kim Jong-nam killed at Malaysia airport, February 14, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38971655> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

442 McEachern, Comparative authoritarian institutionalism, pg.8

443 Gause, House of Cards, pg.63

444 Political Terror Scale, 2018, <http://www.politicalterrorscale.org/Data/Datatable.html> (retrieved March 23, 2018)

of the populace. This is for instance reflected in the determination of occupation, food distribution, housing level and domestic travel restrictions.⁴⁴⁵ Measures against oppositional behavior range from political prisons and low-level labor camps to several forms of violence and public executions.⁴⁴⁶ Yet, there are definite signs of evasion of repression, even though not through direct opposition to the regime by the population. Due to globalization and technological progress North Korea is not a totally enclosed country anymore. On the one hand mobile phones, radio and television and smuggled foreign movies enable to gain some information from the outside. On the other hand the borders to China are not totally monitored, so smuggling of non-North Korean goods, as well as personal contacts to the outside are not uncommon. Apart from the routine crackdowns the regime seems to tacitly acquiesce this behavior.⁴⁴⁷

With a rather harsh coercive system the regime has to steer consent of masses to an, at least satisfactory level. Officially, the definition of Juche states that the DPRK relies and is centered on the masses in developing the state. Ideological framing depicts the society as an organic entity with the leader as its head, hence the leader and the population are inextricably linked. For the development of the country the masses have to follow the leader and under the premise of progress mass mobilizations are initiated on a regular basis. In 2009 for instance, two mass mobilizations were launched, in spring the “150-day battle” and subsequently in fall the “100-day battle”.⁴⁴⁸ These mobilizations basically urge the population to work longer and harder and have an important ideological frame. In economic respect these mass battles mainly do not accomplish their aims, but the population always stays on edge. For ideological and general control the population is engaged in working processes to be kept under permanent pressure. Another aim of the regime is achieved through warlike rhetoric, which simulates an everlasting state of war and therefore keeps a collective cohesion.⁴⁴⁹

445 Collins, *Marked for Life*, pg.103

446 Haggard, Stephan and Noland, Marcus: *Political Attitudes under Repression: Evidence from North Korean Refugees*, in: *East-West Center Working Papers*, No.21, 2010, pp.1-47, pg.1

447 Lankov, *The Natural Death*, pp.100-110

448 Gray and Lee, *Following in China's footsteps*, pg.57

449 Frank, *Nordkorea*, pp.473-476

3.5. Vietnam

“Reform or die.”

– Nguyen Van Linh⁴⁵⁰

Overview of State Institutions⁴⁵¹

Vietnam as a single-party autocracy is characterized by the duality of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) and the institutions of the state. The CPV is the dominant force in the regime as all state and government officials are cadres of the party and the political verdict lies therefore in the hands of the Central Committee and the Politburo.⁴⁵²

The legislative branch consists of the unicameral parliament called the National Assembly which is the highest state power body of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV). Members of the National Assembly serve a 5-year term. The assembly consists of 500 seats, out of which 473 seats are taken by members of the CPV, however all members are at least approved by the CPV. The National Assembly is responsible for foreign policies, like international treaties or regional cooperation (Art.70). As the National Assembly holds only two sessions per year the Standing Committee is the permanent body of the legislation during the year. The President of the SRV, is the head of the state and commander-in-chief. The president is elected by the National Assembly and has also the duty of representation.

The government, which is led by the Prime Minister, is the executive branch and is elected by and responsible to the National Assembly. The function of the government as executive body has been reinforced in the course of the Doi Moi reforms.⁴⁵³

The highest institution in judicial branch is the Supreme People’s Court presided over by the chief of justice who is elected by the National Assembly for a 5-years term.

The special feature of Vietnam’s political system is the division of the highest offices to prevent a concentration of power in the hands of one person. This Troika consists of the president, the prime minister and the general secretary of the party. The prime minister can for instance make decisions regarding state-personnel for his own and without consulting the party. Secondly the

450 Turley, William S.: Introduction, in: William S. Turley and Mark Seldon (eds) Vietnamese Socialism: Doi Moi in Comparative Perspective, Boulder 1993, pp.1–15

451 Facts and Organization of the state and party: CIA World Factbook, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vn.html> (retrieved March 06, 2018); Vietnam News: The constitution of the socialist republic of Viet Nam, 2014, <http://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/250222/the-constitution-of-the-socialist-republic-of-viet-nam.html#OJkSVVdvtF5Xbt8B.97> (retrieved March 06, 2018)

452 Croissant, Die politischen Systeme, pg.546

453 Croissant, Die politischen Systeme, pg.547

National Assembly has the power to question and even prevent drafts of law.⁴⁵⁴ This means that although the party controls the political branches, there is a rather collective leadership observable. This diversification of power has naturally implications for the legitimization process.

The general secretaries, presidents and prime ministers from the beginning of the 1990s are shown in Table 6.⁴⁵⁵

General Secretary of CPV	President	Prime Minister
Do Muoi (1991–1997)	Lee Duc Anh (1992–1997)	Do Muoi (1988–1991)
Le Kha Phieu (1997–2001)	Tran Duc Luong (1997–2006)	Vo Van Kiet (1991–1997)
Nong Due Manh (2001–2011)	Nguyen Minh Triet (2006–2011)	Phan Van Khai (1997–2006)
Nguyen Phu Trong (2011 –)	Truong Tan Sang (2011– 2016)	Nguyen Tan Dung (2006–2016)
	Tran Dai Quang (2016 –)	Nguyen Xuan Phuc (2016 –)

Table 6: Own depiction, Source: Croissant, 2014 and own supplement

3.5.1. Legality

The SRV has adopted several constitutions since the reunification of North and South Vietnam. The first has been adopted in 1980 and was followed by the Constitution of 1992, which was amended in 2001. The latest adopted version is of the year 2013 and can be found as internet resource in an English version on the site of the News Agency of Vietnam, it contains 120 articles and a short preamble.⁴⁵⁶ The main cause of the adoption of the 1992 constitution was the need for a legitimization of the Doi Moi reforms as the changes of the economic system were not consistent with the original Marxist-Leninist background of the SRV.⁴⁵⁷ This short analysis of the Constitution of the SRV serves the purpose of detecting the legal background of legitimization strategies of the regime.

The preamble stresses the struggle of gaining independence and becoming a reunified sovereign nation: “Since 1930, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam founded and trained by President Ho Chi Minh, our People have waged a protracted struggle full of hardship and sacrifice for national independence and freedom and for their own happiness. [...] our People have gained great victories in the struggles to liberate the nation, reunify the country, [and] defend the Fatherland [...]”. The preamble mentions the founding myth and gives the legitimization to the adherents of Ho Chi Minh, who are naturally to be found in the CPV. In

454 Croissant, Die politischen Systeme, pp.547-548

455 Croissant, Die politischen Systeme, pg.548

456 Vietnam News: The constitution of the socialist republic of Viet Nam, 2014

457 Croissant, Die politischen Systeme, pg.544

Article 4 the CVP makes clear that the party has no intention of any political pluralism as the party is “the Vanguard of the working class, concurrently the vanguard of the laboring people and Vietnamese nation, [...] and acting upon the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and Ho Chi Minh Thought is the force leading the State and society”. The notion of the “Vietnamese nation” does encompass all people whereas the rights of minorities are specifically protected (Art.5).

