

8

VARIETIES OF DICTATORSHIP

A monarchy is the best kind of government because the King is the owner of the country. Like the owner of a house, when the wiring is wrong, he fixes it.

Italian peasant, quoted in Banfield and Banfield (1958, 26)

There can be no government without an army. No army without money. No money without prosperity. And no prosperity without justice and good administration.

Ibn Qutayba, ninth-century Muslim scholar

OVERVIEW

1. In this chapter, we examine the wide variety of dictatorships around the world. One common way to distinguish between dictatorships is in terms of their “support coalitions.” Such an approach indicates that there are three main types of dictatorship: (1) monarchic dictatorships, (2) military dictatorships, and (3) civilian dictatorships. Civilian dictatorships can be further classified into those that are personalist and those that have a dominant regime party.
2. There are two fundamental problems of authoritarian rule. The *problem of authoritarian power-sharing* recognizes that authoritarian regimes face potential intra-elite conflict and that the dictator must satisfy those with whom he shares power. The *problem of authoritarian control* recognizes that authoritarian regimes face potential elite-mass conflict and that the dictator must deal with threats from below. These two problems of authoritarian rule shape the institutional structure, policies, and survival of authoritarian regimes.
3. Selectorate theory provides an explanation for the variation we observe in the economic performance of dictatorships. Selectorate theory distinguishes governments based on the size of their selectorate—those with a say in selecting the leader—and on the size of their winning coalition—those in the selectorate whose support is essential for the leader to stay in office.

4. Leaders in systems with large winning coalitions (democracies) tend to use public goods to keep their supporters happy, whereas those in systems with small winning coalitions (dictatorships) tend to use private goods.
5. Leaders in systems where the winning coalition is large relative to the selectorate, such as monarchic and military dictatorships, must produce good economic performance to keep their supporters loyal. In contrast, leaders in systems where the winning coalition is small relative to the selectorate, such as personalist and dominant-party dictatorships, don't have to work as hard to keep their supporters loyal.

In this chapter, we examine the wide variety of authoritarian regimes that exist around the world. We begin by discussing one common typology of authoritarian regimes that distinguishes dictatorships based on the identity of their “support coalitions.” This typology suggests that there are three basic types of authoritarian regime: (1) monarchic dictatorships, (2) military dictatorships, and (3) civilian dictatorships. Civilian dictatorships can be further classified into those that are personalist and those that have a dominant party.

There are two fundamental problems of authoritarian rule (Svolik 2012). The first problem is the *problem of authoritarian power-sharing*. Dictators never rule alone. Instead, they rely on support from key groups and allies within the authoritarian elite with whom they share power. Dictators must keep this support coalition satisfied in order to prevent them from challenging their rule. The second problem is the *problem of authoritarian control*. This problem focuses on the conflict that exists between the authoritarian elite and the masses over which it rules. These two problems of authoritarian rule indicate that dictatorial politics is fundamentally shaped by intra-elite conflict and elite-mass conflict. These two sources of conflict shape the institutional structure adopted by dictatorships and the prospects for authoritarian survival.

In terms of their economic performance, some dictatorships perform poorly, but others perform at least as well as the average democracy. In the remainder of this chapter, we explore why this might be the case with the help of selectorate theory. According to selectorate theory, the key to a country's material well-being has less to do with whether it's democratic or dictatorial and more to do with the size of its “winning coalition” and “selectorate,” two terms we'll define in more detail shortly. Once we start to think in terms of the size of the winning coalition and the selectorate, it becomes a lot easier to explain why some countries produce better economic policies and provide more public goods than others.

