CHAPTER I

Manufacturing compliance with 'rule by design'

Any power relation reveals the need of the dominant side to maintain its authority. The power relation between the state and the individual, which has been a fundamental topic in political sociology and political science, is a typical dominant–dominated power relationship. For a modern state, its survival requires order, stability, and effective governance – all demanding considerable cooperation from its population. While differing in content, several classical studies share the logic that the legitimation of the government must secure enough cooperation to maintain the system's capacity to withstand shock and failure (Giddens 1981; Lipset and Man 1960; Tilly 2017). From legitimacy, the subordinates in a power relationship can obtain moral grounds for cooperation and obedience, while the power- or authority-holder gets the right to expect their compliance. Under certain conditions the population renders to the authority cooperation and obedience – which provide enough stability for the authority to continue in being, withstanding some shocks and failures. At a point in their interactions with the state the public may change its compliance. People who have suffered during the interactions may choose to resist or withdraw compliance, for instance, because of the state's misbehaviour, or because they are dissatisfied with social policies.

Many political sociologists argue that the essential theme of state 'ruling' is the issue of *consent*. The Weberian tradition regards the legitimation of the government as an essential factor for sustaining people's compliance, since the state's rule fundamentally depends on consent, rather than any fear induced by coercion alone. States cannot do whatever they want and expect their citizens to acquiesce. Constant and crude coercion may cause a revolution from below and eventually state collapse. As Weber (1978) pointed out, consent from the public is necessarily rooted in people's belief. The consent

that signals the people's active acceptance and compliance may take the form of ideological trust or spontaneous supportive actions.

However, beliefs are not arbitrary and can be manufactured by exogenous powers. Gramsci's hegemony theory (Gramsci, Hoare, and Nowell-Smith 1971) suggests that the interaction between the population and the state is never a simple, watertight match. People's seemingly 'spontaneous' attitudinal or behavioural consent results from some invisible and subtle ideological, cultural, or institutional infiltration from the state. In other words, in the state–society relationship the state can reconstruct and use people's knowledge, politics, and even daily lives in a way that favours the authority. The other side of the story is that resonating beliefs must be rooted in the experiences of individuals (Gramsci, Hoare, and Nowell-Smith 1971). Any inquiry into consent must grapple with both the expectations of citizens and the behaviour of states, and the fit of both with one another. Thus, although the state generally holds more institutional resources than individuals do, it is not all-powerful; its legitimacy can be earned or lost. A 'legitimacy crisis' ensues when the regime is finding it difficult to manage the equilibrium between state governance and the people's expectations.

The idea of 'governmentality' answers the questions of whom to govern and how to govern. As a form of state rationality, governmentality can be recognised as a power relation between 'man and things' (Foucault 2009, p. 97); state governance therefore involves governing 'a sort of complex of men [and women] and things' (Foucault 2009, p. 96). The objects of the governance include not only people and their complex relationship with things (such as resources) but also things' relationship with other things, such as customs, dependency, habits, and so on. The instruments that a government uses (such as statistics and biopolitics) to achieve a better well-being of the population (such as the population's wealth, longevity, and health) involve and act directly on the population itself. State governmentality can be identified as institutions, regulations, and procedures. It can also be identified as a tendency of changing forces which reveals the state's sophisticated understanding of the people, and thus the efforts that it makes to figure out proper ways of managing changes and consents, and the process of knowledge development (Foucault 2009, p. 109). Through the dynamic governmentality that has been designed and adjusted by the state, the boundary of the state, the boundary between being 'public' and being 'private', is revealed. A thorough investigation of governmentality will unpack not only the way that governmental activities unfold their effect but also how the individual's subjectification process is shaped by statecraft, and how the risks of resistance from the public affect statecraft in return. Unpacking governmentality, therefore, is important in addressing the legitimation and issue of ruling by the modern state.

