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REVISITING THE VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL ORDER CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:  
A CASE STUDY OF CHINA

NUR E JANNAT MOON

124 Pages

The conceptual framework on violence and social order- by North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009)- categorizes societies into three groups based on how they foster competition, limit violence, and allow citizens access to political and economic organizations. This thesis critically examines this conceptual framework and highlights its drawbacks in explaining development in the contemporary global context. This thesis identifies two specific areas of improvement in the conceptual framework of social order: first, by reconceptualizing violence, and second, by integrating the extent of personalism in political parties as critical determinants for categorizing social order. By demonstrating the intricate relationship between the comprehensive concept of violence and various mechanisms of personalization in the political party of China, this thesis contends that the state's extensive capability to control violence and the personalized nature of political processes together undermine the goals of development, which is an individual right to live a life with dignity and freedom.

KEYWORDS: Violence, Open and Limited Access Order, Personalization, Political Party, China

REVISITING THE VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL ORDER CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:  
A CASE STUDY OF CHINA

NUR E JANNAT MOON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Politics and Government

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2023

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REVISITING THE VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL ORDER CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:  
A CASE STUDY OF CHINA

NUR E JANNAT MOON

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N.E.J.M

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BRI	Belt and Road initiative
BTI	Bertelsmann Stiftung Index
CCAC	Central Cyberspace Administration Commission
CCP/CPC	Communist Party of China
CCV	Comprehensive Conception of Violence
CMC	Central Military Commission
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
DSP	Digital Society Project
EO	Economic Organizations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
LAO	Limited Access Order
MCV	Minimalist Conception of Violence
NCPI	National Cyber Power Index
NIE	New Institutional Economics
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NWW	North, Wallis and Weingast,
OAO	Open Access Order
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRC	People's Republic of China
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VC	Violence Capacity
VDem	Varieties of Democracy
WJP	World Justice Project

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Why are some countries developed while others are not? Are there any societies that have mastered the winning formula for socioeconomic progress? Social scientists have pursued such questions for decades, resulting in extensive academic literature without conclusive answers. Noble prize-winning economist Douglas North and his co-authors took on this question. They argued that the key to this puzzle lies in the institutional arrangements designed to control violence in any society. Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis, Steven B. Webb, and Barry R. Weingast introduced this conceptual framework in 2007. It went through additional development in the book *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, published in 2009. North et al. explored this theory further in another article in 2011 and applied the framework to nine developing countries in a new book published in 2013.

Theorizing the political and economic changes that societies experienced throughout human history is undoubtedly a formidable task. However, such systematic knowledge is critical to better understand and improve our realities. In a world obsessed with economic growth, creating theoretical frameworks to tackle sustainable development problems is even more essential. The primary purpose of this thesis centers on one question: how can the conceptual framework of violence and social order be improved to expand our understanding of development? This thesis identifies two areas of improvement within this framework: first, by reconceptualizing violence, and second, by integrating the extent of personalism in political parties as critical determinants for categorizing social order. Furthermore, this thesis contends that the state's extensive capability to control violence and the personalized nature of political processes can impede citizens' freedom and rights.

In this chapter, I first introduce the research problem and objectives. The second section explains the importance of studying this framework, and the third section outlines the thesis.

### **Statement of the Problem and Research Objectives**

According to the conceptual framework of North et al. (2009) (hereafter *NWW*), politics and economics examine development by focusing on one system only, either democracy or the markets (110). This can be a problematic approach as various combinations of political, economic, and socio-cultural factors impact development conditions. *NWW* does not fixate on economic growth but emphasizes a state's overall ability to control violence as the essential precondition for development (Hesse 2015). The authors rightly recognized that there is no foolproof process for social progress; instead, it is a constant, dynamic process of adapting to changes. *NWW* provided insights into how societies adapt to these changes with the support of organizational and institutional structures. *NWW* is a bold attempt since it examines the evolution of development in recorded human history. However, any extensive conceptual work is bound to have some deficiencies. *NWW* framework distinguishes countries based on how successfully they foster competition, limit violence, and allow citizens access to political and economic organizations. Based on these conditions, they categorize countries as open access and limited access societies.

According to this theory, open access societies are better suited to ensure these conditions than limited access societies. A myriad of formal and informal organizations and institutions help open access societies to better control violence and adapt to external shocks, which is why they advance politically and economically. However, since the authors first introduced this concept, the political and economic dynamics of the world have undergone significant changes. The 2008 financial crisis, the emergence of China as a superpower, the expansion of personalism within

political parties, the rise of populist leaders, and the Covid-19 pandemic are a few of the many events which have altered global politics and economies since this concept first appeared in 2007.

This thesis aims to refine and enhance the NWW framework in the renewed global context. Specifically, this thesis seeks to develop a more nuanced understanding of violence and its expression through personalist politics in societies. Studying this framework can provide insights into how social institutions and power structures perpetuate violence, allowing us to work towards creating more just and equitable societies.

### **Why Study the Conceptual Framework on Violence and Social Order?**

The conceptual framework of violence and social order is an established and widely recognized theory in academic literature. Its emphasis on the role of institutions in societies positions it as a critical concept in social science, particularly in New Institutional Economics (NIE). The academic reputation of North, Wallis, and Weingast certainly enhances the framework's significance in NIE literature. However, it is essential to clarify the importance of studying this topic to emphasize the relevance of this thesis. Therefore, this section will outline the rationale behind exploring the conceptual framework of violence and social order, highlighting two significant points.

### **Influence of New Institutional Economics (NIE) on Global Developmental Agenda**

The influence of *New Institutional Economics* (NIE) on the global policy-setting agenda has been paramount. It underscores the importance of social, legal, and political institutions in economic growth and development. NIE is highly intradisciplinary and has influenced many development policy discussions, prompted numerous academic publications, and even gathered four Nobel Prizes in economics (Legiedź 2020; Menyashev et al. 2011; Ménard and Shirley

2014; Schneider and Nega 2016). Supplanting the neo-liberal Washington consensus, the NIE concepts of good governance, the rule of law, and the primacy of institutions have taken precedence in the policy prescriptions of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and other international development organizations (Tamanaha 2015; Burki and Perry 1998; Dutraive 2009).

NIE-inspired institutional reform conditions have become an integral part of the policy prescriptions of international financial organizations and aid agencies. One World Bank report noted that since 2011 “1 in every 2 World Bank projects included a thematic focus on institutional reform,” and they appeared “in more than \$50 billion worth of World Bank sponsored projects between 2006 and 2011” (Bridges and Woolcock 2017, 4). Nevertheless, despite the billions of dollars spent on this cause, institutional reform for good governance in developing countries remains elusive because patron-client relationships and corruption embed themselves in the politics of developing countries (Uberti 2016). The organizational nature of political parties can indicate the extent of patron-client relationships in society. For example, a personalist political party can be based on patronage and clientelism (Ansell and Fish 1999). Therefore, international development and aid organizations should consider the level of personalism in political parties of aid recipient countries for efficient execution of institutional reforms.

Economic growth and development are not isolated phenomena but are strongly connected with culture, history, law, religion, military, and politics. NIE highlights the dynamism and interconnectedness between political and economic processes in society (Furubotn and Richter 2005; Tamanaha 2015) and, therefore, is perhaps better suited to explain economic development. Designed by Douglas North, the founding father of NIE, and his co-

authors, the NWW framework advances the core NIE concepts like the importance of organizations and institutions, beliefs, and property rights in relation to violence. It also marks a breakaway from North's previous recommendations on institutional reform for developing countries emulating the Western liberal political and economic model (Gray 2015, 71). NWW acknowledged that institutional reform prescriptions might not produce the same developmental results for different countries.

That is why NWW recommended evaluating the unique socioeconomic power dynamics underlying the institutional arrangement of society and economic development. The understanding of institutional arrangement is incomplete without incorporating power and power relations (Manioudis and Meramveliotakis 2021). Besides, the extractive and inclusive nature of political and economic institutions can significantly impact the development trajectory of a state (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). Moreover, the NWW framework helps to explore what configuration of these political and economic institutions can trigger (in)stability in any country (Ademmer, Langbein, and Borzel 2020, 205).

Similar to the NIE core concepts, the NWW framework has also influenced global development policy dialogues. For example, the framework for increasing institutional resilience and violence mitigation in the 2011 World Development Report was inspired by the NWW framework (World Bank 2011; Gray 2015). The implications of the NWW conceptual framework in NIE literature and global development policy discussion are profound. Therefore, a refinement of the NWW framework is essential due to the overwhelming influence of NIE in international development discourse.



## **The Development Conundrum: Stability and Growth Versus Limited Freedom**

The importance of stability for economic development is undeniable. The question is, however, to what extent should individual freedom be given up to maintain stability in the country? While the NWW theory offers a broader understanding of development, it can also be misused. For example, the authors noted that “peace depends on the balance of interests created by the rent-creation process” (NWW 2009, 20). Such arguments could be misappropriated to support corruption as long as economic growth prevails. States can also exploit NWW’s emphasis on maintaining stability as a requirement for development. Additionally, the implication that economic openness and high institutional capacity (administrative and legal) is a precondition for political openness is problematic, which Snyder (2010) aptly summarized as below:

“This is both good and bad news for efficient authoritarian regimes on the Chinese model. On the one hand, it implies that the outside world should tolerate China’s orderly elite consensus as a step toward maturing its natural state and preparing the doorstep conditions for a transition to an open-access system. On the other hand, it implies that economic growth will be unsustainable unless the Chinese elites agree sooner or later to step across that threshold” (288-89).

China has consistently defended its governance model, but recently it has taken a firmer position by officially conceptualizing its governance as a “democracy that works” (The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China 2021). Unsurprisingly, this model emphasizes peace, stability, continued growth, and consolidated state power.

While the Western liberal democratic model is not flawless, the Chinese model is also deeply problematic as it entrusts absolute power to the state. The developmental journeys of Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea also show that economic development can happen in an illiberal political context. These success stories have strengthened *new developmentalism*,

especially in emerging economies, which endorse the primacy of the state for rapid industrialization and economic redistribution (Trubek et al. 2013; Döring, Santos, and Pocher 2017; Warburton 2018; Chatterjee 2022). Developmental states lie between liberal states and statism, which characterizes a combination of capitalist political and economic organizations to drive economic growth (Bresser-Pereira 2019). This dynamic of political and economic organizations complementing each other with the sole objective of economic growth is similar to the NWW idea of double balance, where political and economic organizations mutually support each other to ensure stability. The statism in new developmentalism resembles the NWW rationale for the state's violence control capability. With increasing Chinese influence, this approach can trigger an ideological reorientation of the global political-economic order. Therefore, the original NWW framework should consider the implications of circumstances where political and economic openness is not concurrent.

Except for a few cases, most modern states have a monopoly over violence, often at the expense of individual freedom and liberty. The stateness<sup>1</sup> indicator in Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) shows that most countries have high internal cohesion and state control over violence. Besides, the emergence of digital technology has changed how violence is organized and carried out. For example, social media can incite violent acts and damage public assets. As a result, the state's violence control capabilities require a broader understanding today. Digital repression in the name of limiting violence has become pervasive across the globe. Fear culture and self-censorship in the virtual world are forms of psychological violence that restrict individual liberty. This thesis is significant in this context as it critically explores the

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<sup>1</sup> Stateness is defined as the extent of a state's legitimacy and internal cohesion in terms of state identity, monopoly of the use of force, and basic administration.

development conundrum with a comprehensive understanding of violence and freedom in a contemporary digital society.

In summary, the fundamental significance of this research work lies in its potential to improve critical theoretical work in NIE literature and global development policy discourse.

### **Thesis Outline**

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the context of the research. The second chapter describes the major points from the original NWW framework and reviews relevant literature. The third chapter discusses the theoretical framework for this thesis by describing relevant terms and concepts, followed by a chapter on the research methodology. This chapter explains the logic of adopting the case-study method to fulfill the research objective of refining NWW theory and operationalizing relevant concepts. It also describes the contextual considerations for selecting China as a case. The fifth chapter applies the refined conceptualization of violence and personalist political parties in the case of China. Lastly, chapter six summarizes the major findings of the thesis in a critical reflection on personalist politics and violence in the digital era that ties together the discussion of the previous chapters.

## CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL ORDER

The principal objective of this thesis is to critically examine the NWW framework, identify its weaknesses, and create an improved understanding of the NWW framework. As such, this chapter first focuses on introducing NWW and clarifying relevant terminologies in the original framework. Next, it provides a literature review and identifies the contribution of this thesis to the existing literature. This study contributes to the NWW literature by incorporating an extensive understanding of violence and personalism in political parties.

### **Introducing the NWW Framework**

NWW framework explores the complex interrelationship between the role of institutions in limiting violence and promoting political and economic developments of societies. This conceptual framework includes violence, organizations, institutions, and beliefs (North et al. 2009, 2). NWW defined *social order* as a mechanism of structuring institutions and organizations in society. These organizations shape social interactions, norms, and behaviors and eventually limit violence within society. The authors identified three types of social orders in human history. The first one, the *foraging order*, has the characteristics of hunter-gatherer societies and preceded the other two social orders.

*Limited access order* (LAO) or natural state is human history's most enduring social order. Throughout past centuries, empires, kingdoms, and states have maintained LAO societies, while *open access order* (OAO) emerged in a few societies in the 19th century. Afghanistan, the Philippines, Bangladesh, China, and India are a few examples of countries with LAO. OAO examples include the USA, Japan, Canada, and other countries. According to North et al. (2009), only "25 countries and 15 percent of the world's population live in open access societies today; the other 175 countries and 85 percent live in natural states" (p. xii). The underlying motivations

of LAO societies throughout history were to manipulate “the economy to produce rent, motivate stability and reduce violence” (North et al. 2012, 6).

In LAOs, access to organizations is restricted, and personal connections are critical in securing positions in the rent-seeking coalition. Power in LAOs is distributed based on social identities and hierarchies. On the other hand, OAOs support access to organizations and political and economic competition, which are facilitated by impersonal norms and institutional regulations. In this framework, the “state is an organization of organizations” (North et al. 2009, 31). However, OAOs typically have a higher number of civilian organizations than LAOs. The authors also point out that institutions and organizations exist in both limited and open access societies but can deliver different outcomes. For example, the institution of election produces different results in LAO and OAO countries (North et al. 2009, 15). In OAO countries, elections can ensure accountability and representative democracy, whereas, in LAO countries, incumbents can use it as a tool to strengthen power and legitimacy.

These two types of social orders also contrast in how they regulate violence. Both societies have *dominant coalitions* comprising political, economic, religious, and military elites. In LAOs, elites have greater access to resources, property rights, and organizations. Violence can reduce the rent generated through these opportunities. The threats of rent reduction prompt them to cooperate and limit violence. Consequently, they form the *ruling coalition* by establishing control over state institutions, rent-generating resources, and rent distribution. Enhanced elite cooperation helps increase rent, which is later distributed among individuals based on personal ties, and thus a mutually benefiting patron-client network is established. Out of the dynamic of elite cooperation emerges a *double balance*, which North et al. (2009) defined as “a correspondence between the distribution and organization of violence potential and political

power on the one hand, and the distribution and organization of economic power on the other hand” (20). The double balance provides stability, but it is not always permanent.

In LAOs, for example, elites can always resort to violence if the rent distribution is unequal. As such, LAOs are always vulnerable to instability and violence due to the non-institutionalized nature of the elite agreement. Again, LAOs can also vary in their abilities to support organizations outside the state and control violence. North et al. (2011) provided a spectrum of limited access order societies, shown in Table 01. Firstly, in a *fragile LAO*, the violence capacity lies among different groups outside the state. In a *basic LAO*, either authoritarian or competitive clientelist, violence capacity is largely controlled by the state. This type of country also heavily controls political and economic opportunities.

Table 01: LAO and OAO Spectrum (North et al. 2011)			
Type (Examples)	Economic Organizations (EOs)	Political Organizations (POs)	Violence Capacity (VC)
Fragile LAO (Afghanistan, DR Congo, Haiti, Mozambique 1980s)	EOs and POs are not clearly distinguishable, except perhaps for multi-national firms present in fragile LAOs.		All organizations have VC. Civilian and military are not clearly distinguished.
Basic LAO— Authoritarian (USSR, Korea with military government, Mexico 1940s-80s)	All major EOs— public or “private”— are linked with the central state; some are also with multinationals	Most POs are controlled by the state, e.g., a one-party state or dictatorship. Opposition parties are under threat.	Most VC organizations are part of the state, yet some may compete with or threaten the civilian state.
Basic LAO— Competitive Clientelist (Philippines, Bangladesh, and Zambia, since the early 1990s)	Some private firms, some multi-nationals. Political connections are needed for major economic success.	Competing POs, but effective power is dependent on central permission.	Most VC organizations are part of the state, yet some may compete with or threaten the civilian state.

Table 01 Continues

Table 01 Continued

<p>Mature LAO (Mexico since the 1990s, Chile since 1990, India, China)</p>	<p>Many private firms and multinationals. Political connections are needed for major economic success in the face of informal mechanisms of limits.</p>	<p>Multiple POs, but effective power is dependent on central permission. The democratic process, if present, cannot challenge major economic powers.</p>	<p>The state controls almost all VC.</p>
<p>OAO (Western Europe, USA, Canada, Japan, S. Korea)</p>	<p>Most are private. Non-discriminatory rules exist for citizens to start an EO and get state legal support.</p>	<p>Non-discriminatory entry rules exist for any citizens to start or join a PO.</p>	<p>No non-state organizations have VC.</p>

Next, in the *mature LAO*, the state has almost complete control of violence, but ties to the ruling coalition are still critical in gaining access to political and economic organizations. Unlike fragile and basic LAOs, a mature LAO has more enduring organizations and allows free entry to these organizations. Another necessary logic of LAO is that this type of social order is not static, and countries can progress or regress within the spectrum in the face of internal and external shocks. The NWW framework also identifies a few conditions that enable LAOs to transition to OAO.

These conditions are labeled as the *doorstep conditions*: the rule of law, long-established organizations, including state and various public and private organizations, and civil-political control over the military. These three conditions are mutually reinforcing and materialize out of an elite agreement that impersonal rules and intra-elite competition will better serve the interests of the ruling coalition. According to North et al. (2012), open access is institutionalized through substantial political, legal, and economic changes at the tipping point of transition. Consequently, mature LAOs cross the threshold and transition to OAO societies.