A COMMON TYPOLOGY OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

Dictatorships are not all alike. Indeed, there's a wide variety of dictatorships, and many different ways in which they could be classified (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014; Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Levitsky and Way 2002; Schedler 2002). Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010) provide one common typology of authoritarian regimes. They suggest that a useful way to distinguish between dictatorships is in terms of how authoritarian rulers are removed

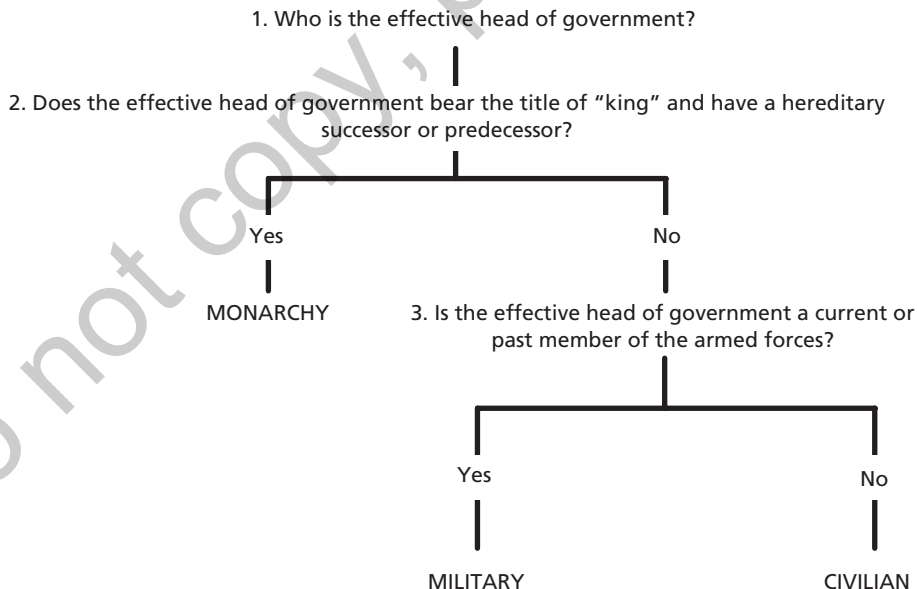
from office. As dictators are nearly always deposed by fellow members of the regime (Ezrow and Frantz 2011; Geddes 1999; Svobik 2009), this means classifying dictatorships based on the characteristics of their “inner sanctums” or “support coalitions.”

A Three-Way Classification: Monarchy, Military, Civilian

According to this approach, the three basic types of dictatorship are: (1) monarchic dictatorships, (2) military dictatorships, and (3) civilian dictatorships. A **monarchic dictatorship** is an autocracy in which the executive holds power on the basis of family and kin networks. A **military dictatorship** is an autocracy in which the executive relies on the armed forces to hold power. All other dictatorships are **civilian dictatorships**. In Figure 8.1, we illustrate the coding rules Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010, 87) employ for identifying each type of authoritarian regime.

