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Political Science 140

4 February 2019

Reaction Paper 1

An authoritarian regime is a political system where power is centralized, democracy according to Dahl is a decentralized system such that power falls on the hands of citizens and this leads to collective decision making (Dahl 1982 6). The different types of authoritarian regimes are as follows: personalist, party, military, and monarchies. In studies of democratization tools such as Democracy-Dictatorship index and Polity IV are used to measure levels of democracy, these measurements may determine the amount of influence an authoritarian regime has on democratization. Democracy-Dictatorship index is binary and takes the minimalist approach, such that procedure and institutions determine whether a system of government is a democracy or a dictatorship (Cheibub Antonio Vreeland 2009 71).

A personalist regime refers to a political system where power is concentrated on a single person. As the name implies, a personalist system is “personal”, this means such rulers tend to appoint friends and family to positions of power. Personalist regimes tend to start wars, this is due to the repercussions of losing power (Geddes Wright Frantz 2014). A personalist regime fails to meet the criteria established by the Democracy-Dictatorship index this makes it valid for analysis. Generally chief executive gains power through a coup such as Central African Republic’s Jean-Bédél Bokassa. A personalist leader appoints the legislature, therefore such institutions are loyal to the leader. There are no parties competing as there are no elections.

Alternation of power in a personalist regime has negative consequences on the leader as they are severely punished (Cheibub Gandhi Vreeland 2009 69). Polity IV may be used to analyze the extent of authoritarianism or comparing personalist regimes to other authoritarian regimes.

Party regimes distribute power to more than just one individual. In some instances the executive leader may serve as a figurehead, that must adhere to the demands of the party. Dominant party regimes may arise from populism. Mexico would be classified as a dictatorship while under the control of the PRI. This analysis falls short when considering that opposition parties exist, or that citizens of Mexico align with the PRI. Polity IV is better suited for that analysis of dominant party regimes in that the executive leader has limited power since they must adhere to the party that is generally composed of multiple factions. Polity IV and Democracy-Dictatorship index focus on the procedures, and since dominant party regimes tend to be the most institutionalized using either tool for analysis is sufficient for questions relating to executive power. Party regimes tend to have the political institutions necessary for democratization, such as a legislature as well as competing factions.

Military regimes arise from an institution in government, the military. In order for a regime to be considered military, the executive leader must be associated with the military. Generally, a military regime applies the structure of the armed forces and established them in the regime. Due to the possibility of armed conflict within the regime, such a regime is unstable and often leads to the forfeiture of power. (Geddes Frantz Wright 2014). The goal of a military regime is to preserve their institution, and seeking power is only done for the benefit of the military. Military regimes tend to favor democracy because their presence is not seen as a possible threat. In a personalist or dominant party regime the military institution must adhere to a

single person, or to a group of people, meanwhile, a democracy has distributed power and therefore the military may to some extent act as an independent institution. In order for the military to control an entire nation they must split or create numerous institutions, but naturally, they fail to do so because the military is in itself an institution, and therefore breaking apart often leads to internal conflict. Such regime fails to meet all fundamental part of the democracy-dictatorship index, since it does not elect the chief executive, legislature, parties are existed, and there is no alternation of power only reshuffling. Using the democracy-dictatorship index to label such regime would be sufficient since such regimes fall at an extreme.

A monarchy main executive leadership is a royal family, that family that controls policy appoints leaders and is established through the bloodline. A monarchy stays in power by establishing connections by appointing family members to the position of power or marriage. Such a regime has established family committees for decision making. The democracy-dictatorship is valid due to the fact that a monarchy fails to meet any of the requirements for a democracy, such as an elected executive chief since the king is appointed by the royal family, the legislature is virtually nonexistent, no parties, and no alternation of power only reshuffling of a king within the royal family. The lack of independent institutions and strict rules to who is able to gain power makes a monarchy unlikely to transition to democracy, and the democracy-dictatorship index clearly indicates this.

In order to understand how authoritarian regimes influence democratization one must consider the aftermath of such regimes. A leader in a personalist regime is likely to face severe punishment and is will, therefore, attempt to impede democratization. Leaders of dominant party regimes that transition to a new form of dictatorship will face consequence and

is, therefore, incentives to avoid such transition. Militaries and monarchs find themselves facing evenly consequences in transitioning to democracy or a different form of dictatorship but may choose democracy, as leaders may be perceived to be a threat to new autocratic regimes (Geddes Wright Frantz 321 2014).

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