In OAOs, the state monopolizes authority over violence, and security organizations such as the military and police remain under civilian control. Organizations outside the state check the state's illegitimate use of violence, and economic actors prevent the political system from controlling economic competition. The political system's ability to use violence is also constrained by the different political actors competing for state power. These additional constraints to reduce violence are embedded within institutions and organizations. As such, non-violent political and economic competition is possible in OAO countries.

NWW also argued that the logic of OAO accommodates principles of 'creative destruction' and equality by allowing everyone access to organizations based on impersonal norms and rules. OAOs can sustain non-violent competition due to the prevalence of such impersonal norms as opposed to LAOs, and thus experience greater stability that supports economic development. Both societies generate rent, but OAOs are less likely to manipulate rent-generating resources. To summarize, OAOs can reduce violence and promote competition because economic, political, and social actors can act freely to protect their interests and constrain each other when necessary.

## **Literature Review**

Many researchers have used NWW to study the development journeys of different countries, and Table 02 summarizes a list of such academic works. A few of these studies also identified circumstances where the development course of some countries differed from NWW conditions. For example, Reckendrees (2015) demonstrated that the political organizations, the majority electorate, or the dominant coalition might paradoxically choose to limit access. Economic organizations might not counteract maintaining political openness as long as economic openness is not affected. Again, Kuditchar (2019) and Grimmer-Solem (2015)



demonstrated the dynamics of open economic access and limited political access with cases of South Korea, Imperial Germany, and Meiji-era Japan. These critiques are particularly relevant considering the development success of countries like China, Singapore, and Vietnam, where economic and political competition is not mutually reinforcing. This framework has also been applied to investigate development problems, such as corruption, by international development organizations like the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) (Mungiu-Pippidi et al. 2011)

Most of these works are qualitative, given the difficulties in developing a viable empirical model with large-N cross-country analysis to test NWW theory (Kapstein 2014). But empirical operationalization of NWW core concepts like violence is essential to use this framework in applied research (Stefanic 2011).

Table 02: Application of NWW Framework in Academic Literature		
Case/Country		Author(s) and Year
United States, France, and Britain		North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009)
Tunisia		Wegner, Heinrich-Mechergui and Mechergui (2013)
Bangladesh		Khan (2013)
Maharashtra and West Bengal of India		Roy (2013)
Iran and Turkey		Esfahani and Gürakar (2014)
Dominican Republic and Haiti		Frankema and Masé (2014)
Germany	Modern	Hesse (2015)
	Interwar Period	Reckendrees (2015)
	Imperial Period	Grimmer-Solem (2015)
South Korea		Mo and Weingast (2013), You (2013), Kuditchar (2019)
Pakistan		Rehman (2015)

Table 02 Continues

Table 02 Continued

North Korea	Weston (2016)
Northern and Southern Italy	Di Martino, Felice, and Vasta (2017)
Russia	Kluge (2017), Flikke (2021)
Taiwan	Legiedź (2018)
Bangladesh and India	Sarker and Khalid (2018)
Ghana	Kuditchar (2019)
Hybrid Regimes	Ademmer, Langbein, and Borzel (2020)
Mozambique	Mairoce, Silberberger and Zweynert (2021)
Carolingian empire	Young (2021)

Although North et al. (2009) claimed NWW as a fundamentally new approach in social science analysis, critics have argued that it embodies classic liberal ideals and rational choice bias (Bates 2010; Gray 2015; Hickey 2013). Again, NWW primarily conceptualizes violence as *organized violence* that encompasses threats and acts of physical violence (North et al. 2009, 14). When the consequence of violence is instability in society, it indicates the destructive nature of violent activities. However, the conceptual parameter of violence, conflict, and security has expanded beyond physical attacks in the age of technology (Brantly 2017; Egloff and Shires 2021; Van Puyvelde and Brantly 2019). In this context, states are equally vigilant about digital and cyber security in addition to controlling traditional violence capacities.

Violence is a multidimensional phenomenon. Violence and attacks using digital tools can cause instability within a country, and at the same time, the state can also use technology as a tool of repression (Gohdes 2020; Gunitsky 2015; Sullivan and Davenport 2018). Digital repression in the name of limiting violence has become widespread worldwide. Fear culture and self-censorship in the virtual world are forms of psychological and cultural violence that restrict individual liberty. In emphasizing the importance of the state's capacity to control violence for

stability and economic development, its ability to perpetrate structural violence has been ignored. States and political parties can exert direct and institutional violence (Riaz 2019). There is a lack of scholarly work focused on reconceptualizing the concept of violence under this framework. Therefore, NWW theory can be improved by expanding the discussion of violence.

Besides, the concept of development in recent decades has expanded beyond economic growth. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) does not entirely reflect how economic development benefits people. As such, academics and practitioners of development studies increasingly emphasize the importance of expanding people's capabilities and overall well-being as development outcomes. In this context, Sen's concept of development focused on expanding the freedom and capabilities of individuals is notable. His idea of development is expansive.

According to Sen (1999), development should increase opportunities for individuals to pursue a life of their choice. He considers political freedom and civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, press, and association, paramount to enhancing economic development. He has also argued against the 'Lee Thesis' — named after the former prime minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew — which maintains that restricting political and civil rights can help promote economic development (Sen, 1999:15). Similar to NWW, Sen's development theory also essentially embodies Western values of freedom, capitalism, and market economy. Nonetheless, his theory has inspired transformation in development discourse and has been instrumental in designing UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI). From this comprehensive view, development outcomes should enhance individual well-being. In a similar vein, personal well-being should also go beyond the absence of physical violence. Relating economic development to restraining organized violence and threats of physical violence prevents a comprehensive conceptualization of development.

While OAO societies may be better equipped to handle external shocks due to their formal and informal organizations, LAOs have also shown comparable capabilities, as demonstrated by China's response to the 2008 financial crisis (Hartzell 2010). Again, the suggestion that OAOs prioritize inclusion, equality, and impersonality is debatable. Income inequality has risen, and social mobility has declined in OECD countries despite institutional stability (OECD 2021). This suggests that discrimination still exists within OAOs. Moreover, OAOs may not always represent citizens' interests, as pluralist politics can be biased toward certain groups (Bates 2010). The lack of effective policies addressing inequality implies a lack of elite commitment to prioritize impersonal rules, blurring the line between OAOs and LAOs. In this context, the NWW theory can benefit from analyzing the patterns of impersonality within the political settlement and elite agreement underpinning the social order.

Political parties are critical organizations in any society. Academic research shows that the strength of political parties is related to long-term development (Bizzarro et al. 2018). NWW also identified political parties as important social organizations; however, their discussion of political parties was underdeveloped. Bates (2010) also pointed out the failure of NWW to examine political parties as a long-lasting organization of societies (755). In their subsequent work, North et al. (2013) emphasized the tendency of personal ties in political organizations and the ruling coalition of the lower-spectrum LAOs. However, the implications of the personalistic nature of political parties did not advance further. Political parties are vital agents that shape the political settlement of society, which in turn impacts stability. Similar to NIE literature, the NWW framework emphasizes the importance of political institutions in economic development. However, NIE discussions on political institutions primarily center on the electoral system (Cox 2008), government types (Carey 2008), and legislative processes (McCubbins 2005). Therefore,

both the NIE literature and the NWW framework can benefit significantly from a comprehensive discussion of political parties, considering their relevance in economic development.

Like limited access order, personalist leadership is perhaps history's most enduring leadership type. From Aristotle and Machiavelli to Laswell (1930) and Weber (1947), scholars have explored personalism in political leadership. Emperors, kings, and presidents have repeatedly attempted to establish absolute loyalty from the elites and masses. Although personalism in politics is not new, it has not been studied extensively in NIE literature. Personalistic political parties, or non-partisan parties (Ignazi 1996), do not emerge from the traditional elite consensus in society, have a weak organizational structure, rely on a clientelist network, and function as a vehicle for the personal aspirations of the leader (Gunther and Diamond 2003). The level of personalism can be a helpful indicator of understanding the institutional strength of a political organization. Academic research has shown that personalism is low in highly institutionalized political parties (Mény 1990; Mainwaring and Torcal 2005; Kostadinova and Levitt 2014).

Moreover, in contrast to the NWW assumption, greater economic competition has not supported political competition or the institutionalization of impersonal rules in political parties worldwide. Rather, personalism is increasing in democracies and authoritarian countries (Kendall-Taylor, Frantz, and Wright 2017). Hungary, Poland, China, Bangladesh, Russia, and Turkey are contemporary examples of increasing personalistic politics. The governance style of former President Donald Trump also indicates threats of personalism in U.S. politics (Frantz et al. 2021). Furthermore, hegemonic political parties in Mexico (Diaz-Cayeros 2013), personalistic political parties in the Philippines (Montinola 2013), and Pakistan (Rehman 2015) show that such political organizations can perpetuate LAO conditions by avoiding political accountability.

The rise of personalism in political parties can further intensify LAO conditions, as it features a fragmented elite coalition, less horizontal accountability, and a weaker rule of law (Rhodes-Purdy and Madrid 2020). The increasing personalization of political parties threatens to undermine the rule of law, traditional elite coalitions, and political accountability. Put differently, personalism in political parties can cause the OAO to regress and prevent the LAO from progressing. In this context, studying personalization in political parties can help to better understand the political settlement that underpins OAO and LAO societies.

In summary, the literature review demonstrates that many academic studies have applied the NWW framework to analyze the development and related socio-economic phenomena. However, there is a lack of scholarly works that critically examine the fundamental elements and characteristics of the NWW social order at length. Thus, this research contributes to the existing NWW-related literature by providing a more comprehensive conceptualization of violence. Besides, the discussion about the role of institutions in driving economic growth is central to both NIE and developmental state literature (Acemoglu and Robinson 2010; Haggard 2003; Bresser-Pereira 2019). The literature review and the introduction of this thesis highlight the dangers of overly emphasizing institutions and resulting in growth-centric developmental state arguments. An increased level of personalization in political organizations can only exacerbate this problem. This thesis also finds an opportunity to contribute to the NIE literature by extending the discussion on political organization with a specific focus on the personalization within a political party. By identifying and addressing a gap in the NIE literature, this thesis offers novel insights and potential avenues for future research. In short, this thesis delves deeper into the complex relationship of violence, personalist politics, and development narrative in

contemporary societies. By doing so, it explores a complex relationship between violence  
perpetration by personalistic politics under the disguise of development narratives.

## CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to introduce and implement various concepts relevant to the proposed research agenda. The original NWW framework views violence as *organized violence* and recognizes that states' dominance over violence capacity organizations is conducive to long-term stability and development. The NWW concept of organized violence entails threats and actions of violence by groups. Again, NWW did not offer a substantial discussion on political parties, despite acknowledging their importance as an institution in society. This chapter first focuses on a comprehensive conceptualization of violence that sheds light on its more complex nature and manifestation in the contemporary world. Next, it discusses personalist patterns in political parties, which have been increasing in both democratic and non-democratic countries.

### **Conceptualizing Violence: Minimalist and Comprehensive Approach**

Violence is an inescapable phenomenon in human history. From Heraclitus, Plato, and Aristotle to Hobbes, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, and Arendt in the modern ages, philosophers and scholars have critically studied violence from different vantage points (Mider 2013; Malešević 2010; Bufacchi 2005). Conceptualizing violence is challenging, as it has many variations, qualities, and consequences (Heitmeyer and Hagan 2003, 3). Different branches of science have studied violence, and as such, its definition can depend on disciplinarian traditions and paradigms (Van der Dennen, 1980). When discussing violence, scholars consider “what type of the use of force, by whom and against whom or what” and how violence manifests itself (Mider 2013, 703).

*A Minimalist Conception of Violence (MCV)* emphasizes the use of forces that causes injury or suffering (Bufacchi 2007; Grundy and Weinstein 1974; Coady 1986). Such discussions on violence also consider using force based on legal and legitimate authority (Hartogs and Artzt



1970; Macfarlane 1974; Taylor 1991; Sederberg 1994). Mider (2013) argued that emphasis on the legality and legitimacy of violence is a restrictive approach to the definition of violence because it considers the legitimate use of violence as a necessity to prevent disorder in society (Grundy and Weinstein 1974).

The definition of violence in the NWW framework focuses on *organized violence* that contains threats and actions of violence by groups (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009, 14). The authors also emphasized the state's ability to prevent the illegitimate use of violence to maintain stability. In their work, the state's consolidated or dispersed control over the legitimate use of violence distinguishes OAO from LAO. As such, the NWW conceptualization of violence is also a form of *political violence* as it entails threats or actions of violence by groups and the state's ability to bring these groups under control (Weiss, Newman, and Abraham 2010, 11-12). While there can be various types of political violence, the NWW concept of violence is concerned with a type of political violence where non-state groups are the principal actors. However, the state can be an actor of violence when it engages with violence against citizens. For example, institutional violence is a type of political violence, which is more directly associated with the state (Riaz 2019, 21). In this type of violence, state or social institutions are used to perpetrate violence. This dimension of state's role in violence is not addressed in the NWW framework.

The NWW conceptualization of a state's capacity to control violence differs from the Weberian approach in theorizing the state. According to the Weberian assumption, the state is a single coercive organization. In contrast, NWW understands the state as an organization of organizations where the state has consolidated control over violence capacity. There is an incentive structure with interlocking political, economic, and social organizations that work to discourage group violence. However, central to both definitions is the state's consolidated

control over the capacity of violence. State's consolidated control over violence is critical, especially when non-state actors threaten the stability and security within the country by enacting violent activities. However, states can also be an actor of violence by engaging in violence against the citizens (Riaz 2019, 17). Therefore, NWW's concept of violence is essentially a *restrictive* or *minimalist* approach emphasizing organized violence and the state's consolidated power over violence capacity. In contrast, a broader definition of violence prioritizes the scope of violation of an individual's physical or mental integrity over the legal basis of the perpetrator's or victim's identity (Mider 2013).

The *Comprehensive Conception of Violence (CCV)* goes beyond physical injuries and incorporates the violence's psychological, structural, and cultural dimensions (Bufacchi 2005; Audi 1971; Gatlung 1969, 1990). This expansive definition considers violence as a violation, which means infringing, encroaching, and interfering with rights or norms (Bufacchi 2005). Garver (1973) theorized that an individual possesses two inalienable rights: rights to the body and rights to autonomy. This expansive view of violence can be difficult to comprehend due to its complex nature. However, it is relevant considering the importance of individual freedom and the right to dignity in modern societies. For example, contemporary Western societies censure actions that cause mental and psychological harm to individuals (such as hate speech), and their political practices and legislation also reflect these disapprovals (Mider 2013). Abusive and humiliating words can affect psychological well-being. So, any activities that undermine individual dignity and freedom could be considered violent if we believe violence is a violation (Degenaar 1980).

Again, the CCV also encompasses the concept of structural and cultural violence. Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung developed these concepts in 1969 and 1990, respectively. In

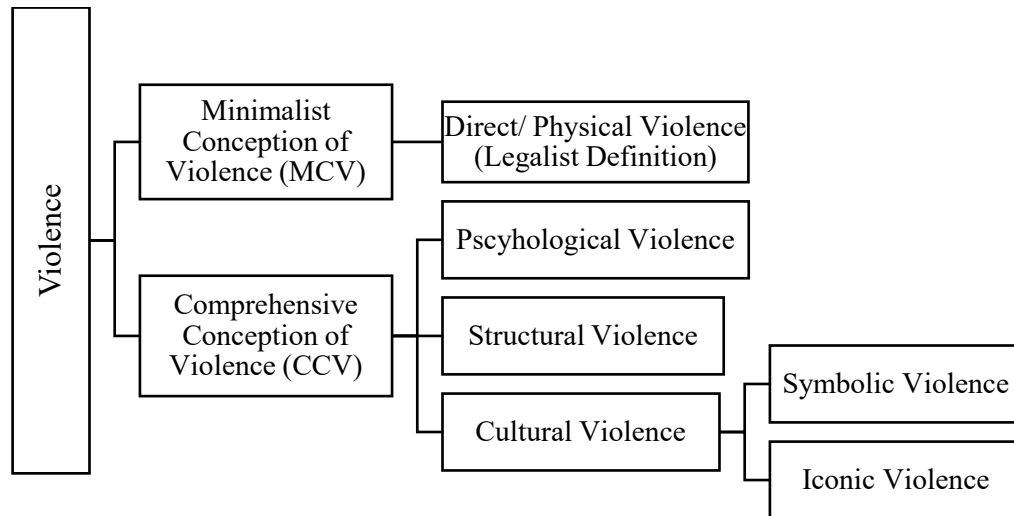
contrast to organized violence, *structural* and *cultural violence* is systemic and not readily discernible. These two concepts are pertinent as this thesis aims to refine the NWW framework with a more nuanced understanding of violence in the contemporary context.

*Structural violence* stems from systemic barriers that obstruct people from accessing political and economic resources. Such barriers can impede individuals from fulfilling fundamental rights and achieving societal equality. In addition, structural violence can cause direct violence by deepening discrimination (Winter and Leighton 2001). In situations concerning structural violence, institutions and social structures also compel people to follow specific patterns (Mider 2013, 705). Structural violence is a type of political violence as it engages institutions to perpetrate violence (Riaz 2019, 21). An example of structural violence is limited access to economic opportunities for all citizens. One of the distinguishing features of LAO and OAO in NWW is the ability of people to form and participate in political and economic organizations. Therefore, the NWW framework should consider the concept of structural violence as it can improve the analysis of the ability to access political and economic resources in LAO and OAO.

Galtung's (1990) concept of *cultural violence* represents actions normalizing physical and structural violence. In other words, cultural violence legitimizes, justifies, or standardizes various acts of direct and structural violence (Mider 2013). There are multiple ways in which cultural violence can legitimize and normalize behaviors, norms, and values. For example, *symbolic violence*, introduced by Bourdieu (2002), is a form of oppressive domination by a group over another group in society (Mamzer 2012). This type of violence includes actions to force specific universal standards by one group over everyone. Bourdieu (2002) identified different mechanisms (e.g., social categorization, language) and institutions (e.g., educational,

and legal) focused on propagating values and legitimizing the existing order in society. Symbolic violence involves an inconspicuous, even informal, or casual, mode of domination, which often operates in everyday politics of life (Topper 2001). For example, disseminating derogatory words targeting any gender, racial or ethnic group to normalize or rationalize their subjugation is a form of symbolic violence. Such type of violence is deeply entrenched in society through a network of institutions. Nevertheless, it remains unacknowledged by many influential theories of institutions (Topper 2001). Again, ideological violence is also very closely related to cultural violence. Ideological violence, a type of political violence, is when a group uses violence to promote a particular social and political agenda (Riaz 2019, 21). For example, if a political party uses violence to disseminate and establish its political agenda in society then it can be considered ideological or cultural violence.

