Editorial

For decades, the term totalitarianism has repeatedly led to vehement conflicts. Perhaps it has not escaped the thoughtful reader that the title of this edition does not speak of totalitarian regimes but of ideocracies.[1] Instead of the term "totalitarian regimes", the leading term ideocracy was chosen for designating the group of the communist regimes on the one hand and the national socialist dictatorship and other fascist autocracies on the other. Research has been enhanced very little by the battle over the totalitarianism term.[2]

It is more important however that the inadequate precision of many totalitarianism concepts, which not least of all becomes apparent in the vague disassociation of totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes, makes using the ideocracy concept as a new approach seem appropriate. A basic problem of the prevailing variant of the totalitarianism concept is rooted in a mixture of the repression perspective (restricting the freedoms of the citizens) and a specifically ideological utopian legitimation perspective. Strictly ideology-driven autocracies can be restricted to the aspect of legitimation and, expressed casually, "the most autocratic" autocracies to the aspect of repression.[3]

Yet, perceived from both perspectives, the regimes are by no means concordant. One basic problem of the totalitarianism term in the conceptually most well-formulated variant by Juan Linz can be seen in his unsatisfactory attempt to differentiate between totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes. According to Linz, in cooperation with Alfred Stepan, "no important economic, social, or political pluralism" in totalitarianism was replaced by almost "no pluralism" in post-totalitarianism. With respect to limiting power, a rejection of despotism would ensue, and "controlling the top leadership" would be executed "via party structures and party processes and the 'inner democracy' of the ruling party".[4] Thusly the authors merely describe the rejection of the characteristics of a personalist ideocratic power under Stalin toward a more strongly regulation-based ideocratic power in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union. An emphasis of the repression perspective thus leads to the fact that post-totalitarian regimes are classi-

---

1 The term "ideocracy" is here used as synonymous with "ideological dictatorship". Cf., among others, Lothar Fritze, Verführung und Anpassung: Zur Logik der Weltanschauungsdiktatur, Berlin 2004.

2 Cf. Steffen Kailitz, Der Streit um den Totalitarismusbegriff. In: Eckhard Jesse/ders. (Publ.), Prägekräfte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Baden-Baden 1997, pp. 219–250.

3 For the year 2008 Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan "measured" the following regimes as totalitarian with the data by "Freedom House" and by ignoring the aspect of the ideological legitimation aspect: Burma, Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Cf. Juan Linz/Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-communist Europe, Baltimore 1996, p. 40. Only Cuba and North Korea had been included in a 2008 intersection, in which also the power ideology was taken into consideration.

4 Quotations: Linz/Stepan, Problems, p. 41 cont.

fied as fundamentally different from totalitarian regimes although, basically, nothing at all has changed in the legitimation of the official ideological power.

The ideocracy term employed here now resolutely removes the repression component from the definition of the regime group and, under the label of "ideocracies", concentrates on the ideological legitimation perspective. In ideocracies the ruling class justifies its power by way of the "laws of history" or the "law of nature" within the framework of a utopian ideology aimed at the reorganization of the entire existing society, this being defined as the common interest of the ruling class and those ruled.[5]

Ideocracies fundamentally distinguish themselves from all other political regime typesin that the ruling class not only claims to possess the right to rule but to control all aspects of the society and is permitted to (radically) redesign it far beyond its current state on the basis of its ideology.[6] For this, it is initially less important whether this claimed right is made use of or not. Having reached the ideological promise, control and redesign would no longer be necessary at the core due to a society that exclusively consisted of believers.[7] However, the society would continue to be ideocratic. The ideological utopian legitimation of power represents the core of what makes the communist regime, on the one hand, the national socialist and fascist regime, on the other, special. Consequently, the utopian ideology is the primary characteristic of this form of

5   Cf. Uwe Backes, Was heißt Totalitarismus? Zur Herrschaftscharakteristik eines extremen Autokratie-Typs. In: Katarzyna Stoklosa/Andrea Strübind/Gerhard Besier (Ed.), Glaube – Freiheit – Diktatur in Europa und den USA, Göttingen 2007, pp. 609–625; David Beetham, The Legitimation of Power, Basingstoke 1991, p. 181; Peter Bernholz, Ideocracy and Totalitarianism: A Formal Analysis Incorporating Ideology. In: Public Choice, 108 (2001), pp. 33–75; Fritze, Verführung; Steffen Kailitz, Varianten der Autokratie im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert. In: Totalitarismus und Demokratie, 6 (2009), pp. 209–251; Jaroslaw Piekalkiewicz/Alfred Wayne Penn, Politics of Ideocracy, Albany 1995.