According to the Constitution human and citizens’ rights are unlimited unless they dissent with social order and national security. Free speech and free press, the right to assembly and the right to demonstrate are guaranteed by the Constitution as well (Art. 14, 15, 23, 24). These articles are in total contradiction to the classification of the Freedom House Index, which argues that the regime does not guarantee any of this principles as: “Vietnam’s media environment is one of the harshest in Asia.”⁴⁵⁸ This is obviously an example of the autocratic discrepancy of how rules should be and how rules are used. Furthermore it is declared that everyone has the equal right of education, health care and social welfare (Art. 37, 38, 58, 59).

The economy is of special interest for the legitimation of the regime. The Doi Moi reforms starting mid-1980s changed the economy of Vietnam from a socialist to a market-oriented system. One can clearly follow the incremental changes and adaptations regarding the economic system in the constitutions of 1980, 1992 and 2013. These different constitutions give a good impression how they grew along with the economic development. In 1980 the economy should be transformed to a socialist economic system, strictly consisting of two sectors: the State-led and the collective-led. The means of production should therefore solely be in the hands of the State.⁴⁵⁹ After the favorable reforms the tone was already different as the 1992 Constitution⁴⁶⁰ states in Article 15 that: “The State develops a socialist-oriented multi-sectoral commodity economy driven by the State-regulated market mechanism. The multi-sectoral structure of the economy with diversified types of production and business organisation is based on ownership of the entire people along with collective and private ownership, of which the first are the cornerstone”. In Article 16 it is stressed that the State wants to build “a strong country with prosperous life for its people, and aimed at ever better satisfying the material and spiritual needs of the people by releasing all productive capacities, bringing into full play the potential of the various economic sectors: State, collective, individual, private capitalist and State capitalist”.

458 Freedom House, 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/vietnam> (retrieved March 06, 2018)

459 For comparison see: Vietnam Law Magazine: Vietnam’s 1980 Constitution, 2011, <http://vietnamlawmagazine.vn/vietnams-1980-constitution-4534.html> (retrieved March 06, 2018)

460 Vietnam Laws: <http://www.vietnamlaws.com/freelaws/Constitution92.pdf> (retrieved March 06, 2018)

Private ownership and private capitalism was officially sanctioned and the turn of the tables was explained with the ambition in generating a prosperous life for the people. The establishment of the market economy could endanger the legitimacy of the CPV and therefore it was necessary to indicate the continuing importance of the State.

In Article 51 of the 2013 Constitution, the economic development already has taken its toll as the tone almost sounds wearily in the face of change: “The Vietnamese economy is a socialist-oriented market economy with varied forms of ownership and economic sectors; the state economy plays the leading role. All economic sectors are important components of the national economy. Entities in different economic sectors are equal before law and shall cooperate and compete with one another in accordance with law.” The State is no longer the cornerstone of the economy but still plays a leading role. The different sectors are nonetheless equal and are able to compete in a market economy. In this regard the Constitution had to follow the economic reforms, but political reforms are not in sight and the regime obviously uses economic performance as a legitimization strategy to prevent political pluralism and stay resilient.

Table 7 shows legitimization strategies detected in the Constitution of the SRV:

Authority	founding myth, violent struggle; Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought; state-capitalism
Performance	socialist market economy; social welfare, education;
Internationality	membership in international and regional organizations;
Consent	Vietnamese Fatherland Front (Art.9); protection of minorities; free speech and free press; right to demonstrate;

Table 7: Own depiction, Source: Constitution of the SRV

Vietnam’s regime has the problem of a weak judiciary and is therefore undermined by a teeming corruption.⁴⁶¹ The Constitution of the SRV targets this problem as state institutions are bound over to fight corruption in state-management and the state-apparatus (Art.8, 56, 96). The

461 Croissant, Die politischen System, pg.555

political consequences of this issue is affirmed by officials saying “that the Party would lose power if corruption was not eliminated”.⁴⁶² The party is aware of the fact that this problem is eroding its legitimacy and is trying to tame the daunting corruption. One effect of the process to tackle high-end corruption directly, was the formulation of the Anti-Corruption Law in 2005⁴⁶³ and the establishment of the Central Steering Committee of Anti-Corruption in 2013.⁴⁶⁴ These two measures clearly enhanced the perceived confidence in the rule of law as can be seen in Fig. 10.⁴⁶⁵

Though, already since the 1990s the public fight against corruption is in the focus of officials, media and the people.⁴⁶⁶ Since then, several high corruption cases have been trialed to some extent with ferocious death sentences, obviously highlighting the severity of corruption. Most recently the case against the former director of the OceanBank, Nguyen Xuan Son, resulted in the death penalty.⁴⁶⁷ In the wake of the fight against corruption the regime does not stop in front of the highest party members as is shown in the case of Dinh La Thang. The former Minister of Transportation and member of the Politburo was sentenced to 13 years in prison due to corruption.⁴⁶⁸ Yet, the main problem is that corruption is immanent to the system and officials are merely fighting the symptoms but not the cause.⁴⁶⁹ The bureaucratic system is highly lenient towards corruption and citizens are generally concerned about this practice.⁴⁷⁰

462 Abrami, Regina M.: Vietnam in 2002: On the Road to Recovery, in: Asian Survey, Vol.43, No.1, 2003 , pp. 91-100, pg.98

463 Fritzen, Scott: Beyond “Political Will”: How Institutional Context Shapes the Implementation of Anti-Corruption Policies, in: Policy and Society, Vol.24, No.3, 2005, pp.79-96

464 Vietnam Net Bridge: Central Committee of Internal Affairs begins operating from February, February 04, 2013, <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/government/65805/central-committee-of-internal-affairs-begins-operating-from-february.html> (retrieved March 13, 2018)

465 World Bank Index, 2018, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index, 2016: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016 (retrieved April 4, 2018)

466 Gainsborough, Martin: Vietnam: Rethinking the State. London 2010, pg.51

467 BBC: Vietnam fraud trial: Death penalty for ex-head of OceanBank, September 29, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41439866> (retrieved March 13, 2018)

468 BBC: Vietnam jails most senior Communist Party official in decades, January 22, 2018 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42770847> (retrieved March 12, 2018)

469 Le, Long S.: Vietnam’s endless corruption campaign, Eastasiaforum, April 16, 2010; <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/04/16/vietnams-endless-corruption-campaign/> (retrieved March 13, 2018)