Another significant type of violence in modern times is *iconic violence*, a concept by the Polish author Agnieszka Ogonowska (2004). Iconic violence is a process of intentional construction of audio-visual texts targeted to influence consumers. In the era of digital media and the internet, this concept holds great significance. Iconic violence is not simply a manipulation of opinion. It is a process where the consumer is a passive recipient of specially designed products with specific values and meanings (Mider 2013). Dominant groups can use such mechanisms to propagate norms and legitimize a favorable social order. This process also signifies how an institution, such as the media, can become an instrument of social control (Ogonowska 2004). It is extremely difficult to capture the psychological impact of iconic violence on people. However, such an implicit and imperceptible form of control is relevant now, considering the extent of online and media surveillance by the state and the use of the internet to propagate specific propaganda.



*Figure 1 Conceptualization of Violence: Minimalist and Comprehensive Definition*

### **Manifestation of Violence: Oppressive and Repressive Forms**

One primary focus of the political violence literature is violence committed by the state. Violence by the state can manifest itself either in an *oppressive* or *repressive* form (Beger and Hill 2019). Different types of direct and physical violence, such as torture, cruel punishments, disappearances, executions, and imprisonment, are examples of oppressive violence by the state (Haschke 2017). Some scholars also identify state violence unrelated to political motives as oppressive violence (Bissell et al., 1978). However, most studies on political violence in the past few decades have principally focused on the repressive nature of state violence. deMeritt (2016) defined repression as a form of coercion. States can use force to prevent violence and simultaneously apply force to suppress opposition. Repressive state violence targets political opposition and aims to discourage or deter organized political resistance (Beger and Hill 2019; Bissell et al., 1978; Davenport 2007a; Stohl and Lopez 1984). The state's overt use of force can

be categorized as high-intensity repression instead of more subtle threats of force, which is low-intensity repression (Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Wright 2020).

In Weberian definition, the state has the legitimate authority to exert coercion. According to NWW, in OAO, the state has consolidated power over all organizations with coercive power, and legitimate violence capacity organizations are also under civilian control. In other words, capacities of repression are integral parts of the state and government. The military, police, militia, and other security forces under government control are the usual repressive agents of the state. However, the NWW framework implies that in LAO, organizations or groups outside the state's power can possess repressive capacities.

States can employ *repressive violence* preemptively to dissuade opposition and dissenting voices. As such, ensuring the state's capacity to prevent violence is essential to maintain the country's stability. However, in this process, if a state's cohesive power becomes a tool of violence, it can cause violence in various forms, as discussed under the CCV definition. The state's violence-mitigating capacities must not transform into acts of violations that infringe on citizens' rights and individual freedom. Therefore, the NWW framework must carefully weigh the blurred lines between the state's role as a violence mitigator and perpetrator behind the rationale of maintaining domestic stability.

Apart from threats of direct violence, states or governments can apply various mechanisms of cultural, symbolic, and iconic violence as a form of repression. Media monitoring and internet activity surveillance are examples of such repression. Using digital tools to carry out repression is digital repression. Internet, social media, artificial intelligence technology, and online versions of conventional media outlets are a few examples of digital tools. In addition,

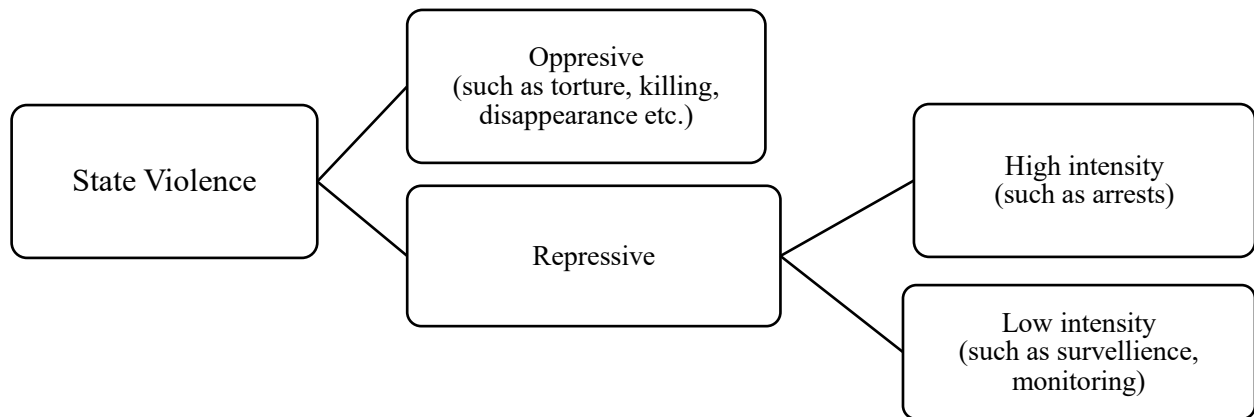
governments, particularly in non-democratic countries, are developing preemptive repressive strategies that reflect the mechanisms of symbolic and iconic violence, such as using social media to disseminate government propaganda.

In fact, digital repression has become the latest tool of repression in authoritarian states (Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Wright 2020). As digital technology evolves, the scope and nature of such repression are also changing. While digital repression is low-intensity repression, it can also lead to high-intensity repression. For example, the government's social media monitoring and internet data tracking can lead to the arrests of political opponents. The scope of digital repression demonstrates that the application of state violence does not need to be direct or physical.

Even though digital tools have joined with the conventional repressive agents of the state, it is also critical for states to establish control over digital spaces. Digital media can cause instability and violence. The expansion of cyber-attacks by international actors indicates the potency of digital tools in creating chaos (Brantly 2017). Moreover, misinformation and disinformation can generate confusion and violent turmoil in society. For instance, social media can instigate violence against individuals or groups. In addition, various kinds of hate speech in digital media can undermine individual dignity and freedom. Therefore, it is also crucial that states maintain sufficient control over digital spaces to prevent violence and instability. The NWW framework, thus, should consider the possibilities of digital technology to create instability in society.

North and his colleagues (2009) discussed how new production technologies transformed human societies ten thousand years ago and created violence mitigation incentives (51-54). Since

the invention of fire, the wheel, the steam engine, and the computer, the expansion of the internet and sophisticated digital technology are the latest and perhaps the most consequential form of technology impacting modern human societies. Therefore, discussing how the manifestation and mitigation of violence can occur in the digital era under the NWW framework is only pertinent.



*Figure 2 Manifestation of State Violence in Oppressive and Repressive (high/low) Mechanisms*

### **Political Parties in Social Order**

NWW chronicled the evolution of political parties in the US, Britain, and France. In this framework, the authors highlighted how Western societies have grappled with a problem for two millennia: “how to constraint a ruler who is above the law?” ( North et al. 2009, 248). Political parties evolved in this gradual process of systemically restraining the ruler/sovereign and minimizing threats of violence from elite factions. The institutional arrangements of competitive political parties impact society’s long-term stability by forming elite agreements. North et al. (2009) accurately observed that fear of factions and intra-elite conflicts are common in both LAO and OAO societies and political parties. If the fear of factions and threats of violence in society contributed to the evolution of political parties, what system manages the fear of factions in a political party? Personalization in a political party can help limit internal factions within the party. Greater power and autonomy of leaders can be useful in streamlining the party’s policy



decisions and implementation. However, a high level of personalization can also create challenges for political parties by undermining intraparty competition as well as the organizational nature of the party.

Since the condition of impersonality is a critical determinant in the organizational structure or institutional arrangement of the NWW concept, it is important to develop a substantial discussion on personalist political parties. Put differently, the discussion on personalist political parties is relevant because the lack of impersonality in political organizations undermines the central NWW condition of impersonality in perpetually lived organizations in the OAO. Establishing the *rule of law* is one of the primary characteristics distinguishing an OAO from an LAO. However, personalization in politics also replaces the rule of law with the rule of man (Rahat and Sheaffer 2007, 65), contradicting the critical NWW conditions for OAO. In this context, a discussion on personalism and personalization of political parties is relevant for an improved understanding of NWW.

### **Personalism, personalization, and personalist political party**

In the history of modern nation-states, political parties have been at the center of political development, making them one of the most consequential institutions in any society. Political parties are durable organizations comprising a group of citizens with similar ideals, interests, or principles (Morese 1896). A high degree of institutionalization and organization is required in a political party to disseminate its ideologies, mobilize citizens, and secure power. The internal organizational strength of political parties can also impact development in the long term (Bizzarro et al. 2018, 276). Academic research on political parties has a long pedigree, focusing on questions of formal structure, leadership and membership in parties, candidate selection, party regulation, and financing (Gauja and Kosiara-Pedersen 2021; Husted, Moufahim, and

Fredriksson 2021). Research also exists on the increasing authority and influence of political leaders (Passarelli 2015; Poguntke and Webb 2005) and trends of leader-centric political activities (McAllister 2007, 2015; Cross and Blais 2012; Zittel 2015; Prusysers and Cross 2016; Marino, Diodati, and Verzichelli 2022), which comprises the broader phenomenon of *personalization of politics* (Cross, Katz, and Pruyzers 2018).

From kingdoms and empires to modern nation-states, personalism has always been present in politics to a varied degree. It is true that, in many aspects, “the personalization of politics is as old and ubiquitous as politics itself” (Holtz-Bacha, Langer, and Merkel 2014). In the first few decades of the twenty-first century, personalism has become one of the most prominent political trends (Rahat and Kening 2018, 263). Personalism in politics can be defined as individual political actors’ high visibility, importance, and prominence (Cross, Katz, and Pruyzers 2018, 3).

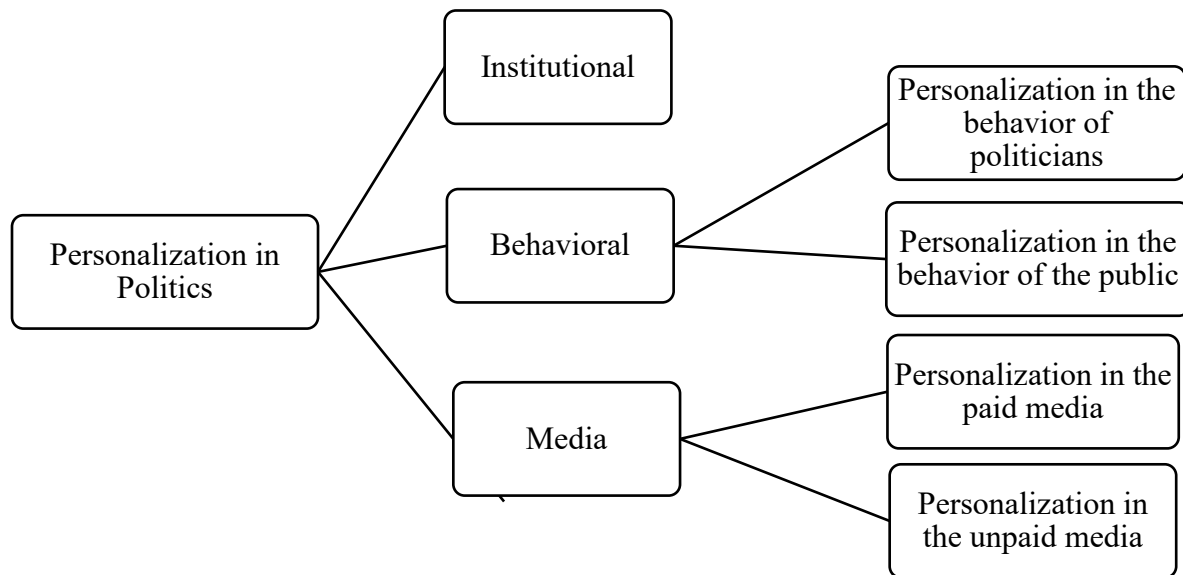
While personalism is a phenomenon, personalization is a process. The personalization of politics is a multidimensional concept (Rahat and Sheaffer 2007; Karvonen 2010; Balmas et al. 2014; Rahat and Kening 2018; Gauja and Kosiara-Pedersen 2021). This thesis identifies personalization as a process in which the prominence of an individual actor expands over time while the primacy of the party declines in the political process (Rahat and Sheaffer 2007, 65; Karoven 2010, 4). Therefore, a political party turns more personalist when the authority and control of one single political leader supplant other senior party elites (Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Li 2022, 920-21). In other words, when a political party undergoes the personalization process, it can be called a *personalist political party*.

Personalism, personalization, and personalist political parties are three distinct terms and concepts. In general, personalism is a situation, while personalization is a gradual process, and when they manifest visibly within a political organization, it can be labeled a personalist political party. However, they essentially indicate one phenomenon where an individual political actor is more influential than other party elites, party members, and even the party institution itself. Therefore, in this thesis, these terms are used interchangeably to discuss political parties under NWW.

Two prominent characteristics of personalist political parties are the presence of a dominant leader and weaker organizational and institutional structures (Kostadinova and Levitt 2014; Kefford and McDonnell 2018). Dominant leadership implies the extensive authority of the leader over the party's mission, decision-making, and management process, which is also considered legitimate by party elites and rank-and-file party members. Again, the leader-centric approach in personalist political parties undermines the deliberative decision-making process and the values of intra-party democracy (Ignazi 2020). As such, personalist parties often lack rules of operation and have an underdeveloped organizational structure.

Personalization in political parties can occur in three ways: institutional, behavioral, and media (Rahat and Sheaffer 2007). These three types of personalization can take two directions: centralized and decentralized. According to Balmas et al. (2014), centralized personalization refers to power flow from the party or cabinet to an individual political actor. In decentralized personalization, power disperses among the political elites within a party. These two routes of personalization can happen concurrently or separately. Wauters et al. (2018) studied these two routes in the case of Belgium and found that centralized personalization is rising while decentralized personalization is decreasing.

Institutional personalization involves adopting rules, mechanisms, and institutions prioritizing individual politicians instead of party groups. Centralized institutional personalization expands the personal authority of a leader (e.g., President, Prime Minister, or top leader) within the party institution. However, with decentralized institutional personalization, the personal influence of individuals increases within an institution (e.g., cabinet or party), and electoral performance centers on individual reputation (Balmas et al. 2014, 38-9). Behavioral personalization highlights the actions of voters and politicians. This indicates voters' tendencies to emphasize individual leaders over parties and politicians' tendencies to focus on personalities and campaigns over party commitments. In other words, it implies a decline in partisan activity and increased individualized political activities.



*Figure 3 Mechanisms of Personalization in Politics, Adapted from Rahat, and Sheafer (2007)*

Media personalization refers to the centrality and higher focus on the individual leader in news coverage compared to the parties, organizations, and institutions. It can be further categorized into unpaid and paid media subtypes. Many scholars have identified the growth of

media, such as newspapers and television, as a significant reason for the personalization of politics in general (Ian 2007; Holtz-Bacha, Langer, and Merkel 2014). In addition, new technologies have compelled political parties to reassess party management and engagement strategies (Iganzi 2017), leading to organizational restructuring to adapt to a digital society.

In centralized unpaid media personalization, the highest political leader (party head, president, or prime minister) receives maximum media coverage. Again, electoral campaigns become more leader-centric instead of the party with centralized paid media personalization. In contrast, with decentralized paid and unpaid personalization, the importance of individual reputation continues to outperform the party. However, candidates and leaders other than the party leaders also receive media coverage. Even though there is no hierarchy among these three types of personalization, media personalization has the potential to significantly influence the other two processes by engaging and shaping public opinion.

These three elements of personalization, institutional, behavioral, and media, together highlight a trend towards the political leader and candidate-focused politics instead of the party, which can impact the organizational nature of the political party (Gauja and Kosiara-Pedersen 2021). In other words, personalization in political parties can weaken a political party's organizational or institutional nature. Highly personalized politics can also subvert the competitive party system (Rahat and Kenig 2018, 262). Personalization is particularly consequential in a democratic political system (Pedersen and Rahat 2021). The potential implications of personalization on political parties have already captured scholarly interest, resulting in extensive academic literature on this topic.

In this context, the party institutionalization concept presented by Bizzarro, Hicken, and Self (2020) is applicable. Personalization can affect a party's institutional and organizational structure by increasing a political leader's influence. This framework helps conceptualize a more nuanced understanding of personalism in political parties across regime types. They defined party institutionalization as

the extent to which parties build stable organizations (routinization), party followers develop lasting connections with the parties, and come to prioritize party interests in addition to their individual short-term interests (value infusion) (3).

This definition helps examine the level of institutionalization in a political party in both democratic and non-democratic regimes. In both types of regimes, political parties can institutionalize similarly by routinizing activities and value infusion. Their conceptual framework is also the basis of VDem's *Party Institutionalization Index*, which this thesis utilizes to analyze personalism in political parties.

Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Li (2022) also developed a framework to measure personalism in the ruling political party. They conceptualized personalist political parties by measuring "the extent to which parties are vehicles to advance leaders' personal political careers such that the leader has more control" (920-21). Using eight qualitative categories (available in Table A in the Appendix), they developed a dataset to empirically measure personalism in the ruling political party of democratic countries. These indicators help examine the gradual expansion of a leader's influence by tracing past experiences at different party levels. The following chapter explains how the party institutionalization index and the qualitative indicators from Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Li (2022) are utilized in this thesis.

## **Summarizing the Theoretical Framework**

In summary, this chapter provides an overview of the theoretical concepts of comprehensive violence and personalist political parties, essential to refining the NWW framework. The conceptualization of violence in the NWW framework is a one-dimensional approach that only accounts for destructive impacts on society. State and non-state actors' capacity to exert violence has grown due to technological advancement. For example, non-state actors can use digital tools to create social, political, and economic instabilities. Thus, states require non-traditional violence-prevention capabilities. States can also utilize digital technology to exert various forms of implicit yet more targeted violence on their citizens. As such, a comprehensive and multidimensional conceptualization of violence is essential to maintain the relevance of the NWW framework in present times.