In empirical investigations of governmentality, which indicators are appropriate in identifying the nature of the state's power over the people? Many concepts have been used to describe the ruling of authority over the people

and could indicate the success of the state's governance. Commonly used terms include the ones mentioned above: 'legitimacy', 'consent', or other concepts such as 'political trust' and 'compliance'. The conceptual details of such notions are also debated by different scholars. For instance, the approach to conceptualising 'legitimacy' can be from the standpoint of legalism and normativity, as in issues of legality, or a particular normative definition of justice or procedure (e.g. Lord and Beetham 2001; Smoke 1994). It can also be analysed from the standpoint of belief, following Weberian notions (Weber 1978). As well as drawing on the Weberian and Gramscian tradition of understanding state rule and highlighting the individual's rationale of 'believing' and 'consent', my work also takes account of the Foucaudian 'governmentality' that the state uses to maintain its rule and investigates its underlying rationality. What then is the best way of integrating these approaches into one analytical model? Compliance, which covers both positive/active consent and the passive or even coerced acceptance of state authority by the population, seems to be a good indicator to measure the state's rule over its people in general. In this sense, the concept of compliance is more appropriate than consent in capturing the 'willingness to defer to political authority regardless of the reasons', or 'with multiple motivations' (Grimes 2008; Levi 1997). In the following section I further discuss the theoretical model constructed on the inclusive measurement of 'compliance'.

The statecraft used in different regimes consists of choices built from an authority's own political, social, and economic scenarios. Compared to their democratic counterparts, authoritarian states have more of a reputation for using oppression and violence in sustaining their authority. But no regime that relies only on oppression and violence can stabilise its governance and maintain its resilience in the long term (Gramsci, Hoare, and Nowell-Smith 1971). In his study, Dimitrov (2013) implied that, in a mature communist regime, the use of repression actually declines, and patronage is distributed to a wider segment of the population, citing the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin. If this is so, an authoritarian regime also needs to employ various strategies and skills to manufacture 'spontaneous' consent from the public. Moreover, such a regime in a prolonged transformational stage, like China over the past 40 years, requires significant public compliance to maintain overall stability.

1.1 Transitional scenarios in China and the state's 'rule by design'

China's transition is one form of the large-scale institutional changes in communist regimes that started in the late 20th century. The process of de-Stalinisation, liberation, and democratisation involved the deformation of central planning and a transition of state socialism. In these post-communist states, the newly emerged market has led to a change in the distributional principles and in the rate of return on financial, productive, and human capital,

and has also altered the social structure. Meanwhile, the boundaries between state, market, and society have been redrawn and negotiated through interactions between different sectors. Challenges to the legitimacy of the Chinese government have followed one another since the economic reforms of 1978. Economic development has increased people's income, and also changed the public's expectation of the state–individual relationship. People's loyalty towards state authority has become more complicated. On the one hand, the benefits brought by economic development were able to help the state to buy public support; on the other, economic development brought people a keener consciousness and more demands for other rights, and therefore threatened the public's acceptance of the state's authority. Moreover, the transition process extended from the economy to society: 40 years of development in the economy has led to an expansion of social inequality along with the entrenchment of a social class system. The transitional scenarios brought by marketisation, privatisation, and institutional reform have led to some fundamental changes in distribution, redistribution, and social justice.

In addition to the large-scale economic-social reforms, the transition of socialist regimes features another key point, due to the special ideological foundation and historical legacy of China. As a communist government, the authorities rely heavily on the 'red ideology' in the political culture, which was also one of the main sources of the CCP's legitimacy during the civil war period and the early years after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). With markets penetrating every aspect of social life, communist ideology has also been reformed in the post-Mao era, particularly in recent years to fit the new social and economic scenarios. For instance, the illusion of government omnipotence persists and coexists with mixed attitudes to liberal notions. Many people buy into the official story that individual merit is highly encouraged, while 'waiting, relying on, and demanding' (government help) is criticised (Gallagher 2011). The spirit of selfless devotion and equality from the revolutionary period has been undermined. In other words, the transitional process also shows a de facto shift away from the revolutionary communist legacy that originally gave power to the Party: a state-controlled planned economy, semi-universal welfare provision and a communist ideology.