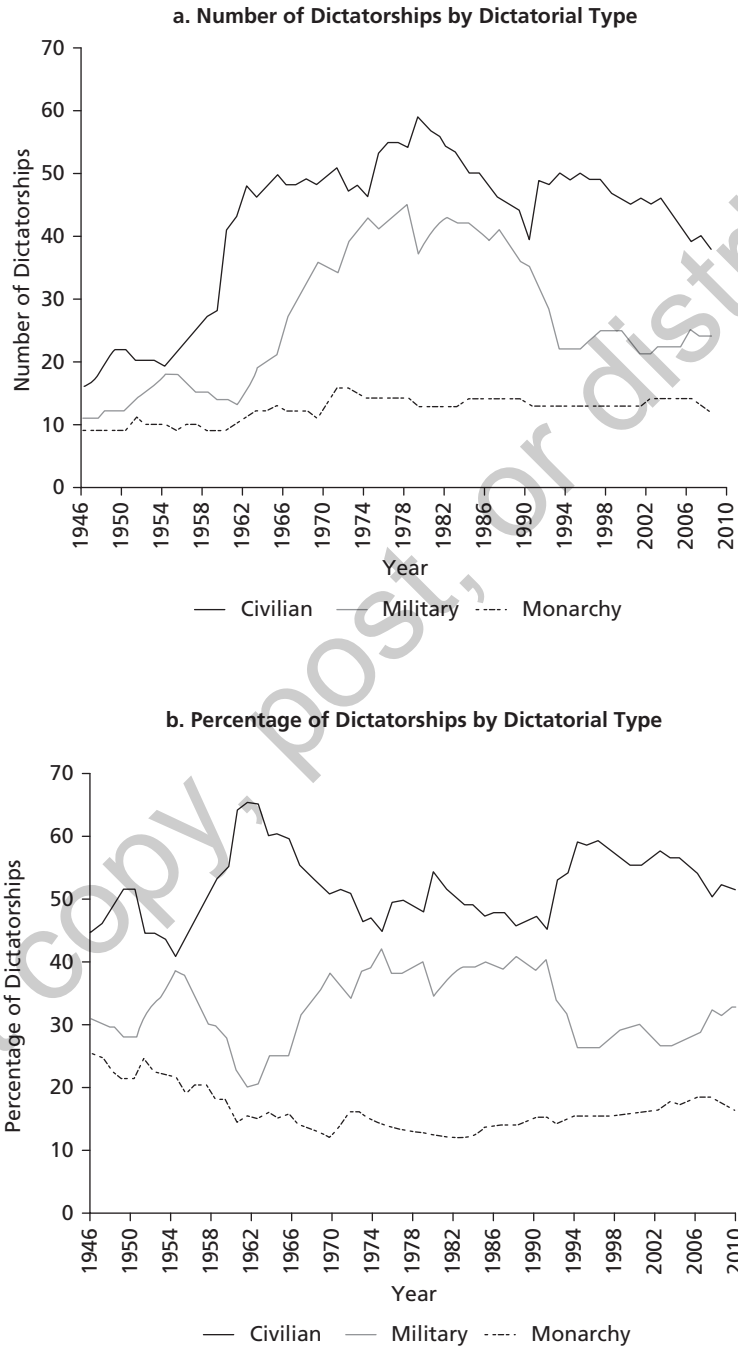
The first goal is to identify the effective head of the government. Although this is relatively straightforward in democracies (see Chapter 10), it’s not always as easy in dictatorships. In most cases, the head of a dictatorial government will be a king, a president, or a prime minister. Occasionally, “an *eminence grise* lurks behind the scenes. . . . For example, Somoza and his sons installed figurehead presidents in Nicaragua to formally comply with term limits” (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010, 88). The second goal is to identify whether the head of government bears the title of “king” and whether he has a hereditary successor or predecessor. If this is the case, we have a monarchic dictatorship. The third goal is to identify whether the head of government is a current or past member of the armed forces. If so, we have a military dictatorship. And if not, we have a civilian dictatorship. Leaders who come to power as part of a guerrilla movement or insurgency, such as Fidel Castro in Cuba (1959–2011), Yoweri Museveni

FIGURE 8.1 ■ Classifying Dictatorships



Source: Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010, 87).

FIGURE 8.2 ■ Monarchic, Military, and Civilian Dictatorships, 1946–2008



Source: Data from Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010).

in Uganda (1986–), and Paul Kagame in Rwanda (2000–), are considered civilian, rather than military, dictators. Although these leaders often give themselves military titles, they can't rely on the support of the military in the same way that former or current members of the military can. Indeed, the military are often one of the main threats to these types of dictators.

In Figure 8.2 on page 158, we show how the number and percentages of monarchic, military, and civilian dictatorships in the world have changed from 1946 to 2008. The civilian form of dictatorship has always been the most common. The heyday for military dictatorships was in the late 1970s when the military ran almost 40 percent of dictatorships. There's been a significant decline in the number of military dictatorships since the end of the Cold War. While the number of civilian and military dictatorships in the world has changed quite a bit over time, the same is not true of monarchies. This suggests that monarchies have been a particularly stable form of dictatorial regime.

To a large extent, this typology of authoritarian regimes is based on the idea that we can distinguish between different types of dictators in terms of the identity of their support coalitions or what we'll call a little later in the chapter their "winning coalitions." Dictators need to keep their support coalitions happy if they're to stay in power. Although the term *dictator* often conjures up the image of an all-powerful individual, it's important to recognize that all dictators, like their democratic counterparts, rely on the support of a coalition to stay in power.