6   Cf. Hannah Arendt, Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft, Frankfurt a. M. 1955; Peter Bernholz, Notwendige Bedingungen für Totalitarismus: Höchste Werte, Macht und persönliche Interessen. In: Gerard Radnitzky/Hardy Bouillon (Ed.), Ordnungstheorie und Ordnungspolitik, Berlin 1991, pp. 241–284; Bernholz, Ideocracy and Totalitarianism; Carl J. Friedrich/Zbigniew Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, New York 1956; Juan Linz, Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes. In: Fred I. Greenstein/Nelson W. Polsby (Ed.), Handbook of Political Science, Reading, MA 1975, pp. 175–412; Leonard Schapiro, Totalitarianism, New York 1972; Ronald Wintrobe, The Political Economy of Dictatorship, Cambridge, UK 2000; dito, The Tinpot and the Totalitarian: An Economic Theory of Dictatorship. In: American Political Science Review, 84 (1990) 3, pp. 849–872.

7   Analogous to this, see also Roger Griffin in this issue. As is well known, Hannah Arendt, on the other hand, put up the thesis that the "nature of totalitarian power" (Arendt, Elemente, p. 711) was the terror, and totalitarian regimes simply cannot distance themselves from terror as a means for the "execution of natural and legal processes" (Arendt, Elemente, p. 712). For the circle of ideocracies, which is markedly wider than the (state terrorist) circle of the totalitarian regimes according to Arendt, this hypothesis does not apply.

autocracy.[8] Still, a diminishing belief in the legitimacy among the ruling class and those ruled is no plausible reason to not any longer classify a regime as an ideocracy. No one would therefore stop calling a monarchy – as e. g. Monaco – a monarchy, merely due to the fact that most of its subjects and also many individuals within the ruler's inner circle have stopped believing that the monarch had actually been called by God, or by nature, as the only possible ruler.[9] As subtypes of ideocracy, a clear distinction between strongly regulation-based ideocracies such as the GDR and personalistic ideocracies such as the national socialist dictatorship and fascist regimes is recommended.[10]

By way of the "Ideocracies in Comparison – Interrelations between Legitimation, Cooptation, and Repression" Conference in September 2011, the present edition of the journal "Totalitarianism and Democracy" as well as an anthology soon to be derived from the conference, the Hannah-Arendt-Institute for Totalitarianism Research would now like to examine the specific interaction of legitimation, cooptation, and repression. The inspiration for selecting this topic is rooted in the development of the more recent discussion in political science concerning autocracies. It became especially apparent that, apart from the factors of the justification of power and the repression of opposition, a third factor, namely cooptation, in other words the integration in the regime of the elites and the population, needed be considered in reference to the functioning and the durability of political regimes.[11] All political regime types thus distinguish themselves by a specific relationship to repression, cooptation, and legitimation. The topic of the conference and of this journal was largely inspired by the intellectual exchange with the colleagues around Wolfgang Merkel at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin. There, the Berlin colleagues are presently working on a large, seem-

---

8   Cf., among others, Martin Drath, Totalitarismus in der Volksdemokratie. In: Ernst Richert (Ed.), Macht ohne Mandat, Köln 1958, pp. IV–XXXIV; Werner Patzelt, Wirklichkeitskonstruktion im Totalitarismus. Eine ethnomethodologische Weiterführung der Totalitarismuskonzeption von Martin Drath. In: Achim Siegel (Ed.), Totalitarismustheorien nach dem Ende des Kommunismus, Köln 1998, pp. 235–271. This means at the same time that the national socialist regime and fascist regimes, on the one hand, and the communist regimes, on the other, must be systematically distinguished between due to the fundamental differences of the ideologies.

9   Factually, the belief in the legitimation of power sinks in all regime types under those ruled in the course of time, though not linearly. So also in Samuel P. Huntington, The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, London 1991, p. 48. Although a large number of books have been written about the legitimation crisis of liberal democracies, this is the least developed process in this regime form.