Personalization in political parties is fundamentally incompatible with the norms of impersonality, which are central to open access order societies. In addition, it can weaken the institutional strength of political organizations, affect the rule of law, and increase threats and actions of violence. In countries with a high degree of centralization of executive power, the personalization of political parties can blur the lines between state and party. The systemic dismantling of check and balance mechanisms to ensure the accountability of the political executive is known as executive aggrandizement (Khaitan 2018). This phenomenon is prevalent in both democracies and non-democracies. Weak institutionalization is connected to personalization of politics and executive aggrandizement (Ufen 2022). Putin in Russia, Orbán in Hungary, Erdogan in Turkey, and Xi in China are a few notable examples where individual leaders have increased their influence, assumed control over collective leadership structures, and undermined mechanisms of executive accountability. Elements of this dual phenomenon can also

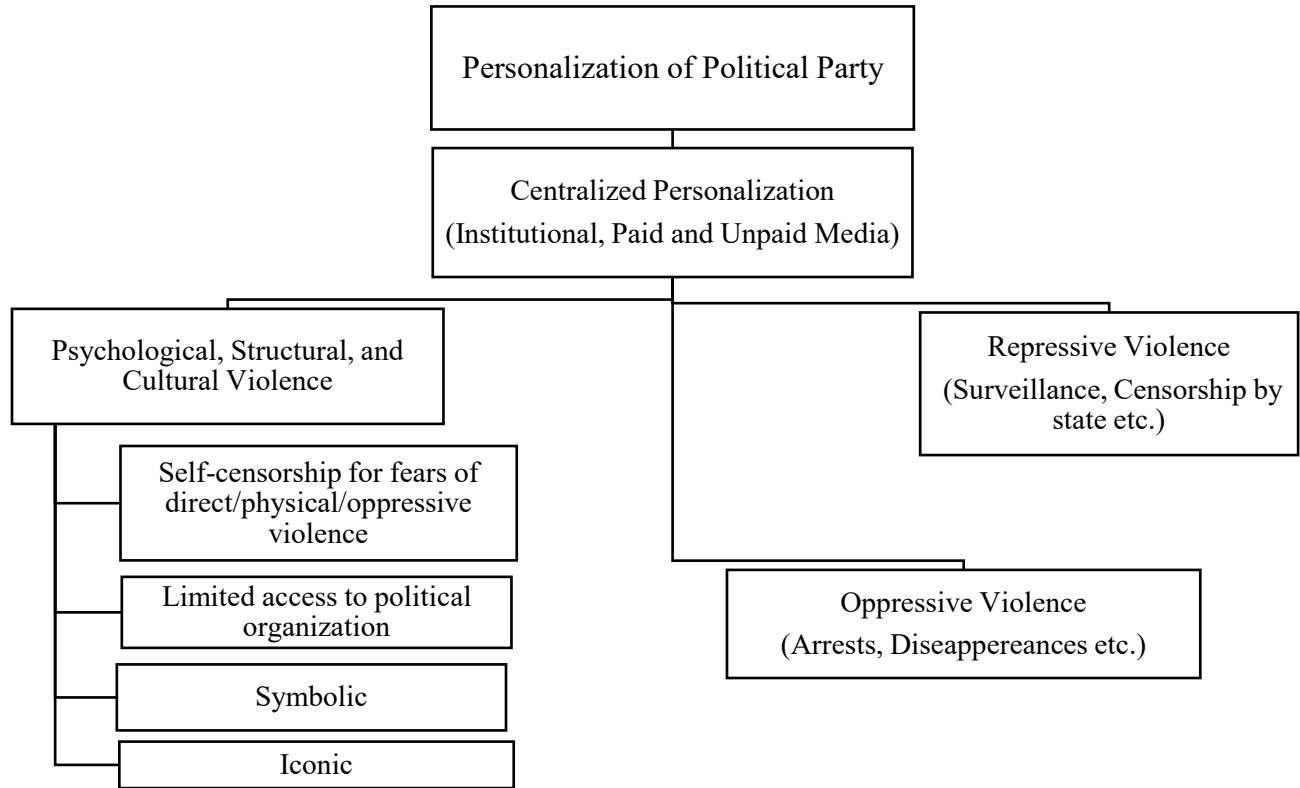
be also found in democratic countries, particularly in presidential systems, like the USA, Philippines, and Indonesia (Froomkin and Shapiro 2021; Bunte and Thompson 2023). Personalization in politics undermines society's progress and takes it back to the original problem of limiting the personal power of an all-powerful leader with institutional checks and balances.

In the original NWW framework, a political party was defined as a part of a complex institutional arrangement that limits societal violence. However, when the comprehensive concept of violence and personalist political parties is considered, we find a more intricate relationship between these two elements. Even though political parties are supposed to limit threats of violence in society, this institution can ironically perpetuate violence through personalist political activities. The centralized institutional personalization and centralized paid and unpaid media personalization in politics reinforce a mechanism of psychological and cultural (symbolic and iconic) violence, accentuating individual political leaders' ideologies and philosophies.

By promoting a personality-centric political culture, centralized institutional and media personalization can create an environment where cultural violence is normalized and justified in pursuing political goals. The growth of digital media has heightened the risk of such violence. This danger is present in both democratic and autocratic countries. However, in non-democratic regimes, the personalization of political parties can have particularly damaging consequences, further exacerbating the manifestation of violence in oppressive and repressive forms. As a result, these personalization processes in non-democratic countries can reinforce the coercive nature of the state and lead to increased violence and repression that undermines rights and



freedom. Figure 04 demonstrates this complex relationship between the personalization of political parties and the manifestation of violence.



*Figure 4 Conceptual Map: Relationship Between Personalization of Political Party and Manifestation of Violence*

## CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To operationalize the concepts from the theoretical framework, this chapter explains the research methods and case selection process for this thesis.

### **Research Methods**

North and his coauthors adopted a qualitative approach with a historical narrative analysis to construct the original conceptual framework on social order. The authors used case study methodology in their subsequent book, *In the Shadow of Violence*, to validate and expand their original argument and offer an understanding of various development problems. Moreover, qualitative methods are also employed in most of the existing literature applying the NWW framework to study the developmental process of different countries. Therefore, consistent with the existing scholarly works, this thesis also uses a *qualitative* design and employs a case study approach to refine the premises of the original framework. The case study method for small N analysis has gained popularity and credibility (Collier 1993) and is considered an established research method in political science. It is particularly useful when a researcher has limited time and resources (Lijphart 1971). Limited time is a key constraint of this thesis; therefore, the case study approach is the most suitable methodology.

One of the significant strengths of the case study approach is the capacity to treat cases holistically by incorporating the contextual complexity of causal relationships (Ragin 1994; Bennet 2004). It is relevant when the research question requires an in-depth discussion of a contemporary phenomenon involving contextual conditions (Yin 2009, 18). This approach allows individual analysis and facilitates a systematic and focused comparison of cases. In LAO and OAO analysis, NWW especially emphasized that societies change constantly and cautioned about the risks of ignoring the underlying logic of the social order in development policies.

The proposed refinements to NWW theory also integrate the philosophy that societies are not static and that social change is a multidimensional process. As such, the subsequent analysis requires a methodology that permits a more focused, systematic, and contextual analysis. Besides, understanding violence and personalist political parties in the contemporary development context is an intricate process. For example, why and how some countries adopt specific violence control measures can depend on the socio-economic or cultural context. Again, personalism in politics is not new; it can exist in both democratic and non-democratic countries. However, the emergence and institutionalization of personalism in political parties can vary from country to country and thus requires a context-specific understanding.

From the economic development viewpoint, the transition from a basic to a mature LAO or an OAO indicates the process of becoming a more open country. The key expected outcome of this developmental journey is achieving increased income and better health of citizens, the rule of law, durable organizations, more equality, and greater political participation (North et al. 2013, 329). However, the circumstances and conditions for achieving these outcomes vary significantly in different countries. Therefore, understanding developmental outcomes in LAO or OAO needs a contextual discussion. For these reasons, a case study approach fulfills the research objectives of this study by exploring different contextual conditions of violence and political developments. Furthermore, the insights generated in this process can be employed to explain the role of violence and personalist political parties in other countries.

The scope of hypothesis testing is comparatively limited in the case study approach but can contribute to theory-building. In his seminal article, Lijphart (1971) discussed how different case study methods contribute to theory-building. For example, theory-infirming cases can highlight the weaknesses of a theory, whereas deviant cases can refine and improve a theory by

proposing modifications. Put differently; the case study method can enhance a theory by accentuating the inconsistencies within the concept. Case studies can “examine the internal workings of a theory in a case or cases, both to test the theory and to develop it further” (Shively 2006, 346). Thus, this approach contributes to the theory continuum by contradicting and reconstructing existing conceptual frameworks (Ridder 2017).

As indicated, this thesis aims to refine the NWW theoretical framework with an exploratory analysis. Studying a few cases can illuminate the contradictions and possible scope of refinement in the NWW theory. As such, this thesis’s case study approach also conforms to the characteristics of Lijphart’s (1971) theory-infirming and deviant case study categories. However, in this approach, researchers often face a tradeoff between selecting a small number of cases for detailed discussion and many cases for inferring broader generalizations (Bennett 2004, 44). This study is aware of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of exploring a small number of cases. To fulfill the research objective of improving the NWW theory, this study focuses on the illustrative case of China.

The illustrative case study is “an intermediary step between hypothesis generation and hypothesis testing” that illuminates a broader theory (Levy 2008, 3). This study is not concerned with structuring a new theoretical framework but contributes to theory-building by identifying gaps in the existing NWW framework and recommending potential adjustments. As such, one illustrative case is selected to substantiate the arguments for proposed adjustments and generate insights that can be employed in future research.

However, this study also faces challenges typical of case-study research methods. The case-study approach is often criticized for selection bias (Achen and Snidal 1989; Bennett 2004;

Geddes 1990). Case selection based on the dependent variable is also generally discouraged (Shively 2017, 101-16; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). In case study methods, purposeful sampling that fit the hypothesis and random case selection can generate serious bias (Levy 2008, 8). But in the case study approach, intentional case selection can be comparatively more appropriate than random sampling as it enables a researcher to choose the most relevant cases (Seawright and Gerring 2008, 295-96; Collier and Mahoney 1996, 89).

Therefore, a careful and theory-guided case selection process is required in a small N-study (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 124–128; Collier et al. 2004; Gerring 2007, 87–88). The limitations of the case study method can be addressed by adopting a transparent process. Crowe et al. (2011) recommended discussing in detail the various steps of case selection, data collection, and interpretation to increase the transparency and trustworthiness of the research. Considering these points, this study applies a purposeful case sampling based on statistical indicators to ensure a transparent case selection process.

### **Case Selection**

NWW avoided statistically analyzing their theory because there are no straightforward measures for the concepts of their framework (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009, 263). For example, the measurement of the rule of law, one of the critical features of the NWW framework, can vary depending on the data source. Freedom House measures the rule of law based on four factors, whereas World Justice Program measures it based on eight factors. Similarly, measuring violence and access to political and economic institutions can also be complex. To study hybrid regime stability in LAOs, Ademmer, Langbein, and Borzel (2019) measured political access with elections, civil liberties, corruption, and horizontal accountability of state institutions. They assessed economic access based on market-enhancing institutions,

capital, privatization, interest groups, and trade liberalization. While these measurement indicators were useful in operationalizing variables and look at their effects on hybrid regime stability in LAOs, this is not an exhaustive list for measuring political and economic access. As such, it is incredibly challenging to design an all-inclusive list of indicators that measure the concepts of NWW.

Considering these challenges and data availability, this thesis utilizes data from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank (WB), Varieties of Democracy (VDem), Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), and Digital Society Project (DSP) to collect statistical information for the purpose of case selection. Data were collected from 2010 to 2019. As explained in the research objectives, this thesis aims to reassess the NWW theory since it was introduced in 2009, considering the changes in the world in the last decade. Again, the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant economic changes, the full extent of which is yet to be determined. As such, the period for data collection started in 2010 and ended in 2019. Besides, longitudinal data also helps provide a more coherent understanding of the changes in the indicators. This thesis considers the following measurement indicators for case selection: Human Development Index (HDI), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (current USD), stateness, the potential of violence using digital tools, and transformation of democracy, economy, and governance status.

The first step of the case selection process involved identifying countries with high developmental outcomes. Originally, NWW used GDP per capita to demonstrate economic development in OAOs. GDP per capita is a widely accepted measure of economic development. However, the one-dimensional focus on economic output fails to capture the improvement of people's lives. Individual well-being does not only depend on income. In an open, free society,

the institutions should systematically maintain and promote freedom of choice. An absence of restrictions to access different political and economic resources is inadequate to assess OAO/LAO typology. Equality and equity of opportunities for people to pursue their individual choices could lead to different outcomes in real life. Equity of freedom and opportunities enable the capabilities of people from the periphery and empower them by strengthening their human agency. Therefore, this thesis prioritizes HDI as an alternative indicator to assess economic and social development. HDI is a composite index that measures the quality of life from 0 to 1. Countries scoring closer to 1 indicate a high standard of living. This study first selects countries that scored above 0.7, indicating *high* living standards. The objective of this thesis is to refine the NWW framework, whose premise explores the context of why some countries develop while others do not. For this reason, this thesis first utilizes the development indicators for the case selection process.

Again, the BTI database was used as it offers a wide-ranging indicator to measure changes in democracy, economy, and governance. A detailed list of BTI indicators, including the sub-categories, is provided in the Appendix (Table A). BTI scoring scale ranges from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates the lowest and 10 shows the highest value. The BTI indicator on democracy transformation includes the rule of law, political and social integration, stateness, and political participation. These factors provide a more comprehensive idea of a country's political openness and access to political resources. The stateness indicator from BTI's democracy index is also considered separately for this study. BTI defines stateness as the extent of a state's legitimacy and internal cohesion in terms of state identity, monopoly over the use of force, and basic administration. This definition aptly represents the central NWW premise about the state's capability to control violence and the Weberian definition of the state.

According to BTI, in countries with scores 6 to 8, the state's monopoly over violence exists on principle with some group challenges. In countries with scores of 9 to 10, the state has complete control over violence within the territory. During case selection, the threshold value for stateness was at least 6, as scores below that indicate more dispersed control of the state over the violence capacity organizations.

Again, the NWW framework focuses on organized violence and control of the state over violent capacity organizations. But digital tools can also incite violence and disability in a country. Therefore, modern states also require control over such non-traditional medium of violence to ensure societal stability. In this context, for the purpose of case selection, this thesis examined the use of social media to organize offline violence using the DSP dataset. It categorizes incidents of offline violence with nominal values 0, 1, and 2, which respectively refer to frequently, sometimes, and no occurrence of offline violence using social media.

Again, BTI's economy transformation index is helpful as it considers private property rights, market and competition, and monetary and fiscal stability. Consideration of property rights and market economy competition is central to the economic access feature of the NWW framework. This index also includes factors like environmental and educational sustainability and levels of social development. The levels of social development indicate if the economic development outcomes create freedom of choice for citizens.

Furthermore, the governance transformation index measures civil society participation within the country, state efficiency of different policy formulation and implementations, administrative structural constraints, and level of international cooperation. This is important as it reflects the capability of the state to drive political and economic governance. It indicates the



political actors' ability to undertake effective development policies and conduct a market-oriented economy. The governance transformation index can help LAOs to transition to OAO or OAOs to maintain the open access order features.

Based on these considerations, this thesis selects *China* as an illustrative case. Table 03 indicates the average HDI and GDP per capita from 2010 to 2019. The HDI scores indicate that China maintained a high standard of living for a decade. The GDP per capita was included to demonstrate the country's development status using a traditional economic growth indicator. Based on the World Bank categorization, China is an *upper-middle-income* country. As such, in theory, China exhibits the characteristics of development, in both traditional and expansive terms, and high living standards.

Table 03 Case Selection Indicators for China (Average from 2010-19)	
Category	Value/Score
HDI	0.7279
GDP per capita (current USD)	7609.883735
Stateness	8.8
Use of social media to organize offline violence	1
Democracy Transformation Status	3.308
Economy Transformation Status	6.652
Governance Transformation Status	5.038

The stateness indicator shows that the Chinese state has high control over violence. It also indicates relatively stronger administrative and bureaucratic cohesion in China, which also means the country has successfully maintained *stability* within this period. However, the DSP indicator shows that, from 2010 to 2019, there were few cases in which social media was used to

organize offline violence. Thus, the Chinese state might not have absolute control over non-traditional violence media. Again, the economic and governance transformation index scores indicate that China still needs to improve economic outcomes for its citizens and administer development policies. It also shows that regardless of continued stability and higher control over violence, China is yet to perform strongly in economic and governance indicators. Therefore, the empirical indicators provide a mixed picture of China from the NWW perspective. In other words, the case of China illustrates that understanding stability, violence control, and development using the NWW framework can be complex in practice.

### **The Curious Case of China: Contextual Rationale for Case Selection**

Statistical indicators played a major role in choosing the illustrative case for this thesis. Countries were listed and filtered based on empirical information that corresponds to the NWW framework's social order characteristics. However, it is necessary to clarify further the contextual reasons for selecting China as an illustrative case.

Firstly, the statistical indicators discussed in the last section clearly demonstrate that the application of NWW social order characteristics is complicated in the case of China. Therefore, it is challenging to categorize China as an LAO or OAO. Considering how NWW conceptualized the condition of double balance in the framework further complicate the case of China. North et al. (2009) argued that "open access in either economics or politics can be sustained only by the double balance of open access in both systems, and open access requires that a large share of individuals be able to form organizations at will" (231). China is a one-party state, meaning a group of citizens cannot form a political organization at will, directly contradicting the NWW assumption. However, despite the limited political access, we see from the empirical indicators that the country has high stability and control over violence.

Moreover, the meteoric economic development of China is recognized in academic works and public discourse. The economic and development indicators show China's continued growth despite lacking open access in the area of politics. , Therefore, the dynamics of open economic access and limited political access in China contradict the NWW assumption of double balance, making it an interesting case to study. Besides, there has been much scholarly research to understand the developmental miracle of China, but there has been no substantial academic work studying China from the NWW perspective.

Studying China is also relevant considering its increasing prominence in the international arena and its evolving political landscape, identifiable by a combination of authoritarianism and economic growth. In particular, the personalization of politics in China under the Communist Party of China (CCP) has been a crucial feature of this political landscape, with significant implications for the country's social, political, and economic stability. However, most works on the personalization of politics have primarily focused on democratic countries. While some academic research acknowledges the similarities of personalization processes in democratic and autocratic regimes, there is an opportunity to expand the discussion on this topic by focusing on personalization in the CCP.

Besides, China's increasing global influence means it can export its governance and political model to other countries. China has touted its idea of 'democracy' (State Council of China 2021), 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' or 'Asian capitalism' (Osokina et al. 2020), whichever they perceived fitting to distinguish an ideological uniqueness in the face of a West-inclined liberal democratic hegemony. The Chinese concept of social order prioritizes social harmony and stability. However, social stability and economic growth must not supersede individual freedom and liberty, either in the physical or digital sphere. Therefore, by examining

how the personalization process in the CCP has led to violence (e.g., structural, cultural, and iconic), it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the political landscape of one of the world's most influential nations and simultaneously improve the core concepts of NWW framework. The next section of this chapter explains how the concepts discussed in the previous chapter are operationalized to analyze China's illustrative case.