An implication of this is that when we see a dictator removed from power, we're likely to see him replaced by a defecting member of his own support coalition. As a result, we should frequently see dictators replaced by dictators of a similar type. In fact, there's considerable evidence that this is what happens. Three things can happen when a dictator leaves office (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). First, democratization may occur with the result that the authoritarian regime is replaced by a democratic regime. Second, the same authoritarian regime may survive but under new leadership. And third, the incumbent authoritarian regime may be replaced by a different type of authoritarian regime. In Table 8.1, we present data showing what happened when 388 authoritarian leaders left office for reasons other than natural death between 1945 and 1996. Dictatorial leaders are replaced by individuals from the same authoritarian regime about 50 percent of the time. Of the 22 monarchs, 11 (50 percent) were replaced by other monarchs. Of the 179 military leaders, 89 (49.7 percent) were replaced by other military leaders. And of the 187 civilian leaders, 103 (55 percent) were replaced by civilian leaders. If we ignore, for the moment, authoritarian leaders who are

TABLE 8.1 ■ Leader Succession in Three Types of Dictatorial Regime, 1946–1996

Type of current dictator	Type of successor				Total
	Monarchy	Military	Civilian	Democrat	
Monarchy	11	6	4	1	22
Military	0	89	38	52	179
Civilian	2	53	103	29	187
Total	13	148	145	82	388

Source: Gandhi and Przeworski (2007, 1289).

Note: Excludes dictators who died of natural causes while in office or who were still in office as of 1996.

succeeded by democratic leaders, then the tendency for authoritarian leaders to be succeeded by leaders of the same type becomes even more pronounced—70 percent of military leaders were followed by a military leader and 65 percent of civilian leaders were followed by civilian leaders. The persistence of an authoritarian leader's type when the particular authoritarian leader is removed is the reason why we often speak not just of individual dictatorial *leaders* but also of dictatorial *regimes*. This point emphasizes the fact that the survival of a dictatorial leader and the survival of a dictatorial regime are not the same thing.

Monarchic Dictatorships

The first type of authoritarian regime comprises monarchies.¹ Dictatorial monarchs rely on their family and kin network to come to power and stay in power. As an example, Gandhi and Przeworski (2007, 1288) note how the emir of Qatar “reshuffled his cabinet in 1992, installing his sons as ministers of defense, finance and petroleum, interior, and economy and trade; his grandson in charge of defense affairs; and his nephews in public health and Islamic affairs.” In general, the family and kin members in a monarchy play an important role when it comes to the issue of succession. Although the successor is typically a member of the royal family, she needn't be the monarch's firstborn; that is, the system of succession needn't be based on primogeniture. In fact, Herb (1999, 80) notes that “the most basic rule of the succession [in Kuwait] is that the family ‘elects’ the ruler by consensus, based on the perception by family leaders of their own best interests.” Even if the established procedure for succession is violated in a monarchy, it's typically the case that the new leader must have the support of the royal family elite.

The Kingdom of eSwatini, formerly Swaziland, highlights the important role the royal family can play in choosing the monarch and the lengths that some monarchs go to in order to stabilize their base of societal support (Woods 2012, 2017). Historically, the king (*Ngwenyama*, Lion) and “senior queen” (*Ndlovukati*, She-Elephant) have ruled together. The senior queen is typically the king's mother. When the king's mother is dead, the role of senior queen goes to one of the king's wives. The king and senior queen must come from different families, and they each have separate royal villages that act as their headquarters. No king can appoint his successor to the throne. In fact, the key role in the choice of a successor is played by the Royal Council (*Liqoqo*), a traditional advisory council made up of members of the royal family. The new king must be chosen from the royal family line, the Dlamini. Although the exact rules of succession are shrouded in secrecy, it's thought that the Royal Council chooses someone who is unmarried and the only child of his mother; the mother, in turn, becomes the new senior queen. The king is expected to consolidate his position over time by choosing wives from every clan. The first two wives are chosen for the king from specific clans—the Masebula clan and the Motsa clan—by the Royal Council, and their children can't become king. The current king, Makhosetive Dlamini (Mswati III), came to power in 1986 and has fifteen wives and twenty-three children. Other contemporary examples of monarchic dictatorships include Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

As Figure 8.2 suggests, dictatorial monarchies are a particularly stable form of authoritarian regime. Empirically, monarchic dictatorships suffer from less violence and political instability than other forms of dictatorship, and monarchic leaders survive in office longer than other authoritarian leaders. There's also some evidence that monarchies have more stable property