10 Cf. Kailitz, Varianten.

11 Cf. among others, André Bank, Rents, Cooptation, and Economized Discourse: Three Dimensions of Political Rule in Jordan, Morocco and Syria. In: Journal of Mediterranean Studies, 14 (2004) 1/2, pp. 155–180; Jennifer Gandhi/Adam Przeworski, Cooperation, Cooptation, and Rebellion under Dictatorships. In: Economics and Politics, 18 (2006), pp. 1–26; Barbara Geddes, What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years? In: Annual Review of Political Science, 2 (1999), pp. 115–144.

ingly seminal "German Research Foundation" project (Critical Junctures and the Survival of Dictatorships. Explaining the Stability of Autocratic Regimes), in which they pursue the interrelation of the pattern of legitimation, cooptation, and repression with the stability of autocracies.[12]

The following overview is concentrated on limiting the central terms of the journal. The level of legitimation includes all those ideocratic regimes which aim at creating a voluntary following, or at least obedience, with the help of political promises and concrete political successes. After discussions among the participants at the conference "Ideocracies in Comparison" it remained unresolved whether the production of political goods is to be understood foremost as an independent strategy for securing power in the course of economic and social politics (performance), whether this point can be classified under legitimation (in the sense of generating output legitimation), or whether it were better to subsume the term under cooptation.

As a matter of fact, the level of cooptation encompasses all those efforts of a political regime by which a following and obedience are to be "bought". This includes the opening up of career opportunities as well as the granting of other material and immaterial advantages. In this connection, the integration of certain population groups and segments of the elite plays an important role. Expressed casually, on the integration level of the population and the elites, this means the proverbial "carrot", which is handed to all those who follow the official path, or at least do not attempt to obstruct it.

The "stick", accompanying the carrot, concerns the instruments of political repression, meaning all those measures which are employed to enforce a following and obedience. The scale ranges from mass terror and harsh interventions, such as detention camps and torture, to the soft means of social control and disciplining as well as of blocking off career paths and preventive surveillance.

In contrast to the theoretical model by the colleagues from Berlin, a political regime is not based on three equal pillars of power but on a clear hierarchical relationship from normative legitimation via cooptation in exchange for loyalty to the repression of opposition. Accordingly a regime foremost desires that throughout any period of economic weakness citizens believe in the normative superiority of the political regime over all regime alternatives. Cooptation and also performance rank second when it comes to securing the support of those who are unwilling to weather every storm to support the political regime. Repression is the final means when the citizens do not accept, or only insufficiently so, the exchange of material and immaterial resource provisions. In case

---

12 Cf. Wolfgang Merkel et al., Legitimation, Kooptation und Repression in Autokratien. Critical Junctures und die drei Säulen autokratischer Stabilität. In: Steffen Kailitz/ Patrick Köllner (Ed.), Autokratien im Vergleich. Sonderheft der Politischen Vierteljahresschrift, 47/2012, Baden-Baden 2012 (in preparation); dito, Legitimation, Kooptation und Repression in Ideokratein aus der Perspektive des historischen Institutionalismus. In: Uwe Backes/Steffen Kailitz (Ed.), Ideokratien im Vergleich. Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Legitimation, Kooptation und Repression, Göttingen 2012 (in preparation).

of withdrawal, however, the threat of repression is, as a rule, of significant importance and reaches far beyond the circle of the actual political opponents.[13]

Particularly the factor of the integration of the politically indifferent and ambivalent in ideocracies has been neglected for a long time. There is good reason for the argument that – in the German language – the term "cooptation" is not especially suitable for what it is supposed to express. In the general German sense cooptation actually means being nominated to an organization by the current members of said organization.[14] However, increasingly, and in accordance with international English language research, German social scientists have been applying a much more substantial terminological content to the cooptation term, recently.[15] Hence, the authors have simply transferred the terminological content of the English "cooptation" term, specifically, the partial importance of the integration of individuals or groups in an existing organization, to the German loan word "cooptation", which was derived from Latin. Last but not least, it is just splitting hairs whether what is meant in Germany is to be called cooptation in future or whether it would be better to speak of integration. The term itself is only the shell for what is meant; the decisive question is whether it is an important phenomenon in autocracies. While there was a distinct dissent over the terminological question at the conference, the opinions concerning the question of the importance of what the term describes diverged much less.

