

***Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes.* By Juan J. Linz.** Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000. 343pp.

Juan Linz, Sterling Professor of Political and Social Science at Yale University, wrote the section on totalitarian and authoritarian regimes for the *Handbook of Political Science* (edited by Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, and published by Addison-Wesley in 1975). That section has been published as a monograph with a new first chapter. This is a welcome appearance, since the *Handbook* has long been out of print. Linz's contribution built upon earlier work by Hannah Arendt (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*), and Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski (*Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*). A quarter of a century later, Linz's work remains valid and sufficiently important to warrant re-publication.

The new first chapter reviews the work on authoritarian regimes since 1975 in the light of real world developments. Linz felt that his original writing could remain with this new introduction. As a consequence, most of the comments in this review are directed to his new remarks. The original material has been available for comments for the last quarter of a century.

Linz's orientation has been taxonomic from the start. He categorizes, catalogues, and groups regimes into typologies. These typologies, in turn, explain critical institutional features of non-democratic regimes (for example, totalitarian regimes have a monistic centre of power, an ideology, and large-scale mobilization of the citizenry [p. 70]). Linz acknowledges the principal difficulties that his typologies have encountered in the past quarter century. First and foremost, the world has changed. Totalitarian governments have, for the most part, vanished. New types of non-democratic regimes, like Iran's theocracy, do not fit into Linz's 1975 typology. Linz recognizes these difficulties, but remains committed to the taxonomic approach. For example, he asks whether fascist Italy was in fact totalitarian (p. 7). Secondly, Linz acknowledges that he neglected several components of non-democratic regimes in the 1975 work. Among the needed additions he cites most prominently are the military, religion, and society. Linz praises Alfred Stepan's work on the military and notes his own recent writings on religion and society. Other omissions are treated differently. Linz admits that he lacks the expertise to write about the economic effects on regimes. Moreover, he criticizes those who use an economic approach because it "ignores the importance of institutions and political legitimacy" (p. 32). Finally, Linz notes that he ignores the presence of dissent and protest (pp. 26–27).

How useful is the taxonomic approach to our understanding of how non-democratic regimes work? Linz admits that the technique requires ideal types and that many regimes fit one or more ideal regime type

(p. 25). He also grants that new kinds of regime form frequently. To accommodate the most recent spate of quasi-anarchic regimes, Linz creates the new ideal type of a “chaocracy” — the rule of chaos and mobs (p. 36). We could continue this categorizing in the future, but does its value outweigh other approaches?

Let us step back to basics. What would we want to know about non-democratic regimes if we were completely ignorant of past research? One would argue that we would like to know how these regimes sustain themselves, particularly in the presence of dissent. How much repression is enough to stifle dissent? Where is the point at which repression induces a backlash against the regime? When and how do members and supporters of the state defect from it? What are the vulnerabilities of these regimes? How do they collapse?

These are not necessarily Linz’s questions. Instead, Linz seeks to create a typology of non-democratic regimes, and then use it to find out if religion, the society, or the economy matters in the regime. The difficulty with Linz’s approach is that it does not allow the reader to answer directly the fundamental questions posed above.

As a first act, one might well want to group into types the regimes one sees. However, the more difficult the grouping, the worse the fit, the less useful is any typology. If there is a need to invent new categories of regimes, perhaps another approach is needed. In addition, because typologies are static in time, they do not provide the required information on the dynamics of non-democratic regimes.

However, which approach can best answer basic questions about non-democratic regimes? It is curious that Linz does not cite what are arguably the most important theoretical works on non-democratic regimes, dissent, and repression that have appeared since 1975. For example, James DeNardo’s *Power in Numbers* (Princeton University Press, 1985), Mark Lichbach’s *The Rebel’s Dilemma* (University of Michigan Press, 1995), and Ronald Wintrobe’s *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), all deal with the state’s or dictator’s dilemma (how to repress just enough to stifle protest and yet be able to mobilize the state’s security forces against dissent). All of these books deal with the central question: how does a dictator retain power against an array of opponents that are inherent in any political context? As Linz admits, he ignores the dissidents. Without dissidents, we have non-democratic regimes alone, or in the context of religion and society. Even Stepan’s emphasis on the importance of the military lacks meaning without an opponent. In Latin America, at least, the most prominent military target in non-democratic regimes are the dissident citizens.

Linz specifically rejects the mass–society approach used by Hannah Arendt (p. 18). He remains committed to the typology approach despite

its admitted shortcomings. The books cited above all use the economic approach (rational choice method). This method has made better progress in explaining the many puzzles of domestic conflict and the collapse of non-democratic regimes, particularly when coupled with empirical analysis.

Whereas Hannah Arendt's concepts arose from her experience in Germany and Europe, Linz developed his concepts from his work on General Franco and Spain. From these perspectives, both theorists venture to a far more general approach on non-democratic regimes. The new generation of theorists, for example, DeNardo, Lichbach, and Wintrobe, have little or no background in dictatorship. They start from abstract questions and puzzles and then seek to model answers and solutions. These models, in turn, can often be estimated with available data. At present, there are no definitive solutions to the questions posed above. However, the more modern approach will lead one closer to the answers than will Linz's new typologies. Nonetheless, the great attraction to academic research is the race to solve basic problems and questions. Although this reviewer favours the economic approach, hopefully Professor Linz will continue his taxonomic work in order to find new answers and even new problems, because the discipline benefits from robust debate. For this reason alone, this volume is a welcome addition for researchers on non-democratic regimes.

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