¹As we'll see in Chapter 10, some democracies—parliamentary democracies—can have a monarch as the head of state. Thus, the presence of a monarch is not necessarily a sign that a country is a dictatorship.

rights and experience faster economic growth than other types of dictatorship (Menaldo 2012). As Table 8.1 indicates, only one monarchic dictatorship (Nepal) has transitioned to democracy in the postwar period. In 1991, the Nepalese king, faced with societal opposition demanding multiparty elections, negotiated a transition to a parliamentary democracy in which he would remain as the head of state. In effect, he agreed to transform Nepal from an authoritarian monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in a parliamentary democracy. Not only are democratic transitions quite rare among monarchic dictatorships, but when a dictatorial monarchy does collapse, it's often followed by periods of violence and the installation of an even more repressive authoritarian regime. As Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014, 326) point out, the overthrow of monarchic dictatorships has led to long and bloody civil wars in three countries—Yemen (1962–1970), Ethiopia (1974–1991), and Afghanistan (1978–). Similarly, the Libyan monarchy was replaced by a repressive civilian dictatorship led by Muammar al-Qaddafi (1969–2011), while the Shah of Iran was removed during the 1979 Iranian Revolution and replaced by the Islamist cleric Ayatollah Khomeini (1979–1989).

Why are monarchic dictatorships so stable? Menaldo (2012) argues that monarchic dictatorships have developed a political culture that allows them to solve credible commitment problems with respect to their support coalitions. To motivate his argument, Menaldo starts by contrasting the experience of monarchies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) during the Arab Spring of 2011 with the experience of other types of dictatorship in the region. He indicates that monarchies, such as Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman, were largely spared the sort of political violence that plagued dictatorial leaders in the rest of the region. As we noted in Chapter 5, some monarchies, like Saudi Arabia, did feel it necessary to pump billions of dollars into public programs to keep the populace on their side (Ross 2011). Indeed, Bahrain's king Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa went further than this, imprisoning hundreds of protesters, imposing martial law, and calling in thousands of troops from Saudi Arabia to clamp down on emerging protest movements. Overall, though, the level of political violence and instability in the region's monarchies was considerably less than that in non-monarchic dictatorships, such as those in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Libya. Why?

As we noted earlier, monarchs often seek to maintain the loyalty of their support coalition by allowing members of the royal family to colonize government posts that they can then use for their own material benefit. Obviously, other dictatorships distribute rents in a similar way to keep their own support coalitions happy. What's different in monarchies, at least according to Menaldo, is that they've generated a political culture where a leader's promise to distribute rents to his support coalition is more credible than in other types of dictatorship. This "monarchic culture" rests on three things. First, there are clear rules as to who the insiders and outsiders are. In general, monarchies tend to depend on tightly knit family structures that are reinforced through intermarriage. These rules allow insiders to know that their privileged position in the regime is relatively secure. Second, monarchies tend to have rules or norms that indicate exactly how regime rents are to be shared among the various members of the royal family. For example, there is a norm in Kuwait that succession alternates between the two branches of the Sabah family (Herb 1999). This creates a system in which members of the royal family all have a stake in maintaining the regime; in effect, regime collapse threatens access to the political and economic rents they've been promised. Third, monarchies tend to have institutions that allow members of the royal family to monitor the actions of the monarch and enforce the norms regarding the distribution of regime rents. As our earlier example from the Kingdom of eSwatini indicates, most monarchies have royal courts or appointed legislatures that enforce rules relating to the succession of monarchs and that place limits on the

actions monarchs can take. These royal courts act as commitment devices, forcing monarchs to follow through on their promises relating to things like the distribution of regime rents. In many ways, these royal courts perform a role similar to the legislatures that were created by monarchs seeking to raise revenue in early modern Europe (see Chapter 5).

Military Dictatorships

The second type of authoritarian regime comprises military dictatorships. In most cases, military leaders rule as part of a “junta,” or committee. High-ranking officers who take power on behalf of the military typically have small juntas that comprise the three or four heads of the various armed services. Lower-ranked officers who come to power, perhaps as part of a military coup, often have larger juntas as they seek to build the support necessary to consolidate their hold on power. Military rulers often portray “themselves as ‘guardians of the national interest,’ saving the nation from the disaster wrought by corrupt and myopic civilian politicians” (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010, 85). This helps to explain why these juntas frequently adopt titles such as the “Military Council of National Salvation,” as occurred in Poland in 1981 when General Jaruzelski imposed martial law, or the “National Council for Peace and Order,” as occurred in Thailand following the 2014 military coup.