470 Fritzen, Beyond “Political Will”, pg.82

Legality Vietnam

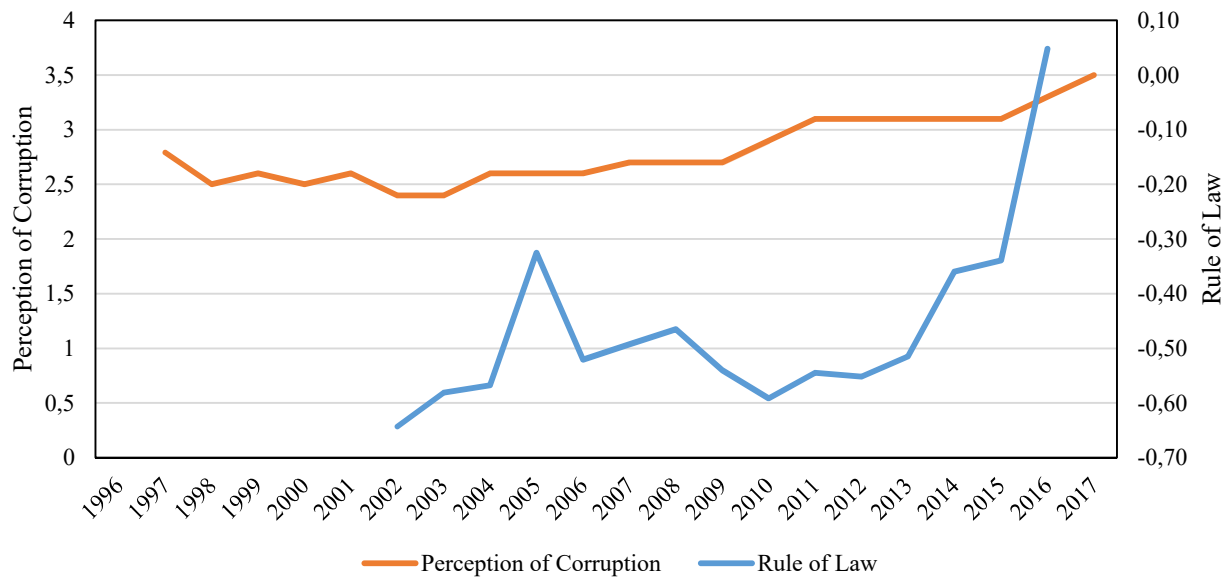


Fig.10: Own depiction, Sources: Transparency International: evaluates the perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople. 0=highly corrupt, 10=very clean;

World Bank Index: evaluates the perceived confidence of agents in the rules of a society regarding the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, the courts and the likelihood of crime and violence. -2,5=no Rule of Law, 2,5=high Rule of Law

It is shown in Fig.10 that the Perception of Corruption in Vietnam is high and relatively stable around 2.5 but the opinion regarding corruption got better in recent years. The same can be seen in the perception of the rule of law, whereas it has been rather low and negative, it has steeply risen in the last years. This leads to the conclusion that the regime's measures in building trust and legitimacy slowly but surely take effect. It seems that the party's legitimization strategy of fighting corruption is at least positively acknowledged by the public opinion.

On the surface the regime's crackdown of corruption helps the legitimization process of "Legality", but these cases target other strategies for the resilience of the regime too. On the one hand, the corruption cases are reinforcing the central state. Due to the market reforms, the allocation of scarce economic resources is not any longer the uncontested domain of the central state, but the lower state-levels use the marketization reforms to accumulate wealth as well. In this light, the crackdown of corruption is the outcome of a power struggle between center and periphery, in which the center uses its power to keep lower levels in line.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷¹ Gainsborough, Rethinking the State, pp.69-70

On the other hand, these high-profile cases are not only showing that no one is above the law. These cases are likewise signs of struggles inside the party, in which different factions try to consolidate their power. It is traceable that high-level corruption cases correlate simultaneously with party congresses and party elections. Therefore it is detectable that it became customary on all party-levels to discredit potential political rivals with the help of allegations of corruption.⁴⁷²

3.5.2. Authority

Analyzing the Constitution, it is observable that the beginning of the Doi Moi reforms constitute a watershed in the ideological legitimization strategies of the SRV. The first phase is based on the foundational myth of national struggle for independence and the consolidation of the state under the leadership of the Communists. The second phase is characterized by marketization and the entailed adjustments of legitimization strategies immanent to a socialist market economy. In the wake of the struggle for independence and unification, the Communist Party had to secure its political hegemony mainly through nationalism.⁴⁷³ After the war against the United States and the unification of North and South Vietnam, the regime gained moral justification as it represented the spiritual embodiment of national independence. Subsequently the SRV tried to establish the socialist transformation with for instance agricultural collectivization. With this land reform, the party gained popularity among the peasantry, the most important power-base for the party in the late 1970s.⁴⁷⁴ Although the main aim of the transition to socialism was the general improvement of living standards, the regime failed all along the line. Because of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia and the following war at the end of the 1970s Western economic embargos and a Chinese retaliation for Cambodia, the regime was under enormous pressure. Long lasting warfare and economic mismanagement led to stagnation of GDP, food shortages and high inflation. This caused a socio-economic crisis, which seriously endangered the confidence in the CPV and the legitimacy of the regime.⁴⁷⁵ The nationalist legitimization strategy was eroding in face of the economic mismanagement and the central planned economy

472 Malesky, E, Paul Schuler, Anh Tran: Vietnam: Familiar Patterns and New Developments Ahead of the 11th Party Congress, in: Southeast Asian Affairs, 2011, pp. 337-363, pg.351

473 Vu, Tuong: The Revolutionary Path to State Formation in Vietnam: Opportunities, Conundrums, and Legacies, in: Journal of Vietnamese Studies, Vol.11, No.3-4, pp.267-297, pg.273

474 Le, Hong H.: Performance-based Legitimacy: The Case of the Communist Party of Vietnam and Doi Moi, in: Contemporary Southeast Asia, Vol.34, No.2, 2012, pp. 145–172, pg.152

475 Le, Performance-based Legitimacy, pg.154-155

could not reinforce a socialist legitimacy, because of the apparent failing of economic development. After 1986 the Doi Moi reforms were trying to open and to reform the economic system with the aim of changing to a market oriented system.

These reforms urged the ideological legitimization strategies to change as well. Marxism-Leninism originally dominated the political system but the new legitimization strategy was closely interrelated with the performance-based legitimization process of the new market economy.⁴⁷⁶ However, relying solely on performance legitimization can endanger the regime in case of economic downfalls, so the strengthening of performance legitimization goes hand in hand with strengthening of the ideological legitimization, especially as in 1991 intellectuals openly discredited the socialist ideological background and denoted Marxism-Leninism as redundant.⁴⁷⁷

In the same year “Ho Chi Minh Thought” was integrated as official ideological legitimization alongside Marxism-Leninism.⁴⁷⁸ The so called “Ho Chi Minh Thought” basically emphasizes the peaceful development of a liberated society under the leadership of the CVP.⁴⁷⁹ The reminiscence of the national hero is no coincidence, especially in consequence of the eroding ideological legitimacy due to marketization. Ho Chi Minh stands for national liberation and the ideological legitimization strategy of nationalism gained importance again. The CVP argues that it is responsible for independence and domestic security, furthermore the Party recently started to channel national sentiments in the direction of China.⁴⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the nationalist legitimization strategy is a dangerous one as it could seriously backfire. The establishment of national sentiments can help in the emergence of oppositional political groups, which challenge the leadership of the CVP.⁴⁸¹

476 Croissant, *Die politischen Systeme*, pg.573

477 Thayer, Carlyle A.: *Political Legitimacy in Vietnam: Challenge and Response*, in: *Politics & Policy*, Vol.38, No.3, 2010, pp.423-444, pg.432

478 Le, *Performance-based Legitimacy*, pg.157

479 Mach, Quang T.: *Undeniable values of Ho Chi Minh Thought*. Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, June 1, 2017, <http://english.hcma.vn/home/features/undeniable-values-of-ho-chi-minh-thought-166> (retrieved March 13, 2018)

480 Vu, Tuong (2013). *Southeast Asia's New Nationalism: Causes and Significance*, in: *Trans -Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia*, Vol.1, No.2, 2013, pp 259-279, pg.264

481 Thayer, Carlyle A.: *Political Legitimacy of Vietnam's One Party-State: Challenges and Responses*, in: *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol.28, No.4, 2009, pp.47-70

3.5.3. Performance

A research⁴⁸² of basic performance indicators shows that the literacy rate above age 15 is to be estimated at 94.5 per cent of the population, which lays at approximately 96 Million people. The life expectancy at birth is around 73.7 years which places Vietnam at rank 132 out of 224 surveyed countries, for comparison, Cambodia ranks at 181 (64.9 years) and Thailand at 116 (74.9 years). The infant mortality rate is in total at 17.3 deaths/1000 live births and ranks Vietnam at 94 out of 225 countries and compared to Afghanistan at rank 1 with 110.6/1000 and regional neighbors Cambodia at rank 35 (47.4/1000) and Thailand at 146 (9.2/1000). The estimated density of 1.18 physicians/1,000 population in 2013 is rather low as at least 2.3 health workers/1000 are recommended by the World Health Organization.