Social welfare provision is one of the most important areas of change, partly because it can be directly perceived by the public. In this area there has been a noticeable trend, which has led to some degree of public discontent owing to the fear of loss of social benefits and an increased welfare burden on some social groups. Before the economic reforms of 1978, China was experiencing the 'creation of a socialist egalitarian society promising a relatively stable livelihood at the expense of economic development' (Leung and Xu 2015, p. 33). Work units (*danwei*) acted in urban areas as administrative social integration sections, as well as providers of public goods (Lu and Perry 1997). Urban work units provided not only jobs for life but also pensions, housing, education, and health care to employees and their dependants. More than 80% of the urban

labour force was covered by the *danwei* system (Leung and Wong 1999). At the stage of state socialism the state's patriarchal role underwrote a collective welfare mechanism that collectively secured social rights (Xie 2016). Corresponding to the economic reform, the state promoted social reforms that helped to shift the state's welfare burden and boost efficiency. The ongoing reform in welfare provision threatens lifetime employment, pensions, health and the housing system in urban areas (Li and Zhong 2009; Wong and Ngok 2006). Very many employees of state-owned enterprises were laid off during the marketisation process. The newly established basic health insurance scheme also required contributions from individuals and employers. Furthermore, the hospitals started to employ market-competition principles in their operation. Individual workers found that their total welfare contribution accounted for quite a large proportion of their salary (Ringen and Ngok 2017). Many of these reform plans were understood to add up to a withdrawal of governmental responsibility and an emphasis instead on the roles of the market and the family. The schemes do not treat equally members of different age groups, occupation groups, and political identity groups; some enjoy more benefits than others.

Facing all the dramatic social and economic changes described above, the state needed to spend some time on generating public compliance to prevent a serious crisis of legitimacy and even regime change caused by bottom-up revolts against the transformation. Theoretically speaking, the skills in the state's governance toolkit include propaganda, repression, absorption, allocated benefits, and so on. In practice, what we can observe of the state's efforts to manufacture compliance is different 'strategies' that involve either one or several skills. For instance, in promoting certain policies, a state could combine economic benefits with propaganda (comparable to the 'social construction of target populations' (Schneider, Ingram, and DeLeon 2014)), while coercion and information censorship could also be used to attain its goal. The toolkit of maintaining compliance for an authority also changes depending on the various challenges in different periods. For example, in Mao's era, when the party class identified struggle as the main problem in China, an ideological campaign was the central approach to producing loyalty and consent. In the 'opening up and reform' period, many scholars have argued that the Chinese authorities has used performance-based legitimacy and maintains its rule by providing material security (Zhao 2001).

Some scholars have highlighted the institutional features and tricks in China's governance. For instance, Andrew Nathan used the term 'authoritarian resilience' to describe the situation whereby the Chinese government reconsolidated itself in the midst of the political instability and potential governance crises. He attributed the authority's resilience mostly to the 'institutionalisation' of the state, such as the normalisation of succession politics within the Communist Party leadership and the meritocratic promotion of bureaucrats (Nathan 2003). Scholars such as Yan (2017) have emphasised that the capacity of the state to absorb and assimilate is one of the main instruments that

keeps the state and the party stable. Perry (2017) contended that, by strategically using symbolic resources such as the traditional culture, the state shapes the higher education institutions and wins the allegiance of social elites. Other descriptions in existing studies include 'a balancing act involving the supply of carrots and sticks' (Gallagher and Hanson 2009), a 'guerrilla policy style' (Perry and Heilmann 2011), 'nationalism ideological articulation' (Bernstein 2013; Gries 2004), and so on. One common issue in existing studies is that statecraft is treated as a set of static and isolated skills rather than as a comprehensive, sophisticated design. The role of 'the ruled' – the people or population – is also missing or under-emphasised in shaping the specific governmentality.