Of course, it’s not clear that military rulers actually have such altruistic motivations. Some scholars have argued, for instance, that military coups are more often than not motivated by class conflict or corporate interests (Finer 1988; Nordlinger 1977; Stepan 1971). For example, many of the military juntas in Latin American countries, such as Argentina (1976), Chile (1973), and Guatemala (1954), resulted from right-wing coups that toppled left-wing democratic governments threatening to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor (Drake 1996; O’Donnell 1973; Stepan 1985). Similarly, the military junta—the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF)—that came to power in Egypt after protests forced long-time president Hosni Mubarak to step down in the spring of 2011 was widely perceived to be acting in its own economic interests. The military controlled anywhere from 5 percent to 45 percent of the Egyptian economy (Fadel 2011). It’s perhaps not surprising, then, that the military moved against Hosni Mubarak during the Arab Spring protests in 2011; the military saw the people camped out in Tahrir Square as “customers,” and it no longer believed that Mubarak could protect its economic interests.

The most pressing threat to the stability of military dictatorships tends to come from within the military itself. Consider the history of military rule in the West African country of Guinea. A military junta, called the Military Committee of National Recovery (CMRN), was established in Guinea in April 1984 following a coup by Lieutenant-Colonel Lansana Conté. The coup had followed the death of independent Guinea’s first president, Sékou Touré. The subsequent history of Guinea has seen numerous military protests, coups, and countercoups, some successful and some not. President Conté, for example, had to suppress his first military revolt, led by his deputy Colonel Diarra Traoré, as early as 1985. In 1996 there was another attempted coup when the military mutinied over poor living conditions. The military junta responded by introducing various reforms aimed at appeasing the armed forces. Lansana Conté eventually died on December 23, 2008, after a long illness. According to the constitution, new presidential elections were supposed to be held within sixty days. However, within six hours of the announcement of Conté’s death, there was another military coup, this time led by the head of the army, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara (“Military ‘Seizes Power’” 2008). In December 2009, President Camara suffered a head wound in an attempted assassination and countercoup led by his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Aboubacar Sidiki “Toumba” Diakité

(Howden 2009). Camara was forced to leave the country for medical treatment in Morocco and eventually agreed not to return. The military junta then handed power over to Alpha Condé, who won the 2010 presidential elections. After several postponements due to security issues, legislative elections were finally held in 2013 amid ethnic violence and charges of election fraud from opposition groups.

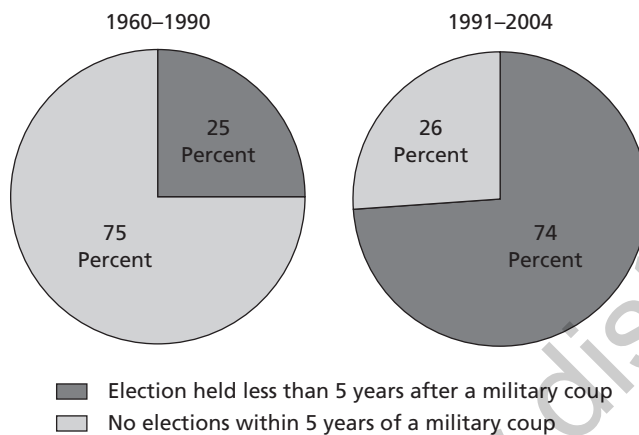
Although we've focused here on military juntas in Guinea, the threat that factions within the military pose to stability is commonplace among all military dictatorships. Indeed, power has changed hands thirteen times between various military factions in Guatemala since 1945 (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1288). Contemporary military dictatorships include Thailand and Chad.