### **Comprehensive Conception of Violence (CCV) for a Revised NWW Framework**

A revised NWW framework needs to reconceptualize violence by incorporating the comprehensive definition of violence in the context of emerging digital technologies. States can mitigate violence with digital tools and simultaneously execute violence with the same tools. In other words, a state can both be a mitigator and a perpetrator of violence. As such, it is dangerous to emphasize the digital violence prevention capabilities of the state without considering the impacts of digital repression. Repressive manifestation of state violence with digital tools can involve various forms of violations discussed under the CCV definition. The expansion of digital media increases the scope of cultural violence (symbolic and iconic) by disseminating propaganda, direct violence with acts or threats of arrest and other forms of intimidation, and psychological violence by instilling self-censorship practices with fear and intimidation of surveillance.

The literature on the state's digital repression capabilities is also developing as digital technology evolves. Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, Wright (2020), and Feldstein (2021) used data from the Digital Society Project (DSP) to construct the Digital Repression Index for their studies. Following examples from their models and using DSP data, this study critically examines the violence capacity of the state using digital tools by constructing a set of indicators.

Firstly, DSP data helps assess the state’s capacity to prevent violence using digital tools indicators on cyber security and the government’s ability to shut, filter, and regulate the internet. In extreme circumstances, the government might need to shut down the internet to limit the spread of violence. Secondly, the digital violence capability of the state can be examined from both the repression and CCV perspective. The digital repression of the state can be measured through a government’s censorship, monitoring, and filtering of social media in practice. Third, the government’s ability to perpetrate direct, symbolic, and iconic violence can be assessed with arrests for political content and dissemination of false information by the party or government. Table 04 summarizes the various measurement indicators employed in this study to operationalize the CCV definition within the NWW framework.

Table 04: Digital Capacity and Digital Violence Indicators		
Digital Capacity	Digital Violence	
	Repressive Violence	Other Types of Violence (Direct, Iconic and Symbolic)
Government cyber security capacity	Government social media censorship in practice	Government dissemination of false information on domestic
Government Internet shut down capacity	Government social media monitoring	Party dissemination of false information on domestic
Government Internet filtering capacity	Government social media shut down in practice	Online media perspectives
Government capacity to regulate online content	Government Internet shutdown in practice	Online media fractionalization
	Government Internet filtering in practice	Arrests for political content
	Government social media alternatives	

## **Personalist Political Party for a Revised NWW Framework**

A second area in which this thesis aims to improve the NWW theory is by situating personalist political parties within the social order. The comparative party literature is extensive, and it has four major subfields: party leadership selection, candidate nomination, party membership, and party regulation (Gauja and Kosiara-Pedersen 2021, 29). Personalization in politics is an intricate concept to measure. Considering the extent of the topic and associated measurement challenges, this thesis identified VDem's Party Institutionalization Index as the most suitable framework for operationalizing the concept of a personalist political party.

VDem's index has two dimensions that measure the degree of routinization in a party and the extent to which voters and party elites value the party and its program (Bizzaro, Hicken, and Self 2020, 2). VDem's index has several categories of indicators, but this thesis only uses the party personalization and candidate selection indicators due to the limited scope of the research. The data for these two indicators have been collected from VDem's dataset. VDem defines personalization as the degree to which a party becomes a vehicle for one individual's personal will and priorities (Lindberg et al. 2022, 35). As such, this indicator is a straightforward measurement of personalization in a political party, making it a helpful indicator to achieve the objectives of this research. VDem scores range from 0 to 4. A score of 4 indicates that the party focuses entirely on the personal will of one individual leader, and a score of 0 means that the party is not focused on the leader's personal priorities and will.

On the other hand, VDem defines candidate selection as the party's process of deciding on candidates for the national legislative elections (Lindberg et al. 2022, 34-5). The rules in a political party for candidate selection reflect the organizational culture of the party (Gauja and Kosiara-Pedersen 2021, 31). VDem scores for candidate nominations range from 0 to 4. In this

case, 0 means that the party leader unilaterally decides the candidate selection, and a score of 4 shows that registered voters decide the candidates. This index is helpful because its conceptualization of party personalization is largely consistent with the existing literature.

For example, candidate selection and party leadership are two major indicators of intra-party democracy (Cross and Katz, 2013; Bolin et al., 2017; Gauja and Kosiara-Pedersen 2021). Candidate selection is one of the principal functions of a political party through which the party endorses official election candidates. The candidate selection process reflects the party's organizational culture and allows the rank-and-file members to exercise influence in the party (Cross 2008, 598). As a result, this process reflects intraparty politics and the personalization level in a political party (Hazan and Rahat 2010; Marino, Diodati, and Verzichelli 2022).

Again, much comparative research on this topic has examined the organizational context and reform initiatives of party leadership selection. Personalization of politics is one of the central factors in reforming the party leadership selection process (Gauja and Kosiara-Pedersen 2021). As such, there appears to be a connection between the personalization of politics and recent changes in the party leadership selection process in CCP. This thesis relies on the qualitative indicators developed by Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Li (2022) to assess the personalization of politics in party leadership. They used ten categories of questions in empirically evaluating the ruling personalist political party. These questions (available in Table B in the Appendix) illustrate the expansion of the influence of a political leader in the party by tracing their gradual progression in party politics. Therefore, this indicator set is useful for assessing the impact of personalization in party leadership. These indicators' qualitative and descriptive information has been collected from various secondary sources, such as newspaper articles and scholarly papers.

## CHAPTER V: CASE STUDY OF CHINA

This chapter explores the comprehensive concepts of violence and the personalization of political parties within China. The first section of the chapter discusses the various mechanisms of comprehensive violence and their manifestations. The second section explores the increasing personalization trend within the Communist Party of China (CCP). The third section provides an overview of how these two concepts interact with one another within the context of the NWW framework.

### **China: A Brief Context of the Case**

China is one of the world's largest and most populous countries with a complex political, economic, and cultural landscape. The country has a rich history and culture spanning over several millennia. The People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949. Constitutionally China is a socialist state under the leadership of the CCP. Its unique blend of communist politics and capitalist economics has resulted in a remarkable transformation in recent decades, propelling it to become one of the world's largest economies and global powerhouses. From 2010 to 2019, China's average GDP per capita was \$7609.88, and its HDI scored 0.7279, indicating high economic growth in both traditional and expansive economic measurement frameworks.

During the same period, the average BTI score on Stateness was 8.8, which suggests strong internal cohesion within the country regarding state identity, monopoly of the use of force, and basic administration. Additionally, at the same time-frame, China spent an average of 1.72% of its GDP after military expenditures, which means the state spends substantial resources for maintaining control over violence capacity (SIPRI). According to the Lowy Institute's Asia Power Index (2019), China ranks third globally in terms of resilience which evaluates the

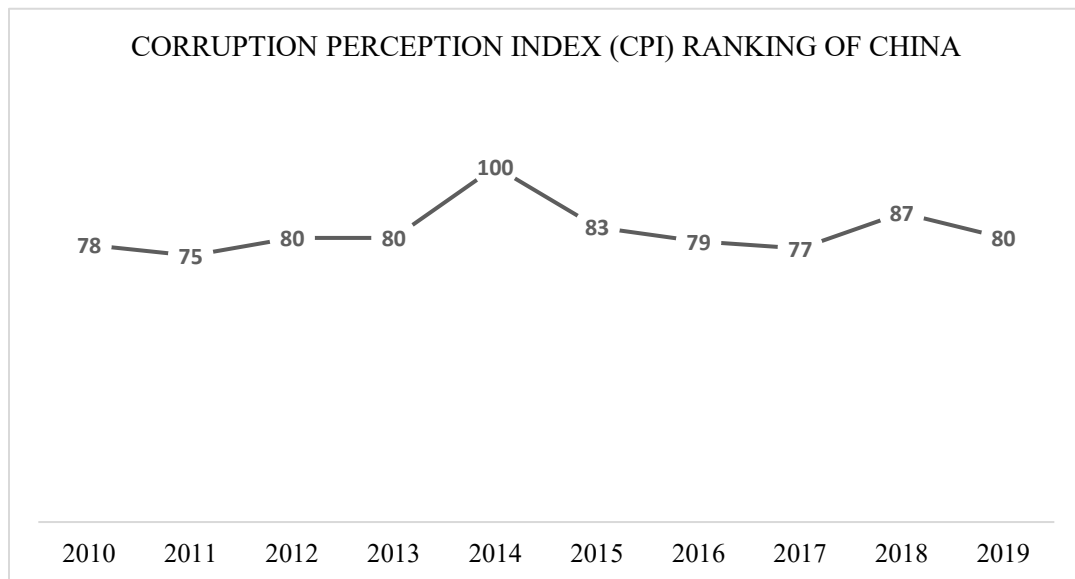


capacity to deter real or potential threats to state stability. The principal military force of China, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), is a military wing of the CCP. This status of the PLA under CCP signifies that the military is under civilian control. As such, China exhibits some OAO characteristics regarding the state's robust control over violence capacity, and civilian control over the military.

However, China simultaneously demonstrates LAO characteristics. According to World Justice Project (WJP), from 2015 to 2019, China's average rule of law score was 0.4875. A WJP score closer to 0 indicates a weaker rule of law in China. The extent of access to political and economic organizations also had some limitations. As a one-party state, the freedom to establish new political organizations is limited in China. The membership of the Chinese Communist Party is also very selective, which is discussed in more detail in section 5.3.1, indicating limited access to participate in political organizations.

Compared to other developed economies, the contemporary Chinese economy features a strong regulatory presence of the state, accompanied by the *invisible hand* of the CCP. The market is expected to serve the overarching goals of party and state, resulting in a form of *party-state capitalism* (Pearson, Rithmire, and Tsai 2023). In 2019, according to the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, China ranked 32<sup>nd</sup>. This suggests that the country's laws, regulations, and institutional arrangements are not conducive to starting a business. Despite the challenges, China has sustained economic growth, prompting Bai, Hsieh, and Song (2014) to label the institutional arrangement as *Crony Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics* because entrepreneurs must cultivate special relationships with political leaders to succeed with their business ventures.

CCP leaders who can boost local economic growth are rewarded with promotion, which motivates them to support entrepreneurial activities. However, this approach also results in uneven distribution of public resources, resulting in pervasive corruption and increased scope for patron-client relationships among business owners and political leaders. From 2010 to 2019, China consistently performed poorly in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI). In 2018, President Xi launched an anti-corruption campaign. However, many experts argue that this campaign targeted entrepreneurs perceived to have accumulated too much wealth or influence independent of the party (Feng 2021).

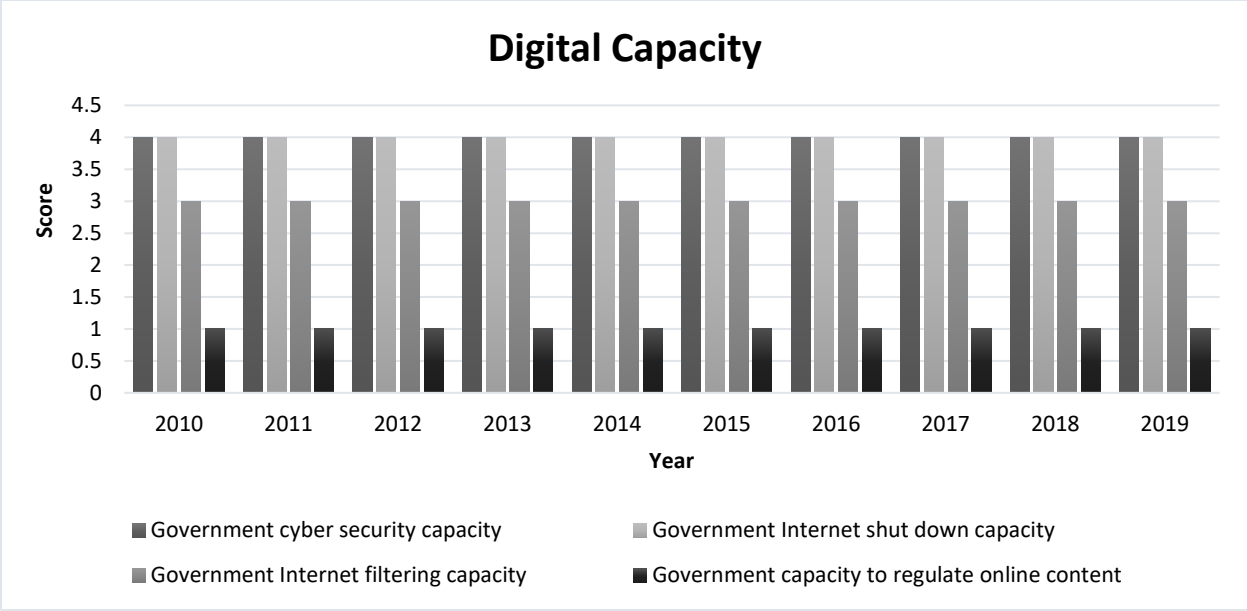


*Figure 5 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) Ranking of China*

Therefore, despite the continuous high economic growth, China exhibits a mixed picture from the viewpoint of NWW social order characteristics. It satisfies a few LAO and OAO conditions, situating it as a mature LAO in the NWW social order spectrum.

## **State of Violence in China**

China has one of the most advanced militaries in the world. According to the Lowy Institute's Asia Power Index (2019), China ranked second globally in military capability. It signifies the country's conventional military strength, such as the size of military and paramilitary forces, military expenses, possession of sophisticated weaponry, and asymmetric tactical and strategic instruments like offensive and defensive cyber capabilities. Together these military strengths are critical for a modern nation-state to maintain internal stability and prevent external attacks. However, the scope of violence has increased with the expansion of digital platforms and tools. State and non-state actors can utilize these tools to act violently. In this context, the Chinese state has invested in expanding its capacity to prevent violence with digital technology. Figure 06 indicates the digital capacity of the government in China, where a score of 0 indicates a lack of government capacity. In contrast, a score of 4 indicates maximum capacity in the digital sphere. The Chinese government possesses a remarkably high capacity to combat sophisticated cyber-attacks and, if necessary, shut down all forms of domestic internet access. Since the 1990s, China has gradually expanded its cyber capabilities to confront domestic or external conflicts.



*Figure 6 Digital Capacity Assessment of China Based on DSP Data*

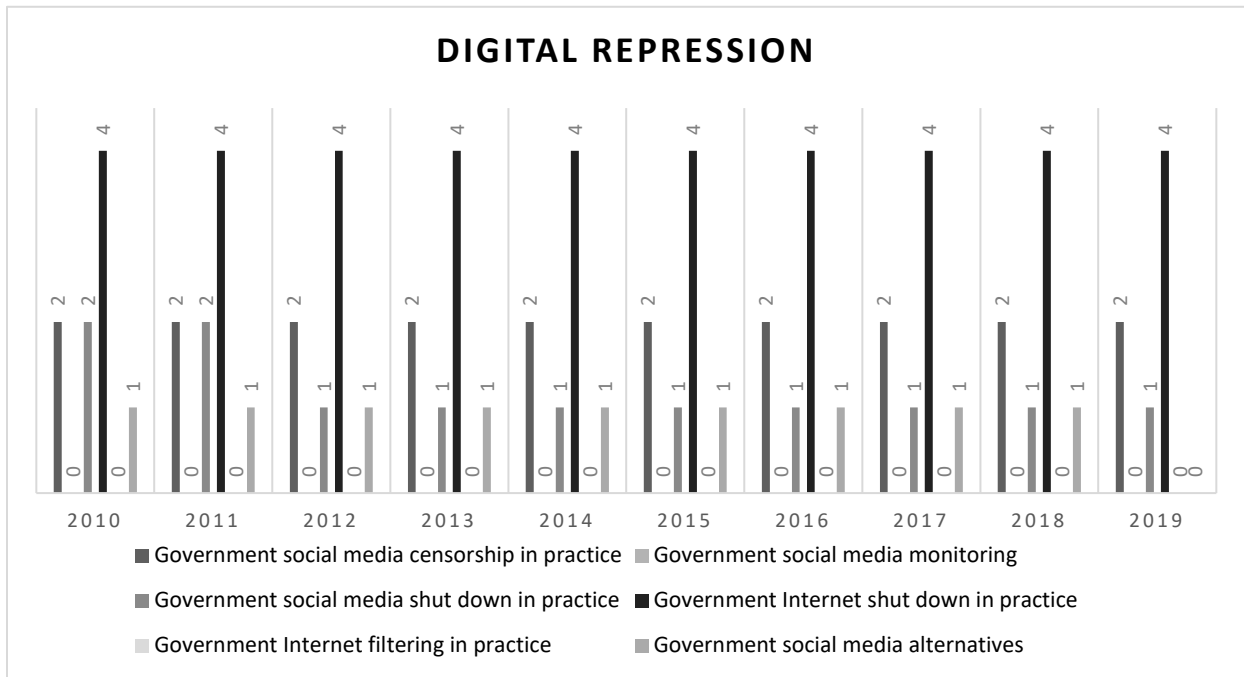
One of the principal objectives of China’s most recent military strategy is improving the state’s control over cyber infrastructure to maintain national security and social stability (Lyu 2019). China also aims to enhance military capabilities by incorporating sophisticated digital technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI) (Kania 2019). In fact, AI-integration in China has gone beyond military capabilities, so much so that it is often called the “surveillance state” that systematically collects citizens’ information. This ongoing mass surveillance effort continues the CCP’s “mass defense, mass rule” policy, combining surveillance by formal security apparatus with informal public participation for societal stability and security (Atha et al. 2020). Integrating powerful surveillance technologies to maintain stability and security directly manifests President Xi Jinping’s national security ideas (Drinhausen and Legarda 2022). Since assuming power, Xi has overseen a gradual centralization of control over digital spaces. In this process, Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission (CCAC) was established in 2018 to streamline overall internet monitoring activities. CCAC, chaired by Xi, was established, which supervises

cyberspace security, internet content management, and news reporting and approves online content-related businesses (Horsely 2022).

