

# Managing Foreign Influence: Autocratic Strategies in Regulating the Import of Foreign Movies

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- How do autocratic leaders manage inflow of foreign ideas contained in cultural products?
- Autocratic countries regulate foreign movie imports based on political needs.

# Literature

- Ideas and norms are transmitted across borders along with globalization. (Greenhill et al. 2009; Hafner-Burton 2005; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Greenhill 2010; Mosley and Uno 2007);
- **My Contribution: Impact of Cultural Product**
- Autocratic leaders optimize information control structures on domestic media. (Gehlbach and Sonin 2014; Besley and Prat 2006; Keremoglu and Weidmann 2020; Lorentzen 2014; Djankov et al. 2003)
- **My Contribution: Strategy to Foreign Information**

# Theory

## Impact of Movie

- Meet consumers' needs for entertainment
- Generate economic value
- Shape opinions on social issues (Franklin 2006; Ortega-Liston 2000; Pautz and Warnement 2013)
- Propagate political values (Combs 2013; Parry-Giles 2010; Mutz 2001)
- Incite protest (Sun and Li, 2023)

# Theory

## Autocratic Leaders' Dilemma:

- Allowing foreign movie inflow could cause social instability.
- Rejecting foreign movie inflow could causes mass dissatisfaction toward the regime.
  - Entertainment needs unmet
  - Criticism regarding media control: Internal/External



# Theory

## Control Content Composition Based on Political Needs:

- Politically stable: high level of tolerance of foreign ideas
  - Less motivation to adjust movie importation
- Politically unstable: low level of tolerance of foreign ideas
  - Minimize domestic consequences from foreign movies
    - Restrict politically sensitive movies
  - Avoid raising dissatisfaction from the public
    - Allow politically non-sensitive movies



# Theory

Hypothesis 1a: Autocrats are more likely to restrict the import of politically sensitive movies in election years than in non-election year.

Hypothesis 1b: Autocrats are likely to allow the continued import of non-politically sensitive movies during election years.

# Theory

## Mechanism: political uncertainty

- Competitive Election: Elections with opponents
  - Chance of losing power
  - Chance of public sentiment
- Non-Competitive Election: Elections without opponents
  - Lack opponents
  - Lack opposite leadership



# Election Data

- National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) dataset
- National elections in 193 countries from 1945 to 2020, including executive, legislative/parliamentary.
- I used the Polity IV dataset's POLITY2 score to identify autocratic countries with scores below +6. [▶▶ skip slide](#)
- Included only regular elections in the sample, taking advantage of the exogenous timing of elections.





# Data and Method

$$NumofMovies_{it} = \beta_1 Election_{it} + \beta_2 Autocracy_{it} + \beta_3 Autocracy * Election_{it} + X_{it} + \pi_i + \pi_t + \epsilon_{it}$$

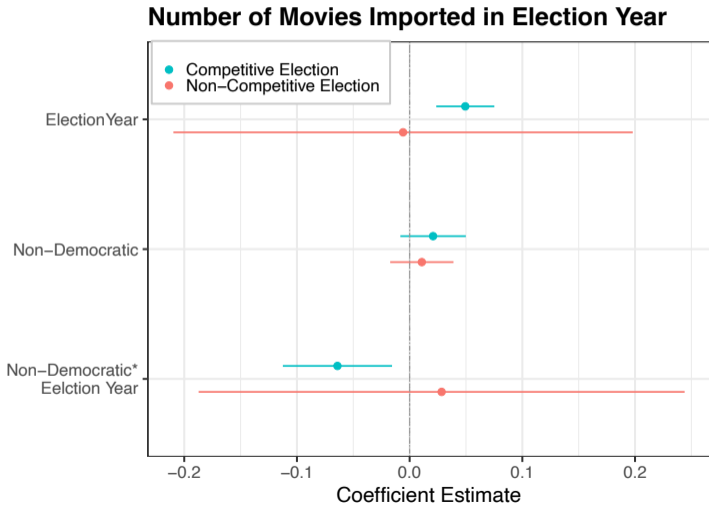
- $NumofMovies_{it}$ : number of movies; boxoffice of movies(logged)
- $\beta_1 Election_{it}$ : election year (Effect of election on democracies)
- $\beta_2 Autocracy_{it}$ : autocracy (Effect of autocracy in non-election year)
- $\beta_3 Autocracy * Election_{it}$ : interaction term (Differences of effect of election on autocracies and democracies )
- $X_{it}$ : Media Censorship; GDP per capita (log); Population (log); Trade in GDP; Unemployment
- Sample Period: 1945-2020
- Estimator: Negative Binomial Regression, Country FE, Year FE







# Heterogeneity Results: Election Competitiveness





# Conclusion

- Contributes to information control in autocratic countries literature by focusing on autocratic strategy regarding foreign information.
- Contributes to globalization's impact literature by including cultural products' influence.

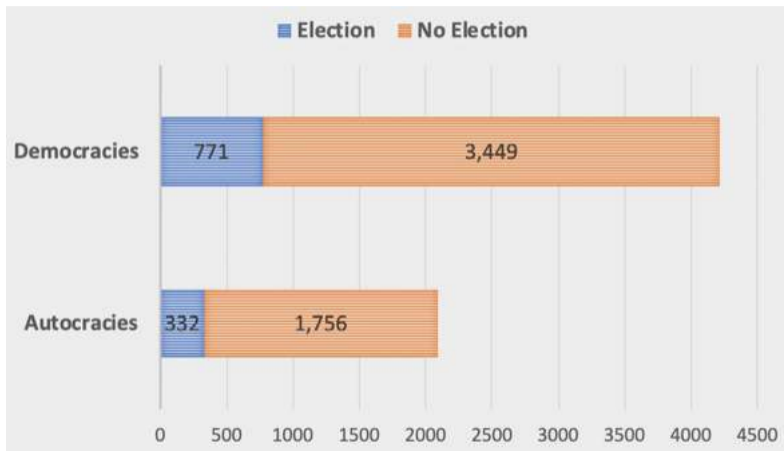


# My Research Agenda

- How autocratic leaders deal with cultural infusion:
  - How autocratic leaders utilize trade agreements to protect their cultural industry
  - How autocratic countries protect their national image in foreign released cultural product
- International Trade of Cultural Product on Individual Behavior:
  - Movie release location and political participation



## Number of Elections in Sample: 57 Autocracies and 70 Democracies





# Market Structure

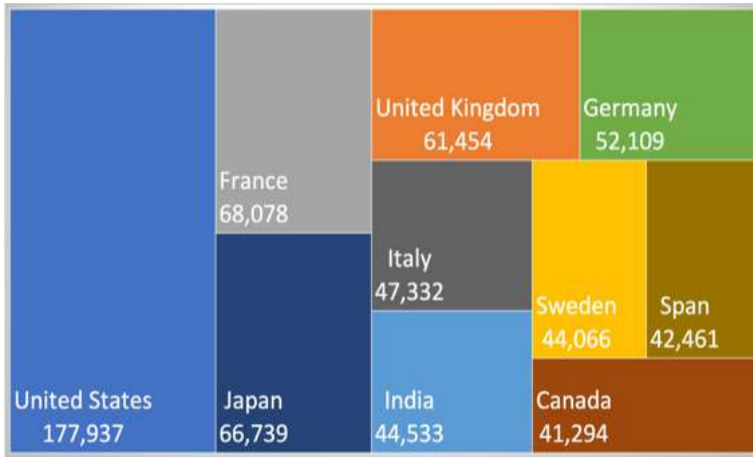


Figure: Number of Movie Produced by Top 10 Countries 1919-2023

