"Dealing with the ‘Concession-Repression Dilemma’: Experiences and Practices from China and Singapore"

Moderator: Dr Elaine Tan
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ABSTRACT
Autocracies always find themselves in a dilemma when deciding how to respond to threats from the mass. While concession and repression are treated as default options in the theory of political survival, they both have limitations and uncertainties that are known as the ‘concession-repression dilemma’. Through the experience of China and Singapore, this paper illustrates how the above dilemma can be mitigated by institutions like ‘Grand Mediation’ (GM) and ‘Meet-the-People Sessions’ (MPS). These institutions serve as a filtering mechanism that enables the regimes to distinguish the trivial but numerous grievances in daily life from the real dangers that threaten regime stability. As the toolbox becomes rich, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and People’s Action Party rely less on violence or compromise in maintaining political order and must only target its coercive apparatus at a small group of opposition.

BIO
Ieong Meng U is lecturer at the Department of Government and Public Administration at the University of Macau. His research interests is comparative authoritarianism with specific region interest of the great China region.