The performance legitimization strategy of the SRV is mainly characterized by the Doi Moi reforms which were started in the mid-1980s. Generally, these reforms are associated with the 6th National Congress in 1986, but there are indications of tinkering with the centrally-planned economy going back to 1979 and it was not until 1989 when economic structures were substantially changed.⁴⁸³ In 1986 the reforms were not as concluded as it is pictured now. For instance directly in the aftermath of the Congress, the predictions of the future of Vietnam were rather dire, although it has been clear that reforms need to happen soon.⁴⁸⁴ At the beginning of the 1980s the SVR had a serious problem of retaining legitimacy due to an ongoing socio-economic crisis which showed the party's obvious inability to cope with the task of improving living conditions and general development.⁴⁸⁵ Hence it is very important for the party to indicate that it decided to adopt the Doi Moi reforms at the 6th National Congress.⁴⁸⁶ The party as inventor which devised and launched the reforms at a specific point is a strong legitimization strategy, illustrating the steering capabilities of the party and the leading role in the development of Vietnam. The measures of Doi Moi restructured the economy, for instance through the de-collectivization and privatization of agriculture, the change from heavy to light export-based

482 CIA Factbook, 2017: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html> (retrieved March 29, 2018)

483 Gainsborough, Rethinking the State, pg.12

484 Esterline, John H.: Vietnam in 1986: An Uncertain Tiger, in: Asian Survey, Vol.27, No.1, A Survey of Asia in 1986: Part I, 1987, pp. 92-103

485 Le, Performance-based Legitimacy, pg.155

486 Gainsborough, Martin: From Patronage to „Outcomes“: Vietnam's Communist Party Congresses Reconsidered, in: Journal of Vietnamese Studies, Vol.2, No.1, 2007, pp. 3–26, pg.16

industry, in reducing subsidies and direct funding of state-owned enterprises, opening for the international economy and eventually a partial liberalization of the financial market.⁴⁸⁷

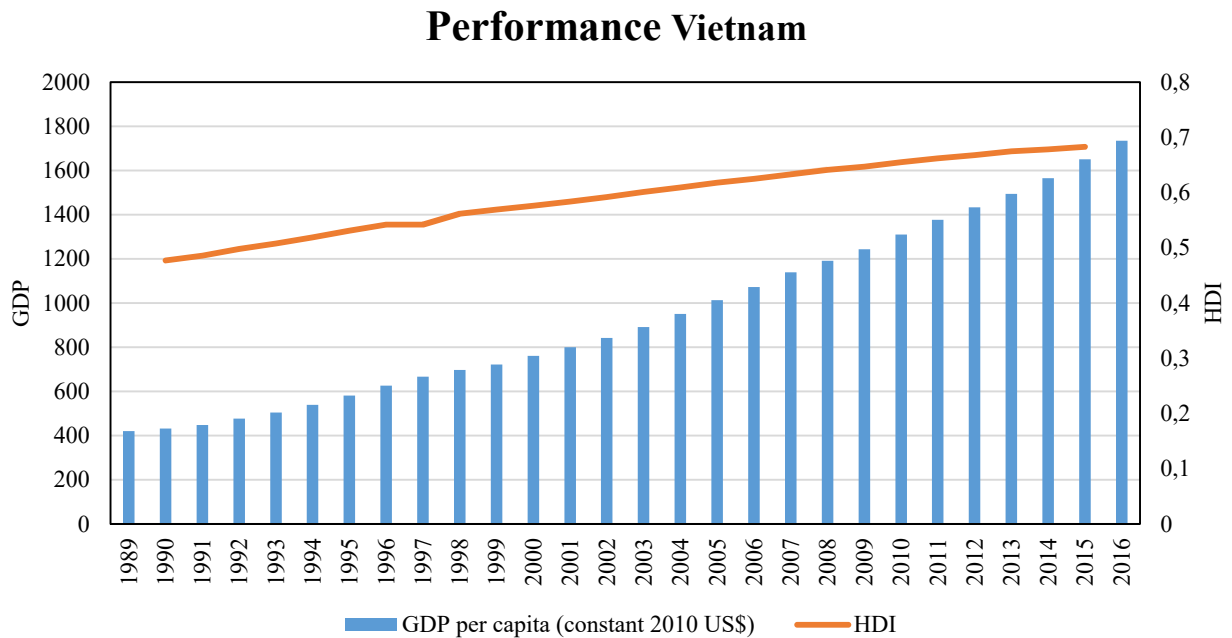


Fig. 11: Own depiction, Sources: GDP per capita in constant 2010 US\$: World Bank Development Indicators: HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living (measured by GNI); 1 is the highest value

At the end of the end 1980s Vietnam was a poor and under-developed country but the reforms soon showed effect as the poverty rate dropped from 58 per cent in 1993 to 14.7 per cent in 2007⁴⁸⁸, and the average economic growth rate from 1988-1997 accumulated to 7.1 per cent,⁴⁸⁹ and was at 6.3 per cent in 2017.⁴⁹⁰ The change to light industry and the subsequent opening to the global economy was the main booster for the impressive growth as in 1989 overall exports covered for 3.5 Billion US\$ rising to 179.7 Billion US\$ in 2016, gaining an average growth of 15.8 per cent annually.⁴⁹¹ It is shown in Fig. 11 that the GDP per capita growth is similarly remarkable, rising from 420 US\$ in 1989 to 1735 US\$ in 2016. The HDI shows as well a positive development of life, rising from 0.477 in 1990 to 0.683 in 2015, with 1 the highest

487 Mensel, Nadine: Der Entwicklungsprozess der Sozialistischen Republik: Vietnam Erfolge und Herausforderungen durch staatlich gelenkte Entwicklung, Wiesbaden, 2013, pp.175-179

488 Le, Performance-based Legitimacy, pg.159

489 Nguyen, Hai H.: Resilience of the Communist Party of Vietnam's Authoritarian Regime since Doi Moi, in: Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs, Vol.35, No.2, 2016, pp.31-55, pg.39

490 CIA Factbook, 2017: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html> (retrieved March 29, 2018)

491 The World Bank, 2018, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators#>; numbers are in 2010 US\$ (retrieved March 29, 2018)

value to reach. This evaluation ranks Vietnam on 115 out of 188 surveyed countries, whereas Norway reaching 1st place with a HDI of 0.949.⁴⁹²

The economic and human development is striking but there is still enough potential in improvement of development. According to the Central Committee future key tasks have to be searched in providing social welfare, protecting the environment and conducting an educational reform adjusted to current situations.⁴⁹³ Another problem which needs to be tackled, is the fight against the still present poverty which is especially in rural areas above average compared to urban centers.⁴⁹⁴ This problem has not only geographical causes but has to be searched in societal and political reasons as well. Infrastructural development of poor regions is often delayed because of financial issues and low political priority.⁴⁹⁵ Yet there are signs that the development of welfare correlates with the economic development. Presumptively out of legitimation concerns the regime shows great determination in increasing the expenses for health and education purposes.⁴⁹⁶

