



*The discussion that we began in one of the Yaroslavl Forum's newsletters about the complex society and post-democratic solutions continues on. This topic prompted considerable debate within the intellectual community and has become ever more pronounced since the time of its publication. We return now to the topic and give the floor to Mary Malone, political scientist, and expert on Latin American studies at the University of New Hampshire.*

## SUCCESS OF DEMOCRACY DEPENDS ON THE QUALITY OF AUTHORITARIANISM

Mary Malone

There are several different paths to democracy. In my book, *Achieving Democracy: Democratization in Theory and Practice* (to be published soon), I examined a diverse group of nine successful democracies, and then examined the paucity of democratic governance in the Middle East. The theories that will explain the emergence of successful democratic governance will vary according to the nature of the prior authoritarian regime. Private enterprise seemed to promote democracy in the early (but limited) democracies of Great Britain and the United States, but it is not very important in promoting democracy in the more recent cases of Chile and South Africa. If we want to understand how to implement new democratic practices, we have to first think about the authoritarian structures and practices we are replacing.

**It is possible to create an up-to-date innovative economy in either an authoritarian or democratic state. There is no clear relationship between authoritarian/democratic governance and economic development.** In the 1990s in particular, a lot of research tried to generalize the experiences of the Asian Tigers to argue that authoritarian regimes performed better than democratic ones at deliver-



ing economic goods. Today though, there is consensus that overall, authoritarian regimes are not better at promoting economic development than democratic ones. There is little relationship between regime type and economic development. There are many reasons for this lack of relationship, but one that addresses the case of China most directly is that for every authoritarian regime like China that delivers on economic promises, there are plenty of dictatorships like North Korea that don't.

I don't think culture explains the problems that democracy has encountered in Middle Eastern countries, or anywhere else in the world. Certain types of democra-

cy, or the institutional arrangements of democratic governance, might work well or poorly in different countries. Foreign intervention and international context appear more important in explaining the emergence of new democracies in the past 20 years, but the basic idea that citizens have 'a say' in who governs them, and what the rules of the country will be, is one that has widespread support across time and country. Instead, **the failure of democratic governance can typically be tied to problems of legitimacy, the inability to respond to citizens' needs, and/or elite manipulation/monopolization of government institutions or economic goods.** In this regard it would be useful to look at health care reform debates in the U.S. Congress. I don't think that passing health care reform over minority objections puts the basic democratic principle of respecting minority rights in jeopardy. The issue for democracy is typically not minority opinion, but rather minority rights. Ultimately, minority opinion had many chances to express political views and try to convince the majority of these views using democratic procedures. ■

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