The continued investments in developing cyberinfrastructure have made China one of the cyber superpowers globally. According to the National Cyber Power Index (NCPI), in 2022, China ranked second in overall digital capabilities. DSP data in Figure 05 shows that, from 2010 to 2019, China scored 4 in cyber security and internet shutdown capacity, which means the government has adequate resources to counter sophisticated cyber-attacks. It can shut down almost all kinds of domestic internet access. A score of 3 in internet filtering capacity means the government can block any sites. However, while the government has a very high internet filtering capacity, the fourth indicator in Figure 05 shows that the government has inadequate staff and resources to regulate online content. A score of 1 indicates the government has limited resources to regulate. So, China is more adept in preemptive monitoring and surveillance in digital spaces. Therefore, China can still develop monitoring capacities of digital spaces to prevent violence and ensure stability.

On the other hand, Figure 07 demonstrates the digital repression capabilities of the Chinese government using DSP data. China has one of the world's most sophisticated internet censorship infrastructures, which is more commonly known as the *Great Firewall*. Although China's internet and digital media were always under strict government control, it has increased significantly in the past decade (Economy 2018). Figure 07 shows that, from 2010 to 2019, China scored 2 in social media censorship in practice indicator, meaning the government successfully censors a significant portion of political content on social media platforms. During the same period, it scored 0 in social media monitoring, which indicates that the government virtually surveils all social media content. A score of 2 in social media shut down in practice

means that the Chinese government sometimes shuts down social media during this period. However, a score of 4 in internet shut down in practice means government rarely prohibits domestic access to the internet.



*Figure 7 Evaluating Digital Repression in China Based on DSP Data*

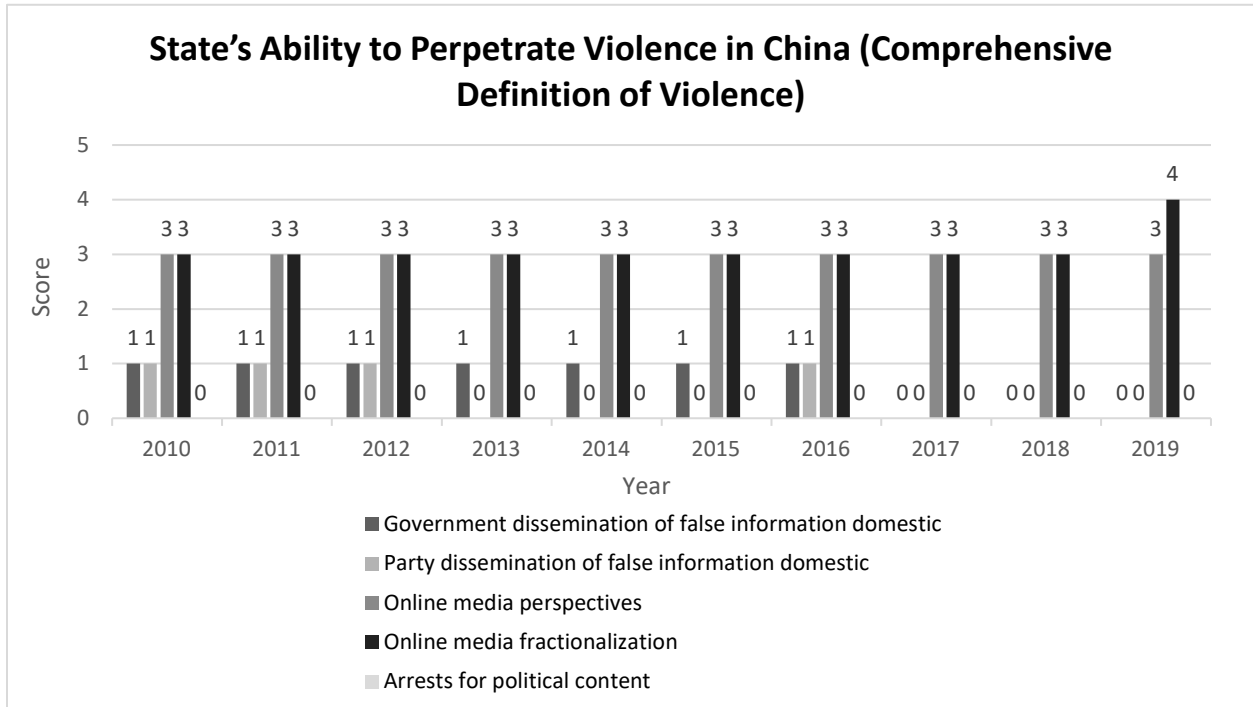
Even though the government does not shut down domestic internet, it can shut down websites and other digital access platforms at any time. In the first three weeks of 2019, the Chinese government shutdown 700 websites and 900 mobile apps (Polyakova and Meserole 2019, 3). Figure 07 shows that China scored 0 in the fifth indicator on the government’s internet filtering in practice. It means it is a regular practice for the government to remove online political content, except for pro-government content. Therefore, the Chinese government evidently surveils nearly all content on social media and executes a wide range of censorship to control political content in social media and online platforms. Figure 07 also shows that from 2010 to 2019, China scored 0 in the government social media alternative indicator, meaning that

essentially all social media uses took place under state-controlled platforms. In China, there is no alternative social media platform outside state control. For example, foreign social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are not allowed in China.

China cultivated the home-grown digital infrastructure and industry systemically, enabling the government's unparalleled digital monitoring and censorship capacity (Tufekci 2017, 238). Again, the fourth indicator shows that although the Chinese government does not typically interfere with domestic access, it almost always removes political content, except for pro-government sites. The government is particularly concerned about censoring social media content that can prompt collective action. An analysis of social media posts during the Hong Kong movement found that while social media posts criticizing the party or government were allowed, any posts with the potential to organize collective action were quickly removed (Tufekci 2017, 235). Such actions show how the government limits dissent and considers it a threat to stability. Altogether, they indicate the highly repressive nature of digital platforms, which allows virtually no freedom for citizens to voice their dissatisfactions or disagreements with the government.

Figure 08 below portrays the capabilities of the Chinese government to perpetrate violence by disseminating party or state-approved ideas and information. According to DSP data, in Figure 08, China scored 1 in the first two indicators for disseminating of false information by government and party. A score of 1 means that the government and party often spread incorrect information among the domestic population. Therefore, the government, party (CCP), and their agents regularly use social media to disseminate false information on critical political issues to influence public opinion. A 2016 study from Harvard University reported that the Chinese government posts and fabricates about 448 million comments annually on social media

(Economy 2018). The government recruits paid online commentators, known as “Fifty Cent Party,” as they receive fifty cents of RMB (renminbi) for each post, to steer online conversations in government-approved directions (Hsing 2014, 132).



*Figure 8 State's Ability to Perpetrate Violence in China (Comprehensive Definition of Violence) Based on DSP Data*

The government also engages employees to post targeted content or posts to distract public attention from critical issues on social media platforms (Tufekci 2017, 238). The third and fourth indicators show that while major online media allows different perspectives, they present mainly the same narrative on political issues, which are consistent with the dominant ideology of the state. These activities represent ideological, cultural, symbolic, and iconic violence, propagating particular norms and behavioral patterns that strengthen the existing social order. Cyber power and state security in China have an ideological dimension that attaches great importance to mobilizing public support for the party's agenda.



In fact, China has a long history of imposing censorship to safeguard the CCP's ideological hegemony, such as literary and self-censorship (Link 2000). Hladíková (2021) argued that such censorship targeted promoting CCP's meta-discourse of 'social harmony' and 'stability' and was characterized by persistent psychological pressure and self-censorship. Such censorship and promoting CCP-approved values have continued to the present day. The state has actively promoted a discourse where patriotic citizens refrain from criticizing the Chinese Communist Party's agenda and top leadership (Gregory 2018). From 2012 to 2014, China introduced a centralized institutional framework to restructure Internet governance and digital communications (Creemers 2017).

In 2013, the government introduced "Seven Baselines" to constrain the nature of online content, which led to the deletion of social media accounts that did not conform to the rules (Economy 2018). The continued control over content and promotion of specific behavioral patterns have noticeably shaped the behaviors of Chinese citizens. For example, Chinese author Fang Fang faced heavy criticism from fellow citizens for publishing a book internationally during the COVID-19 outbreak (Wang 2020). Interestingly, Fang did not oppose the government or party, but many citizens commenting on social media found her work tarnishing the national image. Such reactions indicate the outcomes of decades-long promotion and normalization of specific behavioral norms in digital media by the state. Lastly, the fifth indicator, presented in Figure 07, demonstrates that citizens will likely to be arrested if they post political content that opposes the government and its policies. It shows that digital repression strategies can cause other forms of direct violence against citizens. Amnesty International (2022) documented stories of several human rights activists facing torture and unfair trials, who were arrested, had unfair trials, and were tortured for "subverting state power" when they only critiqued President Xi or

government policies over corruption and sexual harassment. This shows the dangers of expressing opinions against the state and leaders. Such threats of direct violence propagates a culture of fear that can lead to increased self-censorship.

In summary, the Chinese state has a high capacity to control digital media to prevent violence in the country. China has one of the largest militaries in the world. Apart from traditional military strength and cohesive state organization, it has an edge in digital security. As such, China demonstrates strong capabilities even with a refined conceptualization of violence that includes the state's ability to prevent violence through digital media. However, under the refined NWW theory, we also see the threats of the state's substantial control over the digital platform. China has a powerful capacity to perpetrate repression and violence on its citizens. The government's activities can undermine the dignity and freedom of individuals. The state actively propagates CCP-approved ideologies and penalizes any dissent. From the minimalist conceptualization of violence, such penalties indicate the state's ability to perpetrate direct and physical violence.

The state promotes acceptable behavioral norms in digital platforms that favor the government and CCP under the façade of social harmony, security concerns, and nationalist interests. The powerful surveillance culture also instills self-censorship practices. From a comprehensive perspective of violence, this indicates the state's capacity to commit psychological violence and other forms of symbolic and iconic violence. These types of violent acts through digital tools can also result in structural violence. As such, a comprehensive understanding of violence provides a more nuanced understanding of stability and economic development. Such an understanding also helps identify the contradictions within the social order concept in the NWW by highlighting how the state can use the tools to mitigate violence to

violate citizens' rights, freedom, and exercise various types of direct, psychological, and cultural violence.

## **Personalism in Political Party in China**

### **Introduction to the Chinese Communist Party**

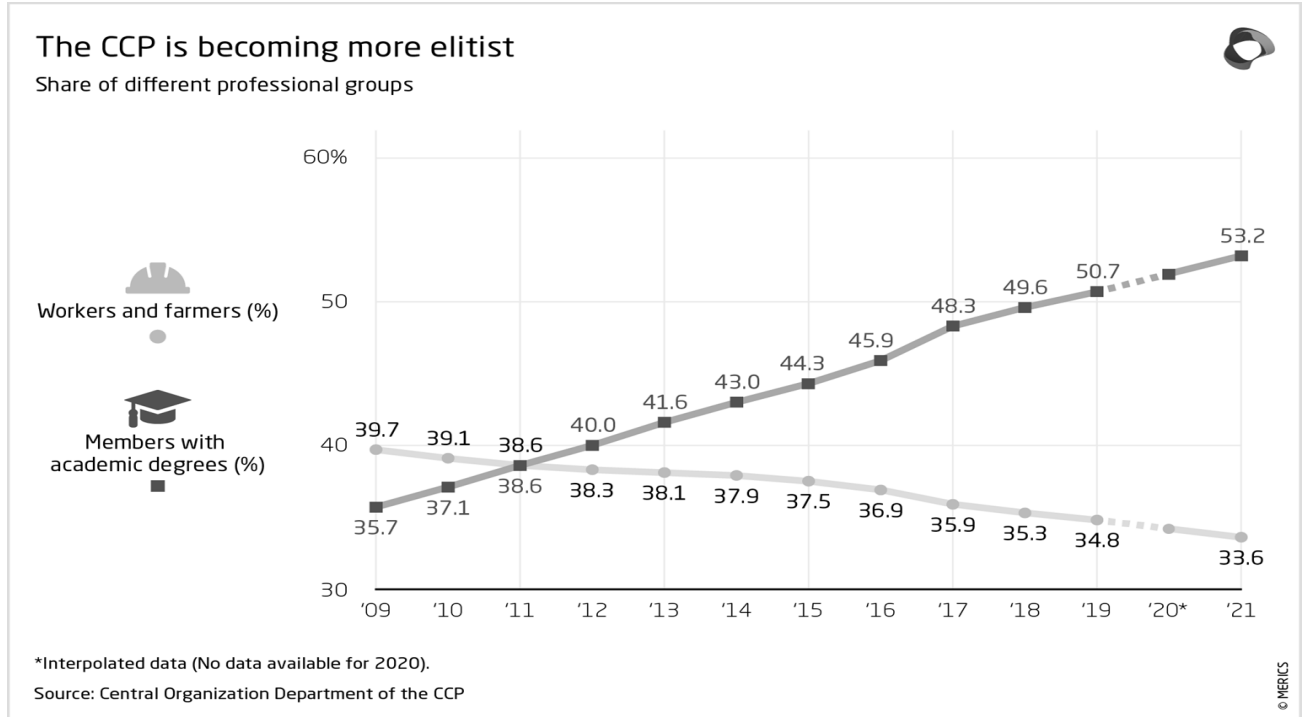
The Communist Party of China (CPC), also known as the Chinese Communist Party of China (CCP), dominates the political landscape of modern-day China. Inspired by Marxist-Leninist ideas, CCP was founded in 1921. CCP has led China since the People's Republic of China was established in 1949 (Xinhua 2021). Most scholarly research on political parties theorizes it from the Western experience and fails to explain political parties like CCP (Zheng 2009, 8). CCP differs in many ways from Western political parties. For example, it does not focus on mobilizing political and electoral competition, the party is indistinguishable from the state (Thornton 2021), and the party membership process is highly selective and exclusive (Li 2022).

Regardless, CCP has transformed into one of the largest political parties in the world. In the face of various social and economic changes, CCP has undergone radical and gradual reforms in the past one hundred years. Different generations of political elites of the CCP have strived to craft the party's role concerning the state and government to maintain its legitimacy and ideological supremacy as the premier organization of the country (Brown 2012). CCP's emphasis on upholding Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Scientific Outlook on Development, Xi Jinping's Thoughts on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, and other ideologies reflect various reforms and changes within the party organization (Xinhua 2021).

CCP has developed a strict membership recruitment process to maintain the party's power grip. CCP membership is a multi-year-long process. Political engagement with CCP can start at an early age for young children, receiving exposure to CCP's ideologies in primary school. Students with good grades and behaviors can join Young Pioneers, who take leadership roles and wear red neckerchiefs that set themselves apart from other students (Yew 2021). In a similar path, good students at the high school level can join Youth League. The application stage to join CCP can take two to three years, which involves a five-stage screening process. Participation in youth leagues is often a steppingstone for CCP membership (Bian, Shu, and Logan 2001, 813).

Membership also requires renouncing religion and adopting secular atheism (Yew 2021). Despite the restrictive procedure, CCP has 96 million members, which comprises 6.9% of China's population (Grünberg 2022). Membership recruitment has become more stringent under the leadership of Xi Jinping (Thornton 2021). CCP was initially founded as a party for workers and farmers. However, since 2009, CCP has become more elitist, with more members with college degrees and decreasing number of workers, farmers, and other blue-collar members, which comprise around 30% of the party in 2021 (Grünberg 2022). Figure 09 shows that in 2009 39.7% of CCP members came from workers and farmers groups, which decreased to 34.8% in 2019. In 2021, more than half of CCP members consisted of individuals with academic degrees. Besides, CCP affiliation is considered prestigious, and membership helps advance careers in

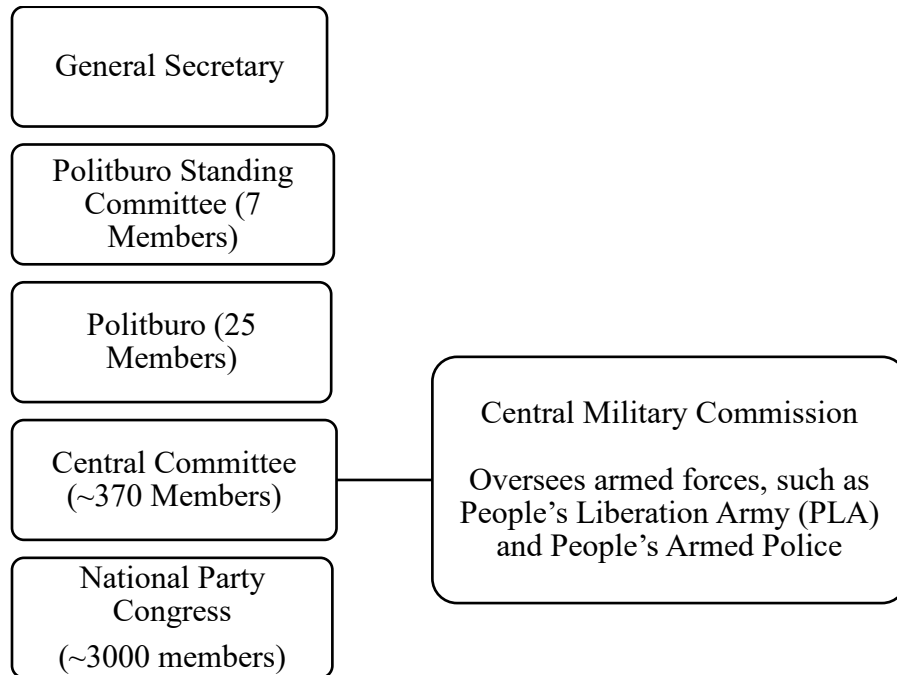
government and public sector jobs (Yew 2021).



*Figure 9 Share of Different Professional Groups Among CCP Members  
(Source: Grünberg 2022)*

CCP has a complex leadership structure with “interlocking Party and state hierarchies that extend from the national level down as far as the village” (Lawrence 2021, 2). The party’s leadership is chosen through a complex system of elections and appointments designed to ensure that only those loyal to its leadership and its ideology can rise to positions of power (Gore 2016). CCP holds National Party Congress every five years, during which delegates select Central Committee members. The Central Committee formally elects the 25-member Politburo, which selects the Politburo Standing Committee. Presently, the Politburo Standing Committee has seven members and is considered the most influential section of the party that determines party policies. Figure 9 depicts the CCP leadership hierarchy in descending order based on power in 2022. The General Secretary must be a member of this committee (CFR 2022). The Politburo

and Politburo Standing Committee elections are non-competitive, whereas the election of the Central Committee is comparatively more competitive (Lawrence 2021, 9).