In the case of regime performance in the face of crisis the outcome is rather ambivalent. When surprisingly hit by the SARS outbreak in 2003, Western media were astonished by the quick and effective reaction of Vietnam.⁴⁹⁷ The regime launched an aggressive campaign in the fight against the epidemic, instructed all levels of government to accomplish health prevention and closely worked with the WHO in battling SARS. Yet there is a bad aftertaste as the virus was firstly detected by a WHO doctor in a private French hospital, so information about the illness was bound to come to recognition anyway. The regime was obliged to follow an all-out strategy as the damage was already done.⁴⁹⁸

The handling of the repeatedly occurring (2003-2009) avian influenza H5N1 suggests that the regime's foremost concern is not human protection but rather an economic consideration. At

492 World Bank Development Indicators, 2017 <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (retrieved April 4, 2018); United Nations Development Program, Human Development Index, 2017 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data> (retrieved April 4, 2018)

493 Thayer, Carlyle A.: Vietnam in 2013: Domestic Contestation and Foreign Policy Success, in: Southeast Asian Affairs, Vol.2014, pp. 353-372, pg.359

494 Mensel, Entwicklungsprozess, pg.347

495 Beresford, Melanie: Doi Moi Review: The Challenges of Building Market Socialism in Vietnam, in: Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol.38, No.2, 2008, pp.221-243, pg.239

496 London, Jonathan D: Welfare Regimes in China and Vietnam, in: Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol.44, No.1, 2014, pp.84-107

497 Nakashima, Ellen: Vietnam Took Lead in Containing SARS, The Washington Post, May 5, 2003, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/05/05/vietnam-took-lead-in-containing-sars/b9b97e91-b325-42f9-98ef-e23da9f257a0/?utm_term=.f2b3f370fcd0 (retrieved March 29, 2018); Mydans, Seth: Vietnam Halted SARS And Saved the Life of a Nurse, The New York Times, May 7, 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/07/world/sars-epidemic-containment-vietnam-halted-sars-saved-life-nurse.html> (retrieved March 30, 2018)

498 Leung and Huang, The paradox of journalistic representation, pg.690

first the information flow was slow and this is attributed to some officials who feared about a decrease of tourists and economic losses in the agricultural sector, to make matters worse, there was no strategy concerning the containment of the virus.⁴⁹⁹ Knowing that a disturbance of the important poultry industry would present more danger to performance legitimacy than some human infections respectively deaths, the regime warned from the potential loss of potential output and livelihood and even employed the army and police forces in the fight against the avian influenza.⁵⁰⁰

The switch to a performance-based legitimation was very successful in almost every concern. It seems that the regime has gained an enormous boost in legitimacy due to Doi Moi and the reaction to crises like a virus outbreak shows that the regime knows how important its performance legitimation strategy is. Additionally it is hard to imagine that the regime will barter its acquired legitimacy for a political liberalization as some observers hope and suggest.⁵⁰¹ Other Vietnam pundits rather suggest that: “Despite 20 years of reform, which has involved extensive engagement with a wide range of neoliberal actors, the state in Vietnam remains little changed in terms of its underlying political philosophy and many of its practices.”⁵⁰² Vietnam’s state-led capitalism will rather prolong the resilience of the autocratic regime, than promote political liberation or democratization.

3.5.4. Internationality

Because of the Vietnamese war against Cambodia from 1977-1991 and the following retaliation war by China in 1979, Vietnam basically relied on the help of the Soviet Union in the economic and political realm. After the economic crisis, in the wake of Doi Moi and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the SRV has adopted several new strategies to gain foreign legitimacy. These strategies are mainly characterized by three features: firstly, gaining access to the global economy and a normalization in the relations to the United States. Secondly, advancing the collaboration in between South East Asia and thirdly, establishing a non-coercive relation with

499 Vu, Tuong: Epidemics as Politics with Case Studies from Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, in: *Global Health Governance*, Vol.IV, No.2, 2011

500 Herington, Jonathan: Securitization of infectious diseases in Vietnam: the cases of HIV and avian influenza, in: *Health Policy and Planning*, Vol.25, No.6, 2010, pp.467–475

501 Trien, Le V. and Hartley, Kris: Doi Moi II: Rule of Law and State Legitimacy in Vietnam, *The Diplomat*, July 14, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/doi-moi-ii-rule-of-law-and-state-legitimacy-in-vietnam/> (retrieved March 30, 2018)

502 Gainsborough, Martin: Present but not Powerful: Neoliberalism, the State, and Development in Vietnam, in: *Globalizations*, Vol.7, No.4, 2010, pp. 475–488, pg.476

the neighboring political and economic giant China, with which especially tensions about the sovereignty over archipelagos in the South China Sea stress the relations. Vietnams growing international ambitions are endorsed by the 12th National Party Congress, which states that “To ensure successful implementation of foreign policy and international integration... [Vietnam must] be proactive and active in international integration; to be a friend, reliable partner, and a responsible member of the international community....”⁵⁰³

The relations to the U.S. were improved at the beginning of the 1990s, which led to the establishment of Foreign Ministry offices in the respective countries and the removal of trade restrictions by the U.S. in 1994. These actions led to a normalization of the Vietnam-U.S. relations in 1995.⁵⁰⁴ In 2016 the U.S. was Vietnam’s main trade destination of exports generating more than 20% of total exports.⁵⁰⁵ Since 2013, Vietnam and the U.S. have a comprehensive partnership as well, but the U.S. and Vietnam differ about the U.S. greater emphasize on “defense”, whereas Vietnam rather stresses the importance of bilateral relations. Vietnam’s security strategy towards the U.S is generally characterized by ambivalent aims, on the one hand they have mutually interests in questions of economic growth and regional security and on the other hand there are struggles as the U.S. challenge Vietnam’s national interests like one-party rule and human rights.⁵⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the general acceptance of the U.S. is an important source of legitimation aspirations of Vietnam’s autocratic regime and enhance the international reputation of the SRV. Furthermore, Vietnam has been a member of the World Trade Organization since 2007. The accession to the trade organization was an important step in the development of the domestic economy and helps to boost the domestic performance legitimation strategy as well.⁵⁰⁷

Vietnam tries to deepen multilateral relations in the political realm and especially regional cooperation in South East Asia and was accessed to ASEAN in 1995, another important stepping stone in gaining international legitimacy. The admittance to ASEAN had two important impacts for Vietnam. First the SRV hopes to get political support in the South China Sea conflict with China and second the regional cooperation reinforces economic growth and

503 Cited in: Thayer Carlyle A.: Vietnam’s Foreign Policy in an Era of Rising Sino-US Competition and Increasing Domestic Political Influence, in: *Asian Security*, Vol.13, No.3, 2017, pp.183-199, pg.186

504 Albert, Eleanor: The Evolution of U.S.–Vietnam Ties, Council on Foreign Relations, March 7, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/background/evolution-us-vietnam-ties> (retrieved March 30, 2018)

505 CIA Factbook, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html> (retrieved March 30, 2018)

506 Thayer, Carlyle A.: U.S.-Vietnam: From Comprehensive to Strategic Partners? Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 20, 2014, <https://www.cogitasia.com/u-s-vietnam-from-comprehensive-to-strategic-partners/> (retrieved March 30, 2018)