Empirically, military dictatorships tend to have short durations and are more likely to end with negotiations as opposed to violence than other types of authoritarian regime (Geddes 2003). There's also some evidence that military dictatorships are more likely to leave behind competitive and democratic forms of government than other types of dictatorship. As Table 8.1 indicates, 29.1 percent of military dictatorships between 1946 and 1996 ended with democratic transitions; only 15.5 percent of civilian dictatorships and 4.5 percent of monarchic dictatorships ended with democratic transitions. What explains these empirical patterns?

The military tends to value discipline and cohesiveness, autonomy from civilian intervention, and military budgets large enough to attract recruits and buy weapons (Geddes 2003, 54). Officers tend to participate in coups only when a government threatens the interests, or the very existence, of the military (Nordlinger 1977; Stepan 1971). As we've seen, the Egyptian military's decision to end its loyalty to the Mubarak regime following popular protests in 2011 and establish a military junta can be understood in this light. If militaries do come to power, though, they often carry with them "the seeds of their own destruction" (Geddes 2003, 63). Disagreements over, say, economic policy or the distribution of office benefits among senior officers can lead to factionalization. In these circumstances, many officers prefer to return to the barracks and allow elections rather than risk the unity of the military by trying to cling to power. Importantly, the value of the exit option—the value associated with giving up power—is considerably higher for military dictatorships than for other forms of dictatorship. The fact that the military has all the "guns" means that it retains a credible threat to re-intervene in politics in a way that other groups don't necessarily have. In other words, the military can step down from power with a greater sense of assurance that whoever wins the elections will still have to take account of the military's preferences due to the possibility of future coups. In many cases, the military will actually negotiate the handover of power to make sure that its interests are indeed protected.

Marinov and Goemans indicate that the shorter duration of military dictatorships and the propensity of military juntas to leave behind competitive elections are even more pronounced in the post-Cold War period. Some of their empirical evidence is presented graphically in Figure 8.3. There were 167 military coups between 1960 and 1990 in the Cold War period. Only 25 percent of these coups were followed by competitive elections within five years. In contrast, there were 43 military coups between 1991 and 2004 in the post-Cold War period. As we can see, military coups are less common in the post-Cold War period. More significant, though, is the fact that fully 74 percent of these coups were followed by competitive elections within five years.

What explains this dramatic difference between the Cold War and post-Cold War periods? Coup leaders are often very sensitive to how the international community will respond to their actions, particularly if they depend on the outside world for foreign aid. Marinov and Goemans (2014, 805) argue that foreign countries, particularly Western ones, exerted

FIGURE 8.3 ■ The Timing of Elections after Military Coups

Source: Goemans, Hein, and Nikolay Marinov. 2011. "From Coups to Voting: The International Community and the Coup d'état." Unpublished manuscript.

much less pressure on military dictatorships to hold elections during the Cold War period because they viewed the world as a "chessboard of West vs. East." Essentially, Western countries, like the United States, often preferred to support staunchly anti-Communist military juntas during the Cold War rather than encourage competitive elections that might produce left-leaning governments sympathetic to the Soviet Union.² According to Marinov and Goemans, the demise of the Soviet Union has enabled Western countries to push a more pro-democracy agenda. Since 1997, for example, US presidents have been bound by an act of Congress to suspend foreign aid to any recipient country that experiences a coup d'état. In line with their argument, Marinov and Goemans (2014) find that a country's dependence on Western aid increases the likelihood that a postcoup election will take place, but only in the post-Cold War period.

This line of reasoning has led some to wonder whether coups might even be "good" for democracy. Thyne and Powell (2014), for example, suggest that coups, by providing a "shock" to the system, can create opportunities for liberalization that would not otherwise exist. Along similar lines, Collier (2009, n.p.) argues that "coups and the threat of coups can be a significant weapon in fostering democracy" in Africa. As an example of a "good coup," we might consider the February 2010 coup in Niger when the military stepped in to remove the increasingly autocratic president, Mamadou Tandja (Armstrong 2010). Within a year, the military-led Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy had allowed free and fair legislative and presidential elections, which brought the former opposition leader Mahamadou Issoufou to power (Freedom House 2012). This optimistic view of military coups, though, is not consistent with the broader empirical evidence. For example, Derpanopoulos and colleagues (2016) find that although military coups in dictatorships are more likely to be followed by democratic transitions in the post-Cold War period than in the Cold War period, the most common outcome is the establishment of a new and more repressive form of authoritarian regime.