*Figure 10 CCP Leadership Structure in 2022 (Collected from Council on Foreign Relations (CFR))*

CCP's Central Committee also has a complex bureaucratic system comprising five functional departments and seven high-level commissions (Lawrence 2021, 18-20). Table 05 summarizes a list of these offices and commissions. One of the major organs of the Central Committee is the Central Military Commission (CMC), which oversees China's military forces. The primary objective of CMC is to protect CCP's authority and interests (Maizland and Albert 2022). Since 1989, CMC has been headed by the CCP General Secretary (Lawrence 2021, 16). The Central Committee also oversees the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), which ensures member compliance with party rules and regulations.

Table 05: CCP Central Committee Bureaucracy	
Departments	Commissions
The Organization Department	Office of the Commission for Integrated Military and Civilian Development
The Publicity Department	Office of the National Security Commission
The Commission for Political and Legal Affairs	Office of the Financial and Economic Affairs Commission
The United Front Work Department (UFWD)	Office of the Commission for Foreign Affairs
The International Department	Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission
	Office of the Central Commission for Deepening Overall Reform
	Office of the Central Institutional Organization Commission

In summary, based on its leadership, organizational structure, and membership recruitment process CCP is unique from most political parties. It also has a military wing that oversees the armed and security forces, effectively keeping them under political control. Since its establishment, it has undergone many gradual, but significant changes. Despite controversial party mechanisms and state-party relationships, the extent of the CCP’s influence and power remains unparalleled in the history of political organizations.

**Personalization in CCP**

Personalization of politics has remained a prominent feature of Communist Party politics since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. From Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping, there have been examples of leaders consolidating power and ideological messaging centered on the highest-ranking political figure. VDem’s party personalization index helps empirically outline trends of personalization in politics. There is inadequate data about CCP’s personalization. However, even limited data, shown in Table 06, provide a quick look at the level of personalization, particularly under the leadership of Xi Jinping.

Table 06: China (Personalization of Political Party)			
Party	Year	Party Personalization	Candidate Nomination
Chinese Communist Party China (CCP)	2010	-	-
	2011	-	-
	2012	-	-
	2013	2	1
	2014	-	-
	2015	-	-
	2016	-	-
	2017	-	-
	2018	-	-
	2019	-	-

VDem score for candidate nominations ranged from 0 to 4. In this case, a score of 0 implies that the party leader unilaterally decides the candidate selection, and a score of 4 means that registered voters decide. Table 06 indicates the available information from the VDem database for these two categories in China. For party personalization, a score of 0 indicates that the party is not focused on one individual leader’s personal will and priorities, and a score of 4 means that the party is entirely focused on the leader’s goals and vision. In 2013, China scored 2 in this category, which suggests that the CCP is somewhat focused on one leader’s priorities and personal will. Although not included in this table, VDem’s data from 2008 showed that China scored 1 in this category. As such, there has been an increase in personalization from 2008 to 2013, which coincides with Xi’s rise to CCP leadership.

For the candidate nomination category, a score of 0 means that the party leader unilaterally decides the national election candidates. On the other hand, a score of 4 indicates that registered voters decide which candidates will participate in national legislative elections. In 2013, China considered 1 in the candidate selection category, which suggests that a group of senior leadership or executive committee collectively selects candidates. CCP is known for



maintaining patron-client relationships and nominating candidates for party membership. Empirical studies show that connection to top leaders is a significant factor in obtaining party membership (Shih, Adolph, and Liu 2012; Jia, Kudamatsu and Seim 2015). It is important to understand the patronage connections of CCP membership as members later play a role in selecting other higher committees within the party. In China, local-level elections are somewhat competitive as they can have multiple candidates. However, the local-level elections act as an instrument to strengthen CCP ideology, leadership, and governing abilities (Tsai and Kao 2012). People can directly vote for members of legislative bodies, known as deputies, at town, district, and county levels. These deputies later elect members for municipal, provincial, and national level legislative bodies. However, given the illiberal environment of the country, elections are not competitive, and CCP-endorsed candidates enjoy more advantages than any other candidates. Therefore, as a one-party state, in China, party member selection and nomination of candidates for legislative bodies are closely interdependent with a strong influence of political patronage that ultimately functions to ensure the CCP's political legitimacy.

Since there is insufficient empirical information from VDem's index from 2010 to 2019, this thesis also utilizes qualitative indicators from Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Li (2022) to describe the personalization process within CCP. They used these indicators to collect empirical data on personalist ruling parties in democratic countries only. However, these indicators help develop a qualitative discussion on the personalization process of CCP. The scope of this thesis is confined to the period between 2010 and 2019, which is concurrent with Xi Jinping's ascension as the top leader of China. As such, the discussion on personalization will outline his rise to leadership and gradual consolidation of power using the eight qualitative indicators from the theoretical framework.

The first indicator considers if the leader created the political party, which helped them elect the chief executive. This indicator does not apply to CCP under Xi Jinping because CCP was founded in 1921. Xi, however, hails from a political family. His father was a first-generation CCP leader and a former vice-premier of China. The case of China is different from many other authoritarian countries as it continues to be a single-party state for more than seven decades. CCP has been the only ruling party since the establishment of modern China. The constitutional mechanisms and the lack of political competition ensures that only CCP political elites can assume the state's executive positions, such as President and Prime Minister. The following five indicators evaluate whether the chief executive has previously occupied an appointed or elected position, national or local, and a party position (such as treasurer or party leader) within the political party.

Xi Jinping started his political career in Youth League, obtained a CCP membership in 1974, and went on to hold different party and administrative positions at village, county, and provincial levels before rising to the national level politburo committee and eventually election as the President of China in 2013 (Osno 2015). Another indicator examines if the chief executive has participated in elections before as an independent candidate, which is not applicable given the unique state-party relationship in China. The last indicator inquires about the leader's experience in a party before assuming office. Xi had a decades-long career at various party and state administration levels before he was elected the state's chief executive. As such, these indicators demonstrate a steady career and rise of Xi Jinping in Chinese politics.

The personalization of politics within the CCP under Xi is also evident in the institutional and media personalization mechanisms. These processes were described in Chapter 04, showing how personalization manifests in politics differently. In the case of the CCP, in the aftermath of

Mao's rule, China adopted a "collective Presidency" system to dilute the individual leader's overt importance (Osnos 2015). This system allowed greater power of other political elites, for example, politburo members, in the overall party policymaking and management process. Mao had nearly unquestioned power and authority. However, the subsequent CCP leaders learned from the devastating outcomes of such power and adopted a system that distributes power among several political elites. This collective leadership model has helped maintain a balance of power among key leaders and factions within the CCP in the post-Mao era by negotiating leadership appointments and selections (Dickson 2021, 48).

However, Xi's dominant role currently undermines the collective leadership principle and reduces the influence of politburo members (Lawrence 2021, 11). Xi's gradual expansion of power sidelined other influential political elites like Li Keqiang, whose Premiership position has recently been filled by Li Qian, a close Xi ally (Yu 2023). He has also replaced members of other factions of important party and state positions with loyalists (Brady 2016; Li 2022). Xi has also dismantled the promotion process within CCP, which is increasingly dependent on closed-door negotiations, paving the way for a more clientelist arrangement within the party and state (Doyon 2018).

From 1989 to 2007, the turnover of power and elite succession within the CCP followed a smooth pattern (Shambaugh 2008, 164-5). For example, Xi's two immediate predecessors - Jiang Zemin (in office from 1989-2002) and Hu Jintao (in office from 2002-2012), served two terms and retired even though CCP's constitution does not include a term limitation for the General Secretary. However, Xi has ushered in systemic changes in the CCP's constitution that consolidate his authority over the party and enlarge his image using government and media tools. For example, in 2017, Xi's *Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era*

was officially added to the party charter, which solidified his identity as the most powerful leader since Mao (Phillips 2017; Economy 2018). In 2018, the Chinese legislature introduced constitutional amendments scrapping the Presidential term limits (AP 2018). In continuation of these institutional changes, CCP passed a “historical resolution” in 2021 that further solidified Xi’s political authority within the party (Ni 2021). In 2023, the CCP-controlled legislature endorsed Xi for an unprecedented third Presidential term (Buckley and Bradsher 2023).

To consolidate power, Xi assumed leadership of various commissions and groups. Apart from being the General Secretary of the CCP and President of China, Xi is also the Chairman of the Central Military Commission that oversees China’s armed forces. In addition, Xi also chairs six of the seven high-level commissions of the CCP Central Committee along with the State Central Military Commission (Lawrence 2021). The leadership of multiple high-level groups has earned him the name “Chairman of Everything” (Aoyama 2023, 2). In this process, Xi has established himself at the core of the CCP.

Under Xi’s leadership, CCP has focused on expanding its influence in various sectors of society, including business and economic organizations, either by introducing new institutional regulations or enforcing existing ones. For instance, the revival of the 1993 PRC Company Law gradually extended the requirement for implementing the legal status of party organization within companies (Livingston 2021). This initiative at first targeted state-owned enterprises (SOEs) exclusively. In 2016, Xi emphasized the distinctive characteristic of Chinese SOEs, integrating party leadership and organization into corporate governance (Livingston 2021, 4). Subsequently, the 100 largest SOEs amended their charters by 2017 to incorporate the party's role in corporate governance. Over time, this campaign extended to private economic organizations as well. By 2018, 73.1 percent of private companies had established a party

organization, a significant increase from 58.4 percent in 2013. Under Xi's leadership, "CCP has extended its authority and reach – organizationally, financially, and politically – into China's domestic and foreign economic relations" (Pearson, Rithmire, and Tsai 2023, 22). Thus, the party's policy aspirations are increasingly dominated by Xi's vision of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which has penetrated political, economic, and social life.

The media coverage has changed since Xi assumed power. Historically, central news media in China have covered CCP-sponsored propaganda. CCP has an entire office dedicated to propaganda dissemination under the Publicity Department. Xi has used the media to carefully cultivate an image of a visionary statesman, a family man, and a down-to-earth person (Kuhn 2018). During the early days of his presidency, he carefully promoted the image of a humble leader in the media, earning him nicknames like "Xi Dad" or "Uncle Xi" from Chinese people. For example, he was photographed waiting in line and paying for lunch (Yuan 2022). This indicates a concerted personalization process by focusing media attention on leaders' leadership and personal qualities, personal lives, and other human dimensions (Langer 2007). A 2017 study showed that Xi has consistently received greater media coverage than his predecessor Hu Jintao, confirming the claims of personalization of power under his leadership (Jaros and Pan 2017).

Again, the presence of Li Keqiang, China's former Premier and the second-most influential leader in the CCP, has diminished simultaneously. Since 2013, media control has also increased in China, implementing Xi's directions on circulating positive messages surrounding harmony and stability in Chinese media (Brady 2016, 136). Xi has used 'positive energy' on multiple occasions, and since then, it has entered CCP's official lexicon and discourse at the highest level (Yang and Tang 2018, 2). In 2019, All-China Journalist Association updated the code of ethics for journalists that directs following guidance from Xi's ideologies (Wescott

2019). Journalists are required to study and prove proficiencies in *Xi Jinping Thoughts on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era* (Hamilton and Ohlberg 2020, 166). The Chinese government also has increased its global media footprint to expand its influence (Freedom House 2022). In addition, China has been employing various digital media, e.g., YouTube and social media, to propagate new narratives on China beyond its border (Kuteleva 2023). These efforts indicate the government's and party's efforts to coordinate propaganda dissemination, at home and abroad, that aligns with Xi's vision.

Overall, Xi has established a *cult of personality* that strengthens his political grip over the party and state. Using the need for social stability as a reason, Xi has justified the gradual concentration of power (Li 2022). Moreover, through institutional and media personalization in CCP, the primacy of one leader, Xi Jinping, has been established at the party's expense.

### **A Nexus of Personalist Political Party and Manifestation of Violence**

The previous two sections of this chapter discussed the state of violence and the personalization of politics in China from 2010 to 2019. This discussion first shows that the Chinese state has a high level of control over violence capacity across traditional and non-traditional platforms, which enables stability within the country. Second, the level of personalization increased during Xi Jinping's leadership. When the comprehensive conception of violence and personalization of politics in China is viewed from the perspective of the NWW framework, it provides an opportunity to develop a nuanced understanding of this influential theory by highlighting the inconsistencies of its framework. The economic performance of China, in terms of both traditional and expansive ideas of development, demonstrates OAO characteristics. However, the personalization of politics in China indicates that the country is an

LAO despite its stability, monopoly over violence capacity, and impressive developmental performance. From the NWW social order spectrum viewpoint, China is a mature LAO. However, this categorization does not fully capture the impact of personalization in politics on weakening impersonal institutional mechanisms in society and strengthening the state's capacity to perpetrate violence. However, this categorization can help expand the conceptual understanding of different types of social order.

According to NWW (2009), most LAOs limit electoral competition, prevent citizens from organizing, and restrict press freedom. They also prevent parties from becoming perpetually lived organizations (267). As a single-party state, political competition has been absent in China. Again, perpetually lived organizations are institutions that sustain their existence for an extended period by relying on impersonal rules, norms, and regulations. Scholars have identified weak organizational or institutional structures as prominent features of personalist political parties (Kefford and McDonnel 2018). As such, a political party can become a 'perpetually lived organization' when the level of personalization is low. However, the discussion on CCP shows deviations from these conditions. As a political party, the CCP has existed for around one hundred years. It has a complex bureaucratic structure that runs party activities and manages millions of party members. The organizational structure seems to be functioning despite ongoing personalization in the CCP.

Again, the norm of impersonality is a critical component of the NWW framework. According to the authors, one of the fundamental features of OAO is the "prevalence of impersonal relationships that sustain beliefs in freedom and equality" (262). In an OAO, these impersonal relationships exist in public and private spheres and political and economic domains. When a society transitions from LAO to OAO, citizens obtain greater opportunities for forming

impersonation relations and face fewer restrictions. However, the personalization of the CCP indicates that the norm of impersonality is shrinking in the political process, which also affects other aspects of society.

The CCP has long relied on personalization in China to consolidate power and maintain social stability. However, this personalization process has various negative consequences, including eroding impersonal norms and perpetuating cultural and iconic violence. For example, the discussion in the previous section highlighted how Xi gradually solidified his sole leadership in the political party, military, and state by changing its constitution and implementing new rules. He also ensured that his allies held important party and state positions to advance his agenda. Xi has also expanded his influence on private entrepreneurs and businesspeople so that their economic activities serve the party's goals (Buckley and Bradsher 2023). In addition, CCP membership can help advance an individual's career in the state and public sectors. It indicates that personal loyalty and connections are critical for essential leadership appointments at the state or party level. As such, the typical OAO feature of impersonality is absent in CCP.

Again, the personalization process significantly impacts how violence is constructed and perpetuated in China. One of the most significant ways the personalization process in the CCP has led to cultural, symbolic, and iconic violence is by constructing a cult of personality around the party's leader Xi Jinping. Cultural, symbolic, and iconic violence refers to a form of violence that operates more inconspicuously through social and political mechanisms, influencing people's beliefs and values and shaping their understanding of the world. Cultural violence is embedded in the symbols and structures of society and perpetuates inequality and discrimination. On the other hand, iconic violence involves using images and representations to justify and normalize violence in pursuing political goals.



The personalization of political leaders in China has been a central aspect of Communist Party politics since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. This process has involved the creation of personality cults around specific leaders, as well as the promotion of a more general cult of personality around the party itself. Media and other forms of propaganda have been crucial in this process, as the party has sought to control the narrative around its leaders and shape public opinion. It has also used media to disseminate certain values such as loyalty, discipline, and the subordination of individual interests to the collective good. Such values have been used to justify various repressive measures, including the suppression of dissent, persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, and restriction of civil liberties.

Personalization in Chinese politics intensified under Xi's leadership and transformed the state's role as a perpetrator of cultural, symbolic, and iconic violence. The characterization of Xi as a humble and kind leader aimed to create a more relatable image for the public. The elevation of Xi Jinping's status to that of a 'core leader' and the inclusion of his political ideology, Xi Jinping Thought, into the CCP's constitution has cemented his status as a dominant figure in Chinese politics. This process has been facilitated by the use of state media and propaganda, which has constructed an image in which Xi Jinping's leadership position has become synonymous with China's ascension as a global superpower.

By emphasizing the importance of Xi Jinping's leadership in constructing a stable and prosperous China, the CCP has created a climate in which dissent and opposition to the party's leadership are viewed as a threat to China's national identity and stability. This has led to the marginalization and repression of groups and individuals who do not conform to the party's vision of Chinese identity and the justification of violence against these groups in the pursuit of national unity. The persecution of Muslims in Uyghur directly indicates how Xi has established

absolute control over China's institutional and ideological mechanisms (Tobin 2022). Reports of forced labor, invasive hi-tech surveillance, sexual violence, and detentions in camps of Muslim minority groups in Uyghur for cultural assimilation indicate threats of direct and physical violence and cultural violence (BBC 2021). The police crackdown on Hong Kong's protesters and arrests of activists further highlights the dangers of direct and physical violence under the excuse of maintaining national unity (Human Rights Watch 2022). In other words, the personalization process in the CCP has also led to the normalization of violence (direct, cultural, and iconic) as a tool of political control.

Moreover, the role of cultural and iconic violence in the CCP personalization process is not limited to domestic areas only. China's increasing international influence has also been accompanied by a projection of its cultural identity and values abroad. This has led to the use of cultural and iconic violence as a tool of political control in other countries, particularly those in which China seeks to expand its influence. China's extensive political and economic leverage sometimes compels Western media outlets to acquiesce and censor negative publicity. For example, Chinese state officials canceled Bloomberg terminals, a significant source of income for Bloomberg L.P., and blocked the Bloomberg news server after it published news on the wealth of Xi's family in June 2012. In another event in 2013, Bloomberg suspended investigative journalist Michael Forsythe for an article on a Chinese tycoon and his ties with the CCP (Wong and Haughney 2013). Beijing also punishes foreign journalists by restricting visas (Hamilton and Ohlberg 2020, 182-3).

CCP also aims to amplify its discursive power through technology to influence global norms and values (Shi-Kupfer and Ohlberg 2019). For example, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the focal point of Xi's foreign policy. BRI is the most remarkable initiative to reorganize the

post-World War II international order, aiming to create a Sinocentric world, by forging economic, business, media, cultural, and diplomatic ties (Hamilton and Ohlberg 2020). The Digital Silk Road strategy, a component of BRI, seeks to expand the Chinese home-grown internet software and infrastructure market in foreign countries. It also aims to reshape the international order that resembles China’s state-led capitalist economy and an illiberal political architecture (Cheney 2019).