In this book I argue that the Chinese state uses a strategy that is hybrid, organic, and dynamic to respond to the potential crisis brought closer by social and economic transformation, and to generate public compliance even though it drifts away from the communist legacy. In particular, I emphasise that public compliance is not only acquired through buying off the public with governmental performance and transferred benefit but is also manufactured through an ideological foundation, such as nationalism, which has been rebuilt by the authority. China's authoritarian governance has been an active process of 'rule by design' that has constantly adapted to new social and economic situations, especially since the notorious repression in the late 1980s. On the one hand, the state monitors and captures public expectations and adjusts its own strategies to meet them; on the other, the state intentionally shapes the public's expectations and manufactures compliance to keep its reforms working. For instance, in the field of social welfare, where the process of privatisation might cause severe discontent, the authority has employed a mixture of retrenchment and generosity and designed diverse schemes for different social groups in order to effectively 'divide and govern'. Moreover, the state has carefully employed propaganda skills using traditional culture and the ideological legacy of the socialist period, in order to legitimise its choices and engender consent from the public. This research enriches the discussion of authoritarian resilience by highlighting the active consent role of the public and the constraints that it imposes on the effectiveness of the state's governance and production of legitimacy.

1.2 Manufacturing compliance in the state–individual interaction

States provide security, resources, solidarity, and identity through benefit allocation, propaganda, education, and many other approaches, in order to shape public expectations and justify their rule; while individuals can update their knowledge about the state from personal benefits, public policy, and current society (their peers) and decide whether to stay loyal or rebel. To better understand the logic of the state's rule and its choices of various forms of statecraft in dealing with its population, I first decipher the state's governmentality,

moving from the Foucauldian theories to formal models and empirical analyses. The second subsection below explains the analytical logic of my work with a semi-modelled clarification. I adopt a holistic viewpoint, integrating across both consent-oriented statecraft and coercion-based statecraft, and highlighting the state's strategic selection of statecraft based on its objectives and constraints. Thus, the analytical paradigm of my research uses an interactive model with two actors' strategies and behaviours involved: the state authority and the population.[1]

Coercion or consent: why coercion alone cannot do the work

Gramsci argued that the state is an entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whomever it rules (Gramsci, Hoare, and Nowell-Smith 1971). The state is a combination of dictatorship and hegemony in which the state power relies on both *political society* (force) and *civil society* (consent), and these choices match up with using either force and coercion against its population, exercising dictatorship; or using consensus building, cultural hegemony, and maintaining moral and intellectual leadership (Kohli, Shue, and Migdal 1994). A coercion-based approach is very efficient in maintaining short-term stability and long-term fear. However, consent-based governance enables the state to enjoy more compliance and the 'expression of these subaltern classes who want to educate themselves in the art of government' (Gramsci, Hoare, and Nowell-Smith 1971, p. 126). In the spectrum of coerced compliance and voluntary compliance, authoritarian states have the reputation of using oppression and violence to sustain their rule. Therefore, in the context of an authoritarian regime, an inevitable question arises: why would the state need to manufacture consent if it can instead just use coercion or force to stay in power? The questions 'why can't coercion alone do the work' and 'why is manufacturing active compliance from the population important for rulers in authoritarian regimes?' have been studied in many empirical and theoretical works.

Empirically, we do see some authoritarian regimes, or regimes at an authoritarian stage, showing significant use of coercion and force in their rule. For instance, mass terror, repression and indoctrination were frequently used in totalitarian periods by Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, and military regimes such as Franco's Spain and Pinochet's Chile. Compliance generated by fear was common in these regimes. But any regime that relies only on oppression and violence cannot stabilise its governance and maintain its resilience in the long term. The integrated global economy and the development of the internet have also made mass killing costly and less attractive for autocrats. In recent years, we have observed more non-democratic regimes using sophisticated statecraft to hold on to power. For instance, some imitate the format of democracy and

hold elections to obtain normative legitimacy, while their election processes exhibit wholesale bribery, illegal competition, and information manipulation. Wedeen's case of Asad's cult in Syria argued that rhetoric and symbolic display reduces the need to rely on sheer repression as a mechanism of control (Wedeen 1999).

