Reading Summary: “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism” by Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way

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Three Sentence Summary: Since the Cold War and the ensuing third wave of democratization, one important type of hybrid political regime has emerged: competitive authoritarianism. These regimes are characterized by abuses of state power and unfair yet competitive political elections, a weak legislature, attempts to rid the judiciary of power through impeachment and bribery, and manipulations over the media. These regimes emerged where leaders were unable to consolidate authoritarian or democratic power, and where international pressures to democratize were minimal or overlooked.

Three Questions:

1. Do competitive authoritarian regimes usually have charismatic legitimacy?
2. Does this article weaken Huntington’s argument that the post-Cold War era primarily saw a wave of new democracies?
3. Do authoritarian regimes give international pressures to competitive authoritarian regimes to not democratize?

Difficulty Rating: 3