

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
AUTHORITARIAN INSTITUTIONS

Terms and concepts to know:

Dictator's dilemma
Personality cult

Supreme leader

Study and discussion questions:

1. Some authoritarian regimes disperse power more widely than others. How can comparativists determine "who rules" and what, if anything, limits executive power in an authoritarian regime?
2. Authoritarian regimes come in several different subtypes: military, one-party, theocratic, personalist, and electoral authoritarian. In what ways do differences across these subtypes explain differences in leaders' actions, levels of repression, and types of popular participation?
3. Schorr argues that "[t]here are no issues on which China can be considered an ally." What are the implications of taking this position for us, and for the world?
4. What is the difference (according to Bloom) between authoritarian capitalism and democratic socialism? Which does he favor, which does he criticize, and do you agree with his assessment?
5. Caitlin Johnstone (controversially) compares totalitarian regimes and free democracies. Where is her argument fair and where would you not agree with her comparison?
6. What is Bernie Sanders' plan for defeating "authoritarianism"? Will it work?
7. Why is clientelism so prevalent and important in authoritarian regimes? In what types of authoritarian regimes does it seem most important, and what might explain this?
8. Some authoritarian regimes allow at least some institutionalized limits on rulers' power. What explains where and why this happens or doesn't happen?

Readings:

Orvis / Drogus – Chapter 8

Video:

Putin's Way.