Some studies have also employed formal models to demonstrate the unsustainability of using violence in non-democratic regimes and justify an authority's choice of hybrid statecraft to maintain compliance. By combining the manufacture of consent with coercive tools, the state can maintain a stable hegemonic position vis-à-vis the population. Repression/violence are among the most extreme ways to crush protest/revolution and alter public opinion through physical coercion (Gregory, Schröder, and Sonin 2006). However, repression is not a once-and-for-all solution. In Kricheli, Livne, and Magaloni's (2011) working paper, they presented a formal model of protest under authoritarianism. Their two-period signalling model showed that, although regimes which are more repressive in the first period can better deter civil opposition, they are more likely in the second period to experience a cascade of power since protests' information-revealing potential is maximised in these regimes. In addition, the work of Acemoglu, Ticchi, and Vindigni (2010), Svolik (2012), and Egorov and Sonin (2011) showed that the authority may experience a greater threat from its military allies once the period of acute repression is over.

Thus, in most cases, the authority tends to consider integrating different tactics in preventing revolution and gaining compliance after rational assessment by the governed. Scholars citing theoretical and empirical evidence have identified many specific combinations. Wintrobe (1990; 2007) modelled two instruments – repression and loyalty – that dictators used to stay in power, dividing such regimes into four categories – tinpots, tyrants, totalitarians, and timocrats – according to their different objectives and correspondingly invested instruments. For instance, totalitarians always aim to maximise their power; therefore, they combine high repression with a capacity to generate loyalty, while tinpot dictators prefer to maximise their own benefits under the constraint of minimum power, so their investment is low on both counts. Although theoretically feasible and easily achieved, eliciting compliance through a redistribution of benefits – irrespective of whether the distribution is to the ruling alliance or to the remaining population – needs credible commitment from the authority (e.g. Boix and Svolik 2013; Gehlbach and Keefer 2011; Myerson 2008). In non-democratic regimes such commitment is often fragile without relevant institutional guarantees. When the state can make only fragile commitments, those who benefit from distributions will discount the effectiveness of its effort to allocate benefits to ensure compliance.

In addition to buying compliance through material means, a more sophisticated way of generating voluntary compliance is to wisely use information and manipulate through censorship, guidance by propaganda, or knowledge

construction. For instance, a state authority may allow free social media so as to obtain the information about the population that the state needs, even though the information may also be used by society to coordinate its protest (Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009). To avoid a potential backfire from the free media, the authorities may also actively send out biased signals through their own propaganda to mislead the public in evaluating the state's capacity (Edmond 2013). Chen and Xu's work (2017) presented a new view: that allowing people's information communication in society actually helps the authorities to obtain material and prevent coordinated revolt from the public.

To return to the main question of this subsection, how useful are these sophisticated tactics compared to simple violence? Guriev and Treisman's work in 2015 proposed a comprehensive argument about the different ways in which modern dictators could help themselves survive. In a game of political leaders trying to convince citizens (some of whom are informed elites) of their competence, a 'dictator can invest in making convincing state propaganda, censoring independent media, co-opting the elite, or equipping police to repress attempted uprisings' (Guriev and Treisman 2015, p. 4). The authors showed that the portfolios of states' techniques differ with the competence of the leader and result in multiple equilibria while:
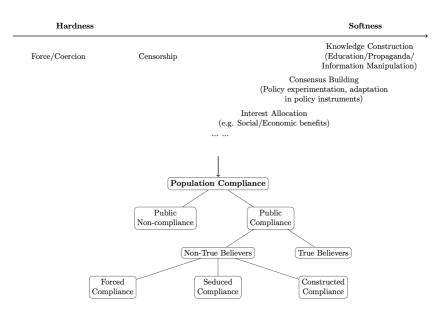
> violence either is a last resort when all else has failed, or is used sparingly when it is possible to conceal it, since competent dictators do not need to use repressions, and reverting to repressions immediately reveals the dictator's incompetence to the public and ultimately results in his [or her] downfall. (Guriev and Treisman 2015, p. 33).

