Dictatorships, democracies and the people

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Abstract

Purpose – The paper aims to consider system and control ideas which are useful in analysing problems in human science.

Design/methodology/approach – Three arts of dictatorships are considered, namely: dictatorship in a developing country, dictatorship in a developed country and the global dictatorship. The conditions leading to these dictatorships are explained.

Findings – Two arts of democracies are discussed and the common parameters of democracies and dictatorships are determined. In all the above, the position of the people is discussed.

Originality/value – An ideal democracy is suggested which can be considered as a goal for a better world and as reference for evaluation.

Keywords Cybernetics, Government, Systems theory

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

In this paper, we deal with an application of system theory in human science. In the references (Mansour, 2000, 2001, 2002a, b), different problems in human science were discussed leading to more or less reliable conclusions. In Mansour (2002b), the fundamentals of modern civilization have been represented by four parameters namely; the belief in natural science, rationalism and empiricism, seeking happiness as aim in life and ethics.

Here, we shall discuss the consequences of the first parameter which is belief in natural science; which leads to power. Actually, power has been the crucial factor in the history of mankind.

According to Russell (1975) “the fundamental concept in social science is power with its many forms (wealth, military, civil authority, propaganda, secret service, priestly power)”. Love of power is one of the strongest human motives even following the leader is trying to take part in power. Machiavelli glorifies naked power. Hobbes propagates that power of the state is absolute. Rousseau in his social contract tends to justify the totalitarian state and Nietzsche wants an international ruling race who is to be the lords of the earth. Belief in race and nationalism is natural outcome of love of power. Prophets have valued things other than power (wisdom, justice, universal love, ...).

Information is a powerful tool in the hand of not only totalitarian, but also democratic systems. There is a saying that may be not far from the truth “in a dictatorship the information is manipulated but the people know it and in a democracy the information is also manipulated but the people do not know”.

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Dictatorship in a developing country

In a developing country, the education level is normally low so that there is always a possibility that someone with leading qualities seizes power. He relies on the weapons of the army and the police. Figure 1 shows the cause-effect diagram of this dictatorship.

The low level of education is a sufficient condition but not necessary for a dictatorship. Here, we have two positive feedback loops which prevent the system from recovering. External interference is necessary for a considerable change towards a new development. The external interference can be a natural catastrophe. Unfortunately, the modelled system is present in a large number of societies in the present world.

Now we consider the people in such a society and how they react. One can divide the people in seven groups:

1. The small number of people who share power with the dictator.
2. The people who benefit from supporting the dictator.
3. The brain-washed group which supports the dictator due to the monopoly of information.
4. The group which supports the dictator to avoid harm.
5. The group who opposes the dictator but remain silent.
6. The group which opposes the dictator and is active in speaking and/or writing.
7. The small group which use violence against the regime.

**Remark 1.** The dictator needs group 7 to have its activity as excuse for suppressing group 6. If group 7 does not exist then the secret service will simulate the activity. Group 6 is the most dangerous group from the viewpoint of the dictator.

**Remark 2.** The dictator relies on two centres of power; the information and the secret service. Much of the crimes are committed by the secret service which has
no accountability. In some cases, the dictator himself loses power to the secret service and the army and becomes only nominal.

**Dictatorship in a developed country**
In a developed country, a national emergency *can* lead to a dictatorship because somebody of leading qualities can claim that he is able to handle the situation and most of the people are ready to give him the power he claims he needs. Figure 2 shows the cause-effect diagram in this case. With only one feedback loop. The dictator keeps his grip on power misusing the information and the secret service. Here, also a recovery can be also from outside.

*Remark.* The groups of the people are almost similar to the groups in a developing country with the difference that many people have the possibility to get different information due to globalization so that the brain-washed group is much smaller in this case.

**Global dictatorship**
Global dictatorship occurs when a single country has excessive military and economic power (superpower). The system has similarity with the dictatorship in a developed country. Figure 3 shows the cause-effect diagram in this case. The terror loop is similar. The members of the global system are countries of different system of government. Although the dictatorship cannot be complete, groups of countries corresponding to the groups of individuals discussed above can be present. The United Nations structure allows the presence of global dictatorship because the United Nations is itself a nondemocratic system. The United Nations includes a general assembly and an international court without binding decisions and the Security Council cannot be held accountable to any body and is controlled by veto powers. Any veto power country with excessive military and economic power is a candidate for global dictatorship.

The system can soften only if the super power looses its dominance.

![Diagram](image-url)
Democracies

Democracies in general have some aspects of dictatorships. The two important aspects are: information and secret service. The information comes from the media which can be manipulated if the media is controlled by rich moguls or special groups.

The secret service cannot be completely controlled because of its nature of secrecy. In democratic countries some of the crimes of the secret service appear sometimes on the surface.

There are two types of democracies: one where the people have control on the decisions of their representatives and the government every four or five years (sampled democracy) and the other where the people have continuous control (direct democracy) (Figure 4).

In a sampled democracy, the government and the parliament can make decisions against the will of the majority of the people without the possibility of rectification. On the other hand, in a direct democracy the people have always the possibility to
cancel at least the important decisions of the parliament and the government. That means the people have their representative always under control.

**A reference democracy**

Aspects of an ideal democratic system include:

- Representation and direct democracy.
- Decentralization to avoid accumulation of power.
- Parties and independents in representation.
- No concentration of information and building mechanisms to avoid misuse of information.
- **Economics**: no concentration of wealth. Man is not a machine (taking care of the aims of individuals) – adequate social security system.
- **Education**: learning that all humans have equal rights irrespective of colour, race, religion or world view. Training in democracy – no racial or nationalistic history education – learning respect for the environment.
- **Justice system**: independent, judges are not chosen according to political agenda.
- Secret service limited in scope and with adequate mechanisms for control.

These are some aspects of an ideal democratic system and it is regarded as a reference system.

**Conclusions**

The characterization of dictatorships and democracies has been tried considering some system concepts. We hope this characterization shall be useful in developing political systems which are more human and which makes the world a better place to live.

**References**


**Further reading**


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