During the preparations for the conference Uwe Backes and Steffen Kailitz forwarded to the circle of participants the following hypotheses referring to the possible interrelation of legitimation, cooptation, and repression:

(1) As long as citizens and elites in ideocracies believe in the ideological promises they are willing to accept deprivations. The creation of an ideology-based normative legitimacy prevents, or at least delays, "performance dilemmas".[16]

(2) The non-fulfillment of great ideological promises (parusy delay) with the resultant sinking belief in the ideocratic promises among the population and the elite requires intensified cooptation- and performance efforts in order to stabilize the ideocracy.

---

13 In the explanation of this hierarchy relationship, the ideologically well-founded repression against "objective enemies" as an "excretion of the harmful" (Arendt, Elemente, p. 708) remains unconsidered.

14 Karl Loewenstein e. g. used the term "cooptation" as analysis framework in this sense. Cf. Karl Loewenstein, Kooptation und Zuwahl: Über die autonome Bildung privilegierter Gruppen, Frankfurt a. M. 1973.

15 Cf. André Bank, Die Renaissance des Autoritarismus. Erkenntnisse und Grenzen neuerer Beiträge der Comparative Politics und Nahostforschung. In: Hamburg Review of Social Sciences, 4 (2009), pp. 10–41, here 14; Martin Brusis, Staat und Wirtschaftsakteure in postsowjetischen elektoralen Autokratien. In: Kailitz/Köllner, Autokratien; Christoph H. Stefes, Autoritäre Parteien und Kooptation im Kaukasus und auf dem Balkan. In: Berliner Debatte Initial, 21 (2010) 3, pp. 100–112; Merkel et al., Legitimation.

16 So in the hypothesis by Huntington, Third Wave, p. 48.

(3) When the ideocracy encounters difficulties in creating sufficient legitimacy via ideology and does not succeed in at least creating loyalty via cooptation, repression is its last resort in order to stabilize the ideocracy. As long as an ideocracy consistently suppresses opposition it can survive, even without legitimacy and widespread loyalty.[17]

(4) In order to stabilize the ideocracy, the drop in severe open repression must in the reverse be accompanied by intensified efforts for the cooptation of strategically important, ambivalent, or (potentially) oppositional actors.

(5) Sinking belief in the ideology can (to a large extent) be balanced by loyalty on the basis of cooptation and output legitimacy.

The list of the actually dealt with issues and hypotheses goes far beyond these points. Simultaneously, it was already clear during their formulation that, following the conference and the contributions resulting therefrom, the indices for and against these hypotheses could be collected but lastly not (yet) systematically be confirmed or rejected. In this respect – so the interim state of affairs – some of the hypotheses did not prove themselves to be as supportable as first expected. Concerning the fifth hypothesis, for instance, the empirical results by *Manfred G. Schmidt* in this edition are contradictory to the theoretical expectations.[18]

Plumbing the depths of the interrelations of legitimation, cooptation, and repression in ideocracies, the contributions of this edition combine perspectives of history, philosophy, and political science. On the one hand, there are theoretical articles on principle issues, on the other hand, systematic comparisons from specific perspectives of ideological legitimation and cooptation, and, finally, regional studies about the Third Reich, the GDR, and the People's Republic of China. In the prelude to this edition *Hermann Lübbe* examines the ideocracies from the perspective of moral philosophy. He shows how good will can result in violence. The potential for the betterment of the world, which is inherent to good will and, in abstract form, to ideocracy, may be heightened by information. For this it were necessary to create the prerequisites for knowledge about the possibilities for the betterment of the world. According to Lübbe, this approach is followed by technocratic ideocracies. Totalitarian ideocracies believe themselves to possess "higher moralism". In a comparative perspective *Roger Griffin* examines how ideocracies justify their power. He bases this on a concept that understands "totalitarianism" as a social construction experiment. Accordingly, ideocracies aim at creating a new society and getting an anthropological revolution off the ground at any price. Applied to "ideocracy", this leads to the assumption that some totalitarian regimes, such as the Nazi dictatorship and the Soviet

---

17   Cf. Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel, Princeton, NJ 1970, p. 233.
18   In his contribution to this issue Christian Goebel comes to a differentiated judgment about the markedly different degree of the load-bearing capacity of the hypotheses in considering the development of the People's Republic of China. He also names weaknesses existing in the "model" of the investigation it is based on, which need to be minimized in the course of further development.