To summarise, violence alone cannot do the work of maintaining governance for an authority which wants to rule in the long term. The modern state enjoys considerable choices of statecraft that enable it to stay in power without much challenge from the population.

Generating compliance: a two-actors model and the state's options

The ultimate goal for the state is to remain in power, in other words to ensure that the population is compliant. Putting the population's reaction on a continuous scale, the state would prefer sincere support (active consent) to forced obedience, while the public's collective non-compliance is more dangerous for the state than a single individual's public non-compliance. There are cases where an individual's private non-compliance goes unnoticed or is tolerated by the authority as long as it does not turn into public non-compliance or, worse still, public collective non-compliance. The state as ruler enjoys resources (such as economic or organisational resources) that could be used to achieve its objectives, but it may not master every detail of the population or its views.

Figure 1.1: Thought map of compliance typology and respective statecraft

Statecraft

Hardness   Softness

Force/Coercion   Censorship   Knowledge Construction
                                                      (Education/Propaganda/
                                                      Information Manipulation)

                                                Consensus Building
                                         (Policy experimentation, adaptation
                                                in policy instruments)

                                    Interest Allocation
                              (e.g. Social/Economic benefits)
                              ... ...

Population Compliance

Public   Public
Non-compliance   Compliance

                Non-True Believers   True Believers

Forced   Seduced   Constructed
Compliance   Compliance   Compliance

In the model, the objective of the population is to optimise its own living conditions, economically, socially, and politically, though the ranking of importance of these different aspects of living standards differs for different social groups. A population ruled by an authority may express compliance, non-compliance, or collective non-compliance such as coordinated rebellion and revolution. The engine of this interactive model's operation in my work is not simply the objective economic situation, as in Wintrobe's pioneering model, but the general design of the ruler, which is constantly updated according to its understanding of the current situation, the public, and its own objectives, or simply as 'governmentality'.

Although overall named 'compliance', the population's acceptance of the authority's rule differs in degree. In Figure 1.1, I present a thought map of the means and outcome of statecraft of modern state. The upper panel displays the various possible statecrafts the state could use in a continuum of hard–soft approaches. In the bottom panel, I demonstrate that, in the scale of outcome of statecraft, public reaction could vary, from sincere believers who present their full consent, to forced compliance for which the population would choose alternative options rather than the incumbent authority if they are given the chance, and to collective non-compliance, which could be dangerous to the state's rule. The typologies in Figure 1.1 do not exhaust all the possibilities, but they act as a guidance about the interactive relation between the state's actions and the potential outcome from the public.

A population has true believers who are sincere loyal to the incumbent ruler. It has supporters who accept the governance, while not necessarily holding the beliefs that the true believers hold. It should be noted that these two categories of 'supporters' may not be easily identifiable from their daily behaviour, but they may choose altogether differently when presented with alternative options of governance. The population's obedience may also be generated by interest exchange, or coercion, as commonly identified in existing studies. The compliance categories are not mutually exclusive – they may be generated simultaneously in response to either a single item or a package of statecraft. As presented in the following table, the state can either construct social knowledge through propaganda, education, or manipulated information, building consensus through policy experiments, or use interest exchanges to buy the population off. It may also use coercive approaches such as censorship and force to maintain public compliance. Again, these tactics can be used by the state either alone or as a package and (if necessary) they can also be tailored for different social groups.

Constructing social knowledge is among the most sophisticated but commonly used tactics for generating compliance. Education is a traditional approach that can impose specific knowledge when an individual is in a formative stage, being socialised and forming his/her value system. Even individuals who have established a relatively stable value system can have their existing knowledge reshaped by a strong input of information from outside. Modern techniques allow the state more possibilities for promoting its ideology and shaping public opinion. Online platforms have become more and more popular in the propaganda toolkit, in addition to conventional media such as newspapers, TV, radio broadcasts, books, and journals. The mouthpieces of the state can publicise well-constructed information about policy, social facts, and excuses for the state's latest moves. The state may also employ internet trolls or hire real people – such as the '50 Cent Party' in China's case (Han 2015; Simon 2014) – to lead the online public opinion and diffuse pro-government arguments. These seemingly 'soft' tactics can in fact signal the repressive capacity of the state. As H. Huang (2015) showed in his work, the capacity to broadcast propaganda and the capacity to repress rebellion are positively correlated.