In summary, this chapter describes the various forms of comprehensive violence and personalization of the only political party in China. The discussion establishes an intricate and complex interrelationship between the personalization of politics and the comprehensive concept of violence and sheds light on a few inconsistencies within the NWW framework. Strictly from the NWW point of view, China is a mature LAO. However, the case study highlights that distinguishing characteristics of different social orders might not be consistent. For example, in terms of the first feature of a basic or mature LAO, as shown in Table 7, China exhibits more characteristics of basic LAO.

Table 7: LAO and OAO Spectrum (Abridged Version)			
Type (Examples)	Economic Organizations (EOs)	Political Organizations (POs)	Violence Capacity (VC)
Basic LAO—Authoritarian	All major EOs—public or “private”—are linked with the central state; some are also with multinationals	Most POs are controlled by the state, e.g., a one-party state or dictatorship. Opposition parties are under threat.	Most VC organizations are part of the state, yet some may compete with or threaten the civilian state.

Table 7 Continues

Table 7 Continued

Mature LAO	Many private firms and multinationals. Political connections are needed for major economic success in the face of informal mechanisms of limits.	Multiple POs, but effective power is dependent on central permission. The democratic process, if present, cannot challenge major economic powers.	The state controls almost all VC.
OAO	Most are private. Non-discriminatory rules exist for citizens to start an EO and get state legal support.	Non-discriminatory entry rules exist for any citizens to start or join a PO.	No non-state organizations have VC.

At the beginning of this chapter, indicators from the Ease of Business Doing Index and examples of crony capitalism in China indicate an environment where political connections help successful business ventures. This suggests limited access and the weak presence of impersonal rules in establishing economic organizations. Besides, the all-powerful nature of the Chinese party-state means that it infiltrates every part of society, including economic or business organizations. China generally accommodates a competitive market economy and does not exercise explicit control over economic organizations. However, policies for integrating party organizations in SOEs and private enterprises indicate attempts to influence corporate governance and exercise implicit control over most economic organizations. As such, most economic organizations in China are linked to the state, directly and indirectly.

Regarding the second characteristic of basic or mature LAO, China aligns with the basic LAO category more than the mature one. The absolute dominance of one party over state power and the absence of political competition are evident in China. The absolute power of the party-state allows it to challenge economic forces, if necessary. For example, Jack Ma, one of the

wealthiest Chinese entrepreneurs, faced severe backlash from the government when he criticized the country's financial regulatory policies in 2020. Under government pressure, he remained primarily out of the public eye for years while his company faced regulatory investigations (Baker and Biron 2023). Therefore, political organizations have significantly more power in China than economic organizations.

However, regarding the third characteristic of violence capacity, China exhibits more similarities with an OAO than a mature LAO. It is also unique compared to other OAOs like the USA, Japan, or South Korea. In these countries, armed forces are controlled by the state, led by democratically elected governments. However, in China, the military and security forces of China are under the control of the CCP, which is a political party. Put differently, the military is under civilian control in China, like OAOs. This raises a question about how to define civilian control, especially in one-party states. These inconsistencies within the NWW characteristics of social order demonstrate the importance of taking a more comprehensive approach to this framework.

NWW can address these contradictions by incorporating the conditions of comprehensive violence and personalist political parties. Emphasis on state's control over violence capacity is not a conclusive feature of the social order because modern states are more focused on strengthening such control, often at the expense of freedom and civil liberties. Therefore, the conceptualization of violence in NWW requires a comprehensive approach, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

In addition, the prevalence of impersonal norms in critical organizations like political parties should also be given more priority in distinguishing social orders. The discussion on the personalization of the CCP provides a sophisticated understanding of social order within the

NWW framework. The personalization of the CCP indicates how this process directly undermines critical features of the norms of impersonality in institutions. This also suggests that the personalization of political parties, especially in a single-party country, enhances the structures of domination and repression. It can strengthen the state's capabilities to perpetrate direct, cultural, and iconic violence toward its citizens and use them as a tool for political control. Under the current NWW framework, the social order categories only consider steady economic growth, the government's capability to control violence, maintain stability, and perform administrative functions, the rule of law, and the presence of widespread impersonal social relationships. However, this discussion shows that NWW social order characteristics can benefit by incorporating a new condition — a level of personalization in political parties — as it directly influences norms of impersonality and the manifestation of violence in society.

In conclusion, the NWW conceptual framework can be improved by integrating the concept of comprehensive violence and personalization of political organization as distinguishing features of social order. The NWW examines the conditions under which countries experience different development trajectories. However, development is not only continued economic growth. Development also means freedom from hunger and poverty as well as the freedom to achieve self-realization (Sen 1999). It also means the right to pursue a life of dignity in a society that embodies equality, justice, and sustainability (Himanen 2014). Such development is only possible in a society without all kinds of violence, from physical and psychological to structural and cultural. A political process that focuses on the vision and goal of one supreme leader is one of the most significant obstacles in achieving such a society. Therefore, the NWW theory should focus on these critical dimensions of modern societies. The case study on China also demonstrates that categorizing it as a mature LAO is problematic when

it clearly undermines the institutions are playing a different role instead of fulfilling the NWW social order characteristics. Therefore, this framework should also consider additional characteristics, such as personalization of critical institutions like political parties, to distinguish among different types of social order.

## CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

This thesis concerns the research question of how the conceptual framework on social order and violence can be improved. To answer the research question, this thesis provides a nuanced analysis of the relationship between violence and personalization in the political process within the NWW conceptual framework by generating insights into how political institutions and personalized power structures perpetuate violence in the contemporary world. This thesis begins with the goal of improving the NWW conceptual framework. It identifies two specific areas of improvement in the NWW framework: the reconceptualization of violence and the inclusion of personalism in political parties as an essential feature in social order categorization. This thesis contends that, while the state's ability to control violence is essential for the social order, it can also have negative implications for citizens' rights and freedom. It also argues that increasing personalization of political processes, particularly in non-democratic countries, can restrict citizens' freedom and liberties. Thus, by addressing these gaps in the framework, this thesis provides a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between violence, personalization of politics, and development.

The NWW conceptual framework is certainly important even though it does not introduce fundamentally unique concepts. Nevertheless, it deserves credit for integrating salient concepts such as violence and development under one umbrella. This encourages a comprehensive approach to explaining development. The academic eminence of North, Wallis, and Weingast undoubtedly reinforces the recognition and significance of this framework. This is an influential theoretical work in the NIE literature. NIE has had a profound influence on global development policies. NIE emphasizes the interconnectedness and dynamism of society, recognizing that economic growth and development are shaped by a range of factors, such as



culture, history, law, religion, and politics, making it a more comprehensive approach to understanding economic development. Similarly, NWW conceptual framework underscores the crucial role organizations and institutions play and the impact of complex economic and political factors on growth and development.

The NWW argument is simultaneously straightforward and multi-layered. This theory argues that societies that successfully solved the violence problem have progressed politically and economically. The key to limiting violence and maintaining stability lies in society's impersonal rule-based institutional and organizational network. One of the distinguishing features of these social categories in NWW is the extent of non-discriminative access to political and economic organizations and activities. Unlike LAOs, access to political and economic organizations is universal in OAO societies, implying more freedom, liberty, and rights. However, North et al. (2009) recognized the limitations of social order categories in explaining how organizations function in society. They noted, "the categories of mature, basic, and fragile turn out to be useful as heuristics, but real societies are much more complicated than any simple categorization" (XIV). Access to organizations in the same society can be simultaneously open and limited. Emphasis on stability and violence mitigation for social order can also be problematic. Besides, the suggestion that economic and political openness sustain each other is debatable. The economic success of countries such as China contradicts this claim and shows that economic openness does not always complement political openness.

If we accept the NWW emphasis on the dynamism of society, it is only appropriate to critically re-examine the conceptual framework in the present moment and identify some areas for improvement. The conception of violence and how organizations like political parties function have changed substantially in recent times. Technological innovations have impacted

the social fabric throughout history, changing how we pursue political, economic, and civic activities. The expansion of the internet and sophisticated digital technology is one of the most consequential events in human history. This has fundamentally transformed the way societies function. In the twenty-first century, war, bloodshed, and threats of direct physical harm have decreased compared to most of human history. As such, the conception of violence is not limited to organized violence with destructive consequences only. On the other hand, in the current global political climate, the personalization of politics is a common phenomenon that threatens the organizational structure of political parties. As a vehicle for fulfilling one individual leader's goals, the personalization of political parties also has other negative implications for society, as it can undermine the rule of law, weaken elite coalitions and horizontal accountability within the party, and transform political parties, and even governance institutions.

In this context, this thesis addresses the research question using an illustrative case study of China. Using several types of empirical information, a qualitative analysis of China's case generates evidence about the research objectives. First, this thesis identifies the conceptualization of violence in the NWW framework as restrictive or minimalist because of the focus on organized violence only. Emphasis on organized violence, with destructive implications, makes this concept one-dimensional. The case study of China shows the inadequacy of adopting a restrictive approach to understanding violence. From a minimalist point of view, the Chinese state demonstrates a robust capacity to mitigate violence on both traditional and non-traditional platforms. However, China's case reflects the manifestation of comprehensive violence in society.

A comprehensive concept of violence incorporates its psychological, structural, and cultural dimensions. Structural violence obstructs non-discriminative access to political and

economic opportunities. Various forms of ideological and cultural violence normalize and legitimize physical and psychological violence, such as arrests, detentions, and censorship. The case of China shows that the threat of comprehensive violence has increased through digital repression mechanisms. These types of violence manifest by utilizing state and non-state institutions, such as legal, bureaucratic, educational, or media institutions, to disseminate specific ideologies, icons, and messages to create a conformist society.

The high likelihood of arrests for political content indicates threats of direct and physical violence, whereas a high level of digital surveillance and censorship suggests a high level of repressive violence in China. Additionally, the strict content moderation in digital media that conforms to the state and CCP ideology features mechanisms of cultural violence in Chinese society. Digital content monitoring in China also indicates how a state can preemptively employ repressive violence to reduce the chances of destructive violence and instability in society. The illustrative case study of China highlights how the institutions of the state responsible for preventing destructive violence can also be perpetrators of violence. Thus, it is imperative to reconceptualize one of the principal determinants of NWW, violence, to maintain the framework's relevance in the contemporary world.

The second and last point identified by the illustrative case study of China is how the personalization of political parties invalidates the core NWW value of impersonal relationships in the institutional mechanisms of society. In LAO societies, personal relationships play a significant role in determining rights, privileges, and benefits. In contrast, an OAO society functions with impersonal rules, and everyone has the right and opportunity to compete in both politics and the market economy. Instead of personalized networks, impersonalized institutional mechanisms systemize the economic and political activities in the OAO. The personalization of

the political process can reinforce LAO conditions by weakening the rule of law, political accountability, and elite coalitions about power sharing in society.

The existence of the CCP as a political organization for around a century indicates its status as a ‘perpetually lived organization’ that can adapt to external shocks and societal changes. The wide bureaucratic and administrative networks of the CCP underscore the party’s organizational strength. However, the discussion on the CCP also highlighted how the CCP has always relied on personalistic political leadership, which has intensified under Xi Jinping. This reflects an interesting combination of the institutionalization of party organization and personalization practices. Centralized institutional and media personalization has increased considerably since Xi assumed leadership. He leads multiple important departments and institutions, most notably the state, party, and military. State media also actively disseminates propaganda that closely aligns with Xi’s ideologies and philosophies about national unity and social harmony. Moreover, the appointment of Xi’s favored candidates in state and party leadership positions demonstrates the presence of political patronage. The stringent selection process for party membership and preference for party members in public-sector appointments also highlights the limited access to political organizations and the selective distribution of political and economic privileges.

The findings of this thesis highlight that the personalization of the political process and the manifestation of various types of violence are closely related to each other. Political parties are merely one type of organization in the sprawling institutional web of society. However, they are at the center of political and economic development in any country, making them more important than other types of organizations in society. Moreover, as a significant part of the institutional arrangement of society, political parties are supposed to play a critical role in

mitigating violence by managing elite agreements. However, this thesis points out that political parties can become agents of violence, especially with the high personalization of political parties, and the risks of psychological, cultural, and repressive violence toward citizens can increase.

These threats are even higher for non-democratic countries, where there is a lack of political access and a limited presence of civil society organizations. In particular, the scope of centralized personalization in the political process and the exertion of targeted violence in non-democratic countries has increased substantially with the expansion of digital media and online surveillance capabilities of the government. China's case demonstrates that the prominence of a powerful patron or leader in politics has far-reaching consequences. The patron's ideologies, visions, and goals are transmitted via media and gradually reinforced through institutional changes. The combination of constant repetition of messages and institutional reforms can instill those values and visions in the public psyche to the point that it can become an acceptable ideology. In the case of a globally powerful country like China, the personalization of politics does not only impact domestic policies but also foreign policies. The digital strategies of China, such as the Digital Silk Road, show how powerful countries can attempt to export norms and values to foreign countries.

While this thesis has several limitations regarding the lack of data availability and empirical analysis, it highlights the importance of critically examining influential development theories, especially from well-renowned and established scholars. When policymakers of leading international development organizations adopt such theories in policy planning and implementation, they tend to have a snowball effect among regional and local level policymaking processes. For example, when international organizations like the United Nations

adopt policies like Sustainable Development Goals, other international or local-level development organizations worldwide, including various government departments and agencies, integrate the objectives and themes of such policies in their own organizational policies or action plans. This thesis does not negate the central argument of the NWW conceptual framework but contends that the lack of nuances in the NWW hypothesis can have serious implications on development discourse. It is imperative to accommodate the nuanced understanding of violence and threats of personalization of political parties to avoid misusing the logic of this framework in legitimizing problematic development models like China, which combines liberal economy and illiberal politics. The status of China as a global superpower is indisputable at this point, which increases its capability to, directly and indirectly, export norms and values to other countries. Chinese leaders and policymakers also are tenacious in legitimizing their policies and strategies with every available tool. Therefore, an influential conceptual framework like NWW should carefully design its core arguments to avoid exploitation.

Overall, this study contributes to the NIE literature by examining the relationship between violence and the personalization of political parties. While this research only concerns the comprehensive conceptualization of violence and personalization of politics, there is scope for further research to investigate other NWW core components. For example, NWW discussed the consequences of the separation of state and religious institutions in the evolution of impersonalized rule-based society. Future research can expand the discussion on the role of belief and religious institutions in political and economic development under the NWW conceptual framework. There is also scope for empirically testing the core determinates of this framework. Additionally, the complex relationship between violence and the personalization of politics raises the possibility of whether a political party can become an agent of violence.

Ideally, political parties represent citizens in a functional democracy, but can they become an instrument of violence in non-democratic regimes?

The key takeaway of this study is that we should be aware of the multidimensional aspect of violence that leaves both physical and psychological marks, especially about the implicit yet targeted violence that curbs rights and freedom and enslaves our thought processes. This thesis also underscores the importance of recognizing the threats of personalization in political parties, particularly in powerful countries. This finding has implications for both citizens of home and other countries. Given the considerable influence that superpowers wield in global politics and the economy through bilateral and multilateral relationships, the personalization of political parties can pose serious threats to the entire international community. The personalization of politics in countries like China and the United States should be equally worrisome even though they represent diametrically opposite political systems. Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of the personalization of politics and ensure that political parties prioritize institutional accountability and transparency above everything.

APPENDIX

Table A: BTI Index Indicators List		
Political Transformation	Economic Transformation	Governance Transformation
<p>Stateness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monopoly on the use of force</li> <li>• State identity</li> <li>• No interference of religious dogmas</li> <li>• Basic administration</li> </ul>	<p>Level of socio-economic development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic barriers</li> </ul>	<p>Level of Difficulty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural constraints</li> <li>• Civil society traditions</li> <li>• Conflict intensity</li> <li>• GNI p.c. PPP rescaled.</li> <li>• UN Education Index rescaled.</li> <li>• Average of BTI Stateness &amp; the Rule of Law criteria scores</li> </ul>
<p>Political Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free and fair elections</li> <li>• Effective power to govern.</li> <li>• Association/assembly rights</li> <li>• Freedom of expression</li> </ul>	<p>Organization of Free Market and Competition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market organization</li> <li>• Competition policy</li> <li>• Liberalization of foreign trade</li> <li>• Banking system</li> </ul>	<p>Steering Capability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritization</li> <li>• Implementation</li> <li>• Policy learning</li> </ul>
<p>Rule of Law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separation of powers</li> <li>• Independent judiciary</li> <li>• Prosecution of office abuse</li> <li>• Civil rights</li> </ul>	<p>Monetary and Fiscal Stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monetary stability</li> <li>• Fiscal stability</li> </ul>	<p>Resource Efficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient use of assets</li> <li>• Policy coordination</li> <li>• Anti-corruption policy</li> </ul>
<p>Stability of democratic institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance of democratic institutions</li> <li>• Commitment to democratic institutions</li> </ul>	<p>Private Property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property rights</li> <li>• Private enterprise</li> </ul>	<p>Consensus-building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consensus on goals</li> <li>• Anti-democratic actors</li> <li>• Cleavage/conflict management</li> <li>• Civil society participation</li> <li>• Reconciliation</li> </ul>
<p>Political and Social Integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Party system</li> <li>• Interest groups</li> <li>• Approval of democracy</li> <li>• Social capital</li> </ul>	<p>Welfare Regime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social safety nets</li> <li>• Equal opportunity</li> </ul>	<p>International Cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective use of support</li> <li>• Credibility</li> <li>• Regional cooperation</li> </ul>
	<p>Economic Performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Output strength</li> </ul>	
	<p>Sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental policy</li> <li>• Education/R&amp;D Policy</li> </ul>	



Table B: Qualitative Data Categories to Measure Personalism in the Ruling Political Party (Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Li 2022)	
Category	Description
Create Party	Did the leader create the political party that backed them in the election for the chief executive?
National appointment with electing party	Did the leader hold a nationally appointed position with the electing party before being selected as chief executive?
National elected with electing party	Did the leader hold a national elected position with the electing party before being selected chief executive?
Party leadership position with electing party	Was the leader appointed with the electing party (e.g., party leader or treasurer) before being selected chief executive?
Local appointed with electing party	Did the leader hold an appointed local position with the electing party before being selected as chief executive?
Local elected with electing party	Did the leader hold an elected local position with the electing party before being selected as chief executive?
Prior independent	Did the leader hold a political office or run as a losing candidate for the chief executive position as a political independent (i.e., without backing from an established political party) before being selected as chief executive?
Party experience	Before assuming office, how long has the leader been in an established electing political party?

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