Union, sometimes legitimize themselves carried by a wave of populist enthusiasm for the prospect of a new era promised by those in power. The acts of violence committed during this phase are justified as labor pains necessary in order to give birth to new life. In his contribution, *Steffen Kailitz* shows that there exists a specific pattern for the integration of elites and citizens in (foremost the communist) ideocracies which markedly distinguishes itself from the integration patterns of other political regime types. Accordingly, ideocracies "ensnare" (durchherrschen)[19] the society in a tight net of material dependencies on the state, from which individuals are hardly able to free themselves, completely. The strong tendency of ideocracies to control the distribution of goods and positions, or even the complete monopolization by the state, go hand in hand with a very strong capability for repression toward all those who are not integrated. In this contribution, the consequences of the integration pattern of elites and citizens in ideocracies are evaluated as ambivalent. So, ideocracies very strongly monopolize and bind the individual. This may also create an aversion in otherwise politically indifferent individuals. Nevertheless, the characteristic, very strong integration of elites and citizens may assist in explaining why, in comparison to other political regime types, communist ideocracies endure for such a long time.

Manfred G. Schmidt examines the importance of the political profile of autocracies in reference to the legitimation of their power. According to his empirical results, which are based on a global macro-comparison of the economic development of democracies and autocracies as well as a case study of the GDR, the "dilemma of the dictator",[20] apart from repression, is only seemingly overcome as autocrats also employ a political exchange which creates loyalty. The securing of power by autocracies and, hence, also by ideocracies, is typically not, or only minimally, based on an internal politically created output legitimacy, which, besides individual successful cases such as the People's Republic of China, usually is not reached at all, or merely in an unstable fashion. The results of the investigation of the legitimated and de-legitimated effects of the social politics of the GDR point to the same direction. According to Schmidt, this case is especially telling as the strivings toward an output legitimacy of autocracies as the ruling class orient themselves on repression and political exchange (in the form of welfare politics), the apparent solution for the "dilemma of the dictator". This however does not create the desired legitimacy. According to Schmidt, and thus completely in contrast to some alarmist voices from the press, compared to democracies, political performance is a structural autocracy disadvantage and not an autocracy advantage.

Wolfgang Bialas addresses the interrelation of legitimation, cooptation, and repression in the NS-Regime. He concentrates on the central group of the politically indifferent. After first reconstructing important elements of national social-

---

19 Cf. Jürgen Kocka, Durchherrschte Gesellschaft. In: Hartmut Kaelble/ders./Hartmut Zwahr (Ed.), Sozialgeschichte der DDR, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 547–553.
20 Cf. Wintrobe, Tinpot.

ist ideology, Bialas shows how the national socialist regime, in its stance toward political indifference, effectively combined cooptation, repression, and legitimation. He records herein the justifications for the opportunistic behavior and the voluntary following of politically indifferent Germans as well as the racial ideological monopolization by Christian humanist thinkers with whose assistance the promises of a "new man" were developed. He vividly demonstrates how, in National Socialism, sheer opportunism and ideological fanaticism stood side by side.

Udo Grashoff devotes himself to the interrelation of legitimation, cooptation, and repression in the second German dictatorship, the GDR. According to Grashoff, those in power always claimed legitimacy for themselves as an antifascist state on the way to communism. He further shows how, beyond that, "apparent parliamentarianism", the integration of technocrats (in the 1960s) and welfare politics (in the 1970s and 1980s) had a certain importance. According to the results of the investigation in the realm of repression, the development of the GDR is marked by a – not evenly running – sinking importance of repression. The cooptation of non-communists played only a small role in the history of the GDR and was practiced only as a discontinued model during the start-up phase.

The contribution by *Christian Göbel* investigates the – in the course of time changing – interrelation of legitimation and cooptation, repression and performance in the People's Republic of China. To his results belongs that the totalitarian Mao-Regime was marked by an extremely high degree of repression and ideological indoctrination but, at the same time, by a low degree of cooptation and performance. After Mao's death, the degree of repression and indoctrination abated, yet the degree of repression and performance did not increase decisively. This way, a power vacuum occurred, which led to societal opposition against increasing corruption, growing inequality, and high inflation. This opposition found its expression in the 1989 demonstrations, which were initiated by students but quickly extended to other levels of society. Through well-directed reforms in the years that followed the regime's performance improved, important societal groups co-opted, and the use of repression became reserved for emergencies. According to Goebel, these measures considerably heightened the regime's stability.

A sincere thank you goes out to all the authors as well as the HAIT staff and the HAIT students, particularly Ms. Christin Diana Becker and Ms. Susanna Mocker, who were instrumental in creating this edition.

Steffen Kailitz