507 Thayer, Challenge and Response, pg.439

external legitimation. Subsequently Vietnam uses all possible institutions like ASEAN and the East Asian Summit to gather international support to resolve the South China Sea conflict in its interest.⁵⁰⁸ Yet it has to be said that the main purpose for Vietnam and the regional cooperation with ASEAN is accelerating and developing domestic economic growth and consequently enhance domestic performance legitimation.⁵⁰⁹

In contrast to the relations to ASEAN and the U.S. the relationship to China is concerning another legitimation strategy. An additional source of legitimacy in this case is the concentration on nationalism and the Vietnam regime wants to show that it is able to cope with the violation of the sovereignty of the SRV in the South China Sea.⁵¹⁰ Another trouble with China and a danger for domestic legitimacy was for instance the issue about bauxite mining in Vietnam by Chinese companies. Because of environmental concerns and danger of pollution Vietnamese groups were questioning the competence of the government in dealing with large-scale development projects. Nevertheless the regime decided to go on with the mining project in collaboration with the Chinese companies.⁵¹¹ Further tensions between the two states emerged when China constructed an oil rig in the South China Sea violating Vietnam's sovereignty. As a consequence enraged Vietnamese protesters damaged and burnt down Chinese enterprises.⁵¹² The population's anti-Chinese resentments are used by the regime to boost its nationalist legitimacy and to show that it is able to cope with attacks on Vietnam's sovereignty.

3.5.5. Consent

The elite politics of the SVR are characterized by the troika of Vietnam's political system, which guarantees that the power of the regime is not in the hands of a single person. This feature of the regime does not only support collective leadership but facilitates factional infights between different political groups likewise. This has an enormous impact on the legitimation strategies of the party on two different layers: The first is the public battle against corruption, which enhance the "Legality" legitimation pattern, whereas the second, more clandestine layer,

508 Thayer, Carlyle A.: *The Tyranny of Geography: Vietnamese Strategies to Constrain China in the South China Sea*, in: *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International Strategic Affairs*, Vol.33, No.3, 2011, pp.348-369, pg.352

509 Thayer, *Vietnam's Foreign Policy*, pg.195

510 Le, *Performance-based Legitimacy*, pg.163

511 Thayer, *One Party-State*, pg.52

512 Thayer, *Vietnam's Foreign Policy*, pg.193

mainly deals with the future approach of the regime with the overall legitimization process. Nevertheless, the inner-workings of the party's political struggles remain opaque as there are different approaches in the analysis of these quarrels. It is argued that the party is divided in two main factions, which are mainly represented in their approach on the future development of Vietnam. One group adheres the socialist heritage and argues for a stronger state, strengthening of State-Owned Enterprises and the socialist regime in general. The other group rather concentrates on developing market mechanisms, in which a strong connection to the global economy, Foreign Direct Investment and private entrepreneurship are the flagships for economic growth.⁵¹³ Underlying the differences between conservative and reform-oriented elites is the notion of the different approach to foreign policy which is determined by Anti-China or Anti-Western proponents. The main idea of the conservatives is that China shares a similar ideological approach, and the U.S. aim to promote regime change through economic cooperation and development, which slowly erodes regime legitimacy. This approach can be bluntly summed up: "China is an enemy of the country but it is a friend of the regime; the United States are a friend of the country but they are an enemy of the regime."⁵¹⁴ Whereas regime survival is naturally the highest important strategy for the elites, the division into these two main camps is not as clearly as the Vietnamese regime is characterized by the collective leadership feature and a high inner-party democracy, which urges leaders rather to follow the majority interests as they can be voted out of office. This is reflected by the high influence of the provincial representation in the party and supports the building of coalitions than the blunt pursuit of policy interests.⁵¹⁵

Vietnam's experimentation with democracy can be traced back to the end of the 1990s, when peasant protests in Thai Binh province were a danger to regime legitimacy.⁵¹⁶ As a consequence democracy experiments were conducted, peasants can evaluate local cadres' and point out corrupt behavior. Yet, while it is acknowledged that political reform could reinforce stability and regime resilience, the concrete improvement towards democracy is not happening, especially as there are differences between political elites about the definition of democracy.⁵¹⁷ This so called "grassroots democracy" enables both, the peasants and the ruling elite, to follow

513 Le, Long S.: Vietnam's economic resiliency: a symptom of strength or weakness? Eastasiaforum, October 20, 2009 <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2009/10/20/vietnams-economic-resiliency-a-symptom-of-strength-or-weakness/> (retrieved April 01, 2018)

514 Vuving, Alexander L.: Vietnam in 2012: A Rent-Seeking State on the Verge of a Crisis, in: Southeast Asian Affairs, Vol. 2013, pp.323-347, pg.341

515 Malesky, Edmund, Regina Abrami and Zheng Yu: Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China, in: Comparative Politics, Vol.43, No.4, 2011, pp.401-419

516 Nguyen, Hai H.: Political Dynamics of Grassroots Democracy in Vietnam, New York, 2016

517 Abuza, Zachary: Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam. Boulder 2001, pg.85

their aims. The rural areas can be stabilized and the peasants can perform some basic democratic procedures.⁵¹⁸ The regime's legitimation strategy can be seen as a success as it is framing a concept in fighting against local corruption and enhances its own coping abilities in responding to peasants' demands with policy output, targeting the dissatisfaction of the population. Generally, Vietnam's one-party rule is not object of discussion for the ruling elite, but tinkering and experimentation with democracy can be observed, not only in the ability to evaluate local cadres but as well in the implementation of elections. In the election to the National Assembly for instance self-nominated candidates are able to run for office. These candidates are prone to repressive behavior by the regime but at least this feature of Vietnam's political system is a slight glance of pluralism.⁵¹⁹

Whereas these signs of pluralism show the regime's will and ability to respond to domestic threats in a reform-oriented manner, it has to be attested that the regime's general response to a protesting populace is still a repressive one. The years of economic reform do not correlate with political reform as a lessening of the security apparatus can not be observed.⁵²⁰ In 2016 the Political Terror Scale, measuring political terror and violence, attributed the SRV with grade 3 out of 5, defining the repressive measures of the regime as: "There is extensive political imprisonment, or a recent history of such imprisonment. Execution or other political murders and brutality may be common. Unlimited detention, with or without a trial, for political views is accepted."⁵²¹ Vietnam's illegal opposition is not only formed by individuals protesting against the regime but often an organized political group promoting human and workers' rights, democracy and religious freedom.⁵²² An example of an oppositional group is the pro-democracy unification Bloc 8406, named after the date of their founding manifesto in 2006. The leading circle of this group was imprisoned after Vietnam's WTO admission was done in 2007. Whereas the crackdown of oppositional groups was further concluded with the imprisonment of several online-activists pointing out environmental problems.⁵²³ Generally does Vietnam's regime react with repression to threats of its legitimacy by the population and especially targets lawyers and online-activists, like blogger. These repressive means reach from shutting down

518 Nguyen, Resilience of the Communist Party of Vietnam's Authoritarian Regime, pg.41

519 Nguyen, Hai H.: Are Vietnam's elections becoming more democratic? Eastasiaforum, March 23, 2016, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/03/23/are-vietnams-elections-becoming-more-democratic/> (retrieved April 1, 2018)

520 Gainsborough, Martin: Present but not Powerful, pg.481

521 Political Terror Scale, 2017: <http://www.politicalterroryscale.org/Data/Datatable.html> (retrieved April 2, 2018)

522 Thayer, Challenge and Response, pg.436

523 Thayer, One Party-State, pg.55

internet platforms, physical assault of dissidents and imprisonment.⁵²⁴ These instances show the incremental emergence of a civil society in Vietnam but any organization stays mainly under the party's control. Actions of the civil society cannot be seen as independent movements but rather function under the umbrella of the regime and help to facilitate authoritarian structures.⁵²⁵ Because of the tight control of civil society organizations these groups can even be seen as reinforcing authoritarian legitimacy and as "obstacles to democratization".⁵²⁶