Consensus building through policy experimentation differs from other compliance generating processes in its way of highlighting the adaptations of state governance and the dynamic process of governmentality. It is especially useful in cases where the population is divided, the regional features are distinctive, and the policy that the state wants to promote is somehow controversial. In China, policy experiments are among the most commonly used strategies; the central government takes a moderate approach to policy changes and allows enough space for it to practise 'trial and error'. Referred to as 'crossing the river by feeling the stones', policy experiments are of great importance in avoiding radical changes in national policy.

Policy experimentation is frequently used in social welfare reforms due to the geographical variation and social and economic diversity between provinces. The reform of a social welfare scheme can be very costly for the central government if it wants to collect comprehensive information about the population. Moreover, since most of the current social welfare schemes in China are fragmented and specific to certain social groups, it is impossible to push any comprehensive social reforms. Therefore, the central government regularly uses policy experimentation when it implements new policies. For instance, in health care, about 60 cities from 1994 onwards participated in the reform in basic urban social health insurance. In education, a pilot policy of abolishing fees for rural compulsory education was initiated in 2006 and expanded to other non-pilot areas in the two years afterwards.

Benefits allocation is another commonly used strategy in exchange for people's compliance with the state, and may cover material rewards, such as incomes, bonuses, tax reduction and so on. They can also be welfare benefits, such as access to certain subsidised programmes. In some cases, it can be political incentives, for instance permission to join a party (membership) or being promoted within the bureaucratic system. The governed decide on their consent and support after reviewing the social and economic benefits received from the authority. Constructed on the social and economic outcome of governmental behaviours, some scholars refer to the population compliance generated by benefits allocation as a specific source of state legitimacy – performance legitimacy.

Censorship is not as direct as pure violence, nor as sophisticated as the knowledge construction approach, but it still can achieve the goal of generating compliance because of its value in increasing the information asymmetry between the individual and the state (Bennett and Naim 2015; McMillan and Zoido 2004). By blocking publication, filtering the internet, bribing the owners and journalists in the 'independent' media, and even threatening these content producers with jail, the authority can prevent the spreading of unfavourable information. Not only can the capacity of the state be shown in the process but, more importantly, it discourages any prospect of coordinated protests and aggravates the pluralistic ignorance in society. The strategic use of censorship that adjusts to different levels of social tension can bring the state more benefit than the use of free media (Lorentzen 2014).

Constraints, choices, and state–individual interaction in transitional situations

In ruling the population, the state faces two constraints. One is the state's own resources for dealing with popular revolt/revolution. The resource constraint is closely related to the state's economic capacity, organisational capacity, and military capacity. Available fiscal resources can be used to fund such means of knowledge construction as education and propaganda, or they can be used

for economic/social/political benefits that can buy off compliance. Resources can also be used to censor unwanted information or fund the state apparatus (such as the police, the military, and prisons). All these investments will help the state remain in power and keep the population compliant, while collective non-compliance and regime change are kept at bay.

In an interactive power relation, the second constraint that the state faces is the information asymmetry regarding people's desire to be non-compliant, both individually and collectively. In its power relationship with the state, the story from the population's side is that they would expect to (feasibly) optimise their living situation. In theory, if the living conditions enjoyed by individuals meet their expectations, they will repay the state with compliance. In this sense, individuals' objectives can be understood as the price of their compliance with the state (it should be noted that, although the state might prefer sincere loyalty, this does not necessarily entail a higher price). If their expectations are not met, individuals may choose non-compliance or revolt, which will also carry certain costs to themselves. But the people's intention to rise up and their doing so are not crystal clear to the state. The possibility of the people's collective non-compliance is a function of their capacity, motivation, and coordination, which are supported by traditional social movement theories about the resources, grievances, political opportunities, and social networks of the activists (Le Bon 1897; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). The state, therefore, needs to tackle all these aspects in order to reduce the collective non-compliance of the public.