524 Abuza, Zachary: Vietnam's rising repression, New Mandala, September 22, 2015 <http://www.newmandala.org/vietnams-rising-repression/> (retrieved April 2, 2018)

525 Beeson, Mark & Hung H. Pham (2012) Developmentalism with Vietnamese Characteristics: The Persistence of State-led Development, in: *East Asia Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol.42, No.4, pp.539-559, pg.543

526 Wischermann, Jörg, Bui The Cuong, and Dang Thi Viet Phuong: Vietnamese Civic Organisations: Supporters of or Obstacles to Further Democratisation? Results from an Empirical Survey, in: *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol.35, No.2, 2016, pp.57-88

4. Conclusion

This section presents the findings of the analyses of the case studies. In a first step the different regimes are compared and in doing so the initial research question and the hypotheses are answered. Subsequently, I will tackle some open questions in regard to the general scholarly research concerning autocratic regimes, which are discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis.

Legality

The arguably most contested legitimization strategy is the “Legality” legitimization strategy. In autocratic settings the “rule of law” is often equated with the “rule by law” but as the analysis shows all the researched regimes at least nominally use the “rule of law” as a legitimization strategy. Even if it is only pretended to rely on the rule of law, the regimes use it to bolster their legitimization. All regimes claim that the constitution and the state institutions are based on the rule of law but simultaneously the constitution itself is prone for misconducting behavior bearing resemblance with “rule *by* law”.

The constitutions are often changed and adapted to the needs of the regime but the necessity of a constitutional law for the legitimization process has at least been recognized by all the compared regimes. Though, in the practical application of law – the fight against corruption – dissimilarities in the approach of the different regimes become apparent.

There is a visible approach against all kinds of corruption in the regimes Belarus, the PRC and the SRV, yet the DPRK-regime seems to be powerless given that corruption permeates the system and is widespread at all levels. In all the regimes high-level officials are victims to actual and alleged corruption to demonstrate power and eradicate potential or actual opposition. These high-profile cases are often used to display the rule of law and therefore are used for enhancing legitimization. In regard of the legality strategy of legitimization, Belarus is the exceptional case as the leader of the regime was originally elected through a democratic ballot and has been reelected in several instances. Although these elections were rigged, a different outcome can be doubted and this legitimization strategy is in the Belarusian case of higher importance than in its Asian counterparts.

Authority

The ideological legitimization is naturally supported strongly in the two, nominally communist Asian regimes and in the DPRK.

The “Authority” legitimization strategy shows the difficulties which an autocratic regime with personalist tendencies has to face. Because of the missing strong foundational myth and the deficient process of nation-building in the case of Belarus, Lukashenko’s strategy relies on a recapitulation of constructed historical narratives and tinkering with several different approaches. In this sense, he shows high flexibility and a thoughtful attempt in the creation of the “Authority” legitimization. Belarus has a weak ideological legitimization strategy but the regime knows its shortcomings in this regard and tries to invest in ideological legitimization through narratives referring to a constructed Belarusian history.

The distinct ideological legitimization strategy of the North Korean regime is extraordinary due to its peculiarities. There is a strong pattern in redirecting legitimacy from the regime to the supreme leader but there are also keen attempts in adapting this strategy to North Korean idiosyncrasies. With the adaption of Juche and Songun as nationalistic ideologies the regime was able to build an enormous legitimization specific to North Korea and its leaders. At the same time the regime paved an ideological explanation for a possible marketization through the military-first dogma but simultaneously can hold a strong grip on power.

Similar to the DPRK the two other Asian regimes – China and Vietnam – invest heavily in their ideological foundations. All three regimes base their ideology on a founding myth, which glorifies a violent struggle for independence and liberation from external suppression. On the contrary to North Korea the other two regimes have opened up their economies much more and almost totally integrated into the global economy. These regimes adapted their domestic economy as well, so the original ideology had to be adapted in order to new circumstances. The CCP-regime for instance invests heavily in the ideological legitimization strategy and shows immense flexibility in adaptation of dogmas to current circumstances without losing the overall contiguities out of mind. After the legitimacy deficit at the end of the 1980s it seems that the party understood the dangers coming with letting slide the investment in ideological legitimization. Whereas the regime in China highlights a “harmonious” development based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the VCR-regime practices a more nationalistic approach, underlining the remembrance of Ho Chi Minh’s liberation struggle.

Performance

The analysis suggests that Lukashenko's performance legitimation mostly relies on welfare distributions than on economic performance. Especially as Belarus is strongly dependent on Russian benevolence and currently not able to secure sufficient economic development by its own. Whereas state-support in employment, housing, health care and education serve as suitable "window-dressing" for poor overall economic performance, the question remains how much longer this legitimation strategy will work in the regime's favor.

The performance-based legitimation is recognized as highly important by all regimes, yet there are different approaches in the enhancement of performance observable. The regimes in China and Vietnam suffered from a decrease of legitimacy in the 1980s which was caused by a bad economic performance. Both reacted with an adaption and reform of their economic systems and both experienced relative amazing results. The regimes are able to show economic growth and due to their economic development other misgivings in the performance legitimation can be balanced. So do both regimes still have problems with the smooth handling of crises and a backlog-demand in the general social performance. The losers of the economic development need to be taken into account, otherwise a weakening of the performance legitimation could be provoked.

North Korea on the contrary did not reform their economic system or cancelled its attempts. In general it can be attested that the performance-based legitimation of the regime is in bad shape. Whereas Kim Jong-un's bread-and-circus strategy may work in the short term, the long term implications of sanctions, failing attraction of foreign investment, miserable energy supply and hampering bureaucratic structures, do not necessarily give reason to be overly optimistic in terms of further performance and human development. The strong ideological legitimation was and is obviously able to compensate for weak performance but in the long run it is essential to reinforce the performance legitimation strategy to enhance general legitimation.

Internationality

Comparing the legitimation strategies in the international realm one has to notice similar patterns among the regimes. Belarus as a post-Soviet country has close relations to Russia but the regime is trying to diversify its relations. In the regard of keeping a sovereign position, highlighting independence, the Belarusian regime has shown some flexibility and adaption to current circumstances. Trying to retain favorable relations to all important political players surrounding Belarus. In general it is clear to Lukashenko that regime performance is an essential

piece of resilience and he tries to obtain this by a multilateral approach to different players in the international diplomacy.

China as a global superpower has a multilateral approach to the international political dimension likewise. In the attempt to attain external legitimation, participation in international organizations is chosen by the regime to be a favorable legitimation strategy. For domestic performance legitimation and for global influence China builds and encourages several infrastructure projects. Furthermore, tensions with the other superpower, the United States, are used by the regime to project its political strength to enhance domestic legitimation, and the mediation in East Asian conflicts prove the generally accepted legitimacy of the Chinese regime amongst its neighbors.

Vietnam as a close neighbor to China whose intentions are not always clear, adopted a multilateral approach as well. On the one hand, regional cooperation is an important strategy in gaining legitimation through the recognition of neighboring states and trade agreements help to enhance domestic economic performance. On the other hand, the tensions in the South China Sea are clouding the relations to China, which has two effects: good relations to the neighbor improve economic performance as well, whereas tensions reinforce the nationalism legitimation.