Under the two constraints above, the state chooses a hybrid solution from its toolkit that includes both tolerant approaches – such as consent construction and benefit allocation – and intolerant approaches – such as censorship and force – to maximise the compliance from the governed. Each of these tactics has its distinctive effect on the public. The state's intolerant statecraft may be useful in whittling down the capacity as well as the coordination of the population's rebels. However, it may also cause non-cooperation/non-compliance in the long term and increase people's motivation for further revolt/revolution. Tolerant strategies such as propaganda, education, and benefit allocation may not be as efficient as force, but they can be useful for undermining the motivation of the prospective rebels. The knowledge construction approach tends to gain more stable compliance than strategies based on benefit exchange do. However, radical loyalty could turn into radical opposition if ever the believers' expectations of the authority are disappointed. The tolerant and intolerant approaches are strategic substitutes limited by a specific capacity at a certain time, while they become strategic complements when obtaining information from the population. When the state's resources are given at a certain time, the state can increase its investment either in strategies of force or strategies that could manufacture public consent. When seeking certain information from the population, a state must complement any increase of force by efforts to create consent in order to avoid further challenge from the governed.

As I have suggested above, the state's rationale and its implementation of statecraft face the risk that its tactics to maintain state legitimacy will backfire in the population: all these techniques, no matter how sophisticated or powerful, must make sense, meshing with individuals' experience and resonating with their 'common sense'. If a backfire does result, this can be dangerous for tolerant strategies that are designed to shape people's ideology. For instance, in a situation where people's personal knowledge and public knowledge mismatch, the state's efforts to construct knowledge in a certain way may result in discontent rather than advocacy. The state may add force to supplement its governance and ensure that its intentions are executed, for example by pushing reforms while censoring opposed opinions. However, when individuals cannot say what they think, they may falsify their reported/public consent and the accumulated falsification of political attitudes may produce 'cascades' (Kuran 1991). In this case, any initial small-scale protest, if it can ever be formed, will act as an important signal for the whole society to update its belief with regard to the state (Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1993; Lohmann 1994). The possibility of room for people's counter-conduct therefore leads to further implications about the state's action and forces the state to include the estimated population reaction in its decision-making process.

A state's conduct, or governmentality, in dealing with its people is not just a static design. It is a dynamic process of governing and using the best possible portfolio of statecraft practices in response to changing conditions. This feature is especially easy to identify when dramatic social/economic changes occur. For instance, an individual's expectations of redistribution, as well as their estimation of the general expectations of society as a whole, will change when a reformed distribution is under way. In this case, the government's demand for information regarding the public's expectations and the distribution of public opinion can be especially strong. The increased demand for information then needs a decent amount of tolerance in the authority's approach to minimise the cost ascribed to the information asymmetry. Meanwhile, following economic development, a shift of the capacity curve will permit an increase in both the investment in force and the manufacture of consent. In this case, the equilibrium point of various forms of statecraft shifts, and the specific direction of the shift, or the portion of each strategy, depends on the slope of each constraint line.

Conclusions

This paradigm elaborated in this chapter clarifies the way in which the two-way story of state–individual interaction in modern society works and how a rapidly changing social and economic scenario may prompt a state to adjust its governmentality. The analytical paradigm is designed to be as comprehensive as possible to capture all the possible options in the state–individual interaction

and can be formally developed in the future. In the chapters that follow I take the first step in illustrating the theoretical schema with empirical evidence. A key step here forms the focus of the next chapter, looking at the ways in which state policy demarcates subpopulations where different governmentalities may be applied.

Notes

1 Since this book deals with the state–society/individual relationship, I do not include bureaucrats in the model, as many studies using a similar approach do.

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