Once more the North Korean regime has a different approach as the ones in the other case studies. However the outcome of the recent sanctions will be, the regime of the DPRK can be attested to have a strong international legitimation strategy concerning nuclear armament and dealing with international sanctions. Instead of crumbling and backing down the regime rather uses international pressure for domestic accumulation of legitimacy. Domestically the regime points out the unjust demeanor of imperialist intentions towards the DPRK which leads to a reinforcement of the already strong ideological legitimation and rather to an increase of legitimacy than a weakening of the regime.

Consent

Lukashenko's "Consent" legitimation strategy concentrates mainly on the rigged election process which enhances not only his legitimacy in a legal procedure but mobilizes the population as well. Elections serve to discredit political opponents and show the population that there is no alternative besides him. Cooptation is not as important for the regime, especially as the posts of the bureaucratic elites are shuffled on a regular basis to prevent an accumulation of power. Whereas the regime is an autocracy without a doubt, repression is one of the last means to keep the regime resilient. Open dissent with the regime may result in violent repression but

in general the regime trusts the surveillance apparatus and rather reacts with soft repression and seldom uses violent means.

The Chinese legitimization strategy in enhancing consent is targeting the bond between party and population. One point is the clean-up of the party on a local level and the acceptance of justified dissent. Economic activity is reinforced and capitalists and other elites are coopted by the party. Whereas the repression may not be as vigorous as the PTS suggests, any organized and potentially powerful endangerment of party supremacy and legitimacy will be, regardless of casualties, crushed.

The DPRK's consent legitimization strategy is exemplary in regard to the theoretical approach of the thesis. Horizontal threats are an imminent risk for any North Korean leader, especially during the consolidation phase. Ideological legitimacy may help in reinforcing the general legitimization process, cooptation and repression of elites stay a highly important tool for regime resilience. The "Consent" legitimization strategy targeting the main populace mainly concentrates on repression and mass mobilization to maintain the pressure and reinforcing a collective mind with the projection of the leader as the overarching shining light.

The "Consent" legitimization strategy of the SRV is a balance act for the regime as the elite cooptation strategy does secure regime resilience but not individual political survival. The main concern for leaders is the building of several different coalitions to gain support for policies as the possibility of deselection is imaginable. Factional infighting for personal gains reduce regime legitimacy as high-profile corruption cases get public but on the flipside, these cases and subsequent convictions create an impression of legality, which reinforces the respective legitimization strategy. Nevertheless, outside the political arena coercion and state surveillance is omnipresent and consequently enforced as oppositional groups get repressed and civic organizations coopted.

The analysis of the case studies shows different focal points in the approaches of autocratic regimes in generating legitimization, yet all of the regime do invest in legitimization reinforcing strategies. Yet, not all legitimization strategies have the same importance and whereas one strategy proves to be rather bad, others have to balance this weakness and therefore legitimization is always in flux.

According to the analysis, Belarus as an electoral autocratic regime has the strongest legality-legitimation. As the other strategies are weak, it seems that investing in a legal framework proves to be very strong in this case.

China has the most balanced legitimation process, which is probably due to fact that constant internal and external pressure could otherwise lead to a crumbling of legitimacy and that the regime has the economic means and a deep pool of human resources to invest in all strategies. The DPRK's main legitimation strategy is the ideological legitimation flanked by the consent strategy. The underlining of the strength of the regime by building nuclear weapons and highlighting sovereignty proves to be absolutely sufficient if balanced by consent legitimation. Vietnam's regime mainly bases on performance-legitimation, which builds upon the merits of the Doi Moi reforms. Yet, knowing that performance alone is in the long run probably not enough to keep the regime resilient, the SRV regime tries to redirect efforts in other legitimation strategies.

The findings demonstrate that autocratic regimes invest in different legitimation strategies and actively redirect means to balance or to reinforce weak strategies. This shows that autocratic regimes are not static entities but rather very flexible and active in their attempt to stay durable and stable. Especially in tackling critical junctures autocratic regimes react highly adjustable and often respond to changing circumstances through learning and adaption of a legitimation strategy. Whereas conventional wisdom suggests that autocracies mainly remain on performance and repression, the case studies prove that several legitimation processes are responsible for autocratic resilience.

Furthermore, it is shown that modernization theory is in dire need of fresh input as three of the case studies have an emerging middle class and democratization seems not to happen in soon in any of them. Therefore it is necessary to study autocratic regimes not on the basis of their possible collapse but rather on the basis of their investment in legitimation. As the thesis shows, a fruitful approach in doing so is a mixed quantitative and qualitative analysis as the sole quantitative measurement of criteria can cloud the results, especially if one keeps in mind that Western-based databases and indices are mostly biased and even falsifying.

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List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BTI	Bertelsmann Transformation Index
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CPV	Communist Party of Vietnam
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea/North Korea
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HDI	Human Development Index
NPC	National People's Congress
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PRC	People's Republic of China
SAC	State Affairs Commission
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SPA	Supremes People's Assembly
SRV	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
WHO	World Health Organization
WPK	Workers Party of Korea
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Appendix

Abstract

A normative point of view denies autocratic regimes any legitimacy and academic research suggests that autocratic regimes are highly static using mainly a mixture of economic performance and repression to stay resilient. This thesis argues that autocratic regimes are aware of the challenge to justify their rule in the eyes of the population and therefore invest in different legitimization strategies to stay resilient. The analysis follows the theoretical approaches of David Easton's "Political Systems Theory" and David Beetham's "Legitimation of Power" to show that autocratic regimes are flexible and adaptive in their approach to legitimate themselves. The thesis analyses several legitimization strategies concerning "Legality", "Authority", "Performance", "Internationality" and "Consent" to detect similar patterns of legitimization in autocratic regimes. It is demonstrated that different autocratic regimes use different legitimization strategies but actively adopt measures to enhance legitimization and that these regimes balance for instance a weak legitimization strategy with reinforcing one of the other strategies.

Kurzzusammenfassung

Von einem normativen Standpunkt aus gesehen verfügen autokratische Regime per se über keine Legitimität und auch die akademische Forschung vertritt die Meinung, dass diese Regime statische Gebilde darstellen, die auf eine Mixtur aus Performanz und Repression vertrauen, um die Herrschaft weiterhin auszuüben. Diese Masterarbeit argumentiert jedoch, dass sich autokratische Regime sehr wohl bewusst sind, dass sie ihre Herrschaft in den Augen der Bevölkerung rechtfertigen müssen und daher in verschiedene Legitimationsstrategien investieren, um an der Macht zu bleiben. Die Analyse zeigt anhand der politischen Systemtheorie von David Easton und der Legitimationstheorie von David Beetham, dass autokratische Regime sehr flexibel und anpassungsfähig sind, um ihre Herrschaft zu legitimieren. Die Analyse untersucht hierbei verschiedene Strategien der Legitimation, wie „Rechtmäßigkeit“, „Autorität“, „Performanz“, „Internationalität“ und „Konsens“, um zu untersuchen ob autokratische Regime in ihre Legitimation investieren. Die Masterarbeit zeigt, dass verschiedene autokratische Regime zwar unterschiedliche Legitimationsstrategien verwenden, aber sich bemühen ihre Legitimation aktiv zu stärken und auch Schwächen in einer Strategie mit verschiedenen Maßnahmen ausgleichen, indem sie zum Beispiel versuchen eine andere Strategie zu konsolidieren.