²In some cases, Western countries even helped the military with its coup. For example, it's known that the Nixon administration and the CIA helped in the military overthrow of the left-leaning President Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973.

The apparent break in the behavior of Western countries toward military juntas, and dictatorships more generally, in the post–Cold War world shouldn't be overstated either. It's true that the West is no longer in a global competition with a foe like the Soviet Union and that, therefore, there are fewer countries on which the West must rely to protect its strategic interests. In certain regions of the world, though, Western influence continues to be challenged. In many places, this challenge comes from countries like China or radical Islamist groups like al-Qaida, ISIL, or the Taliban. It's not clear whether Western countries will support elections in these regions with the inherent uncertainties they bring or whether they'll prefer to prop up dictatorships that promise to protect Western interests. To support our concerns here, we point to the reaction of the United States toward the military coup that took place in Egypt in 2013. Following the ouster of the longtime dictator Hosni Mubarak during the Arab Spring, Mohamed Morsi, the candidate for the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, became in 2012 the first democratically elected president in Egypt's history. The following year, the Egyptian military intervened to remove President Morsi from power. There was a mixed international reaction to these events, with the United States refusing to call them a "military coup" because the 1997 Congressional Act we mentioned earlier would have required it to freeze the substantial economic and military aid it provided to Egypt.

Civilian Dictatorships

The third type of authoritarian regime comprises civilian dictatorships. Unlike monarchic and military dictatorships, which can rely on family and kin networks or the strength of the armed forces to stay in power, civilian dictators don't have an immediate institutional base of support; instead they have to create one. Many civilian dictators do this with the help of regime parties or personality cults. For this reason, some scholars distinguish between two subcategories of civilian dictatorships: (1) dominant-party dictatorships and (2) personalist dictatorships (Geddes 1999).

Dominant-Party Dictatorships

In a **dominant-party dictatorship**, "one party dominates access to political office and control over policy, though other parties may exist and compete as minor players in elections" (Geddes 2003, 51). Just as political parties play an important role in recruiting and socializing the political elite in democracies (see Chapter 12), they can perform a similar function in civilian dictatorships. Consider the role played by the Communist Party in the former Soviet Union (CPSU). For all intents and purposes, membership in the CPSU was a necessary condition for becoming part of the political, economic, and academic ruling class—the *nomenklatura* (Gershenson and Grossman 2001). Describing the Soviet *nomenklatura* in the 1980s, Voslensky (1984, 98) wrote that "while a party card is of course no guarantee of success, lack of it is a guarantee that you will not have a career of any kind." Power and authority increased the higher one rose in the party, as did the monetary and nonmonetary benefits. For example, members of the *nomenklatura* were able to enjoy many of the things denied to the average citizen—they got to shop in well-stocked stores, they had access to foreign goods, and they were allowed to travel abroad. As George Orwell ([1949] 1977, 192) describes in his novel *1984*,

By the standards of the early twentieth century, even a member of the Inner Party lives an austere, laborious kind of life. Nevertheless, the few luxuries that he does enjoy—his large well-appointed flat, the better texture of his clothes, the better quality of his food and drink and tobacco, his two or three servants, his private motorcar or helicopter—set him in a different world from a member of the Outer Party, and

the members of the Outer Party have a similar advantage in comparison with the submerged masses.

As citizens gained membership into the CPSU and advanced up its ranks, they would be increasingly socialized into following the party line. Demonstrating loyalty to the party was crucial to gaining and retaining the benefits of power associated with membership in the *nomenklatura*.

A further illustration of how political parties can be used to control the masses comes from Gandhi and Przeworski (2006, 25).

Consider communist Poland. Even though in 1948 communists forced their major rival, the Polish Socialist Party, into a “merger,” thus creating the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), they tolerated a pre-war left-wing United Peasant Party (ZSL), a small private business party (SD), and a Catholic group with direct ties to Moscow. After 1956, two other Catholic groups were allowed to organize. Even though these parties functioned under separate labels in the legislature, they were presented to the voters as a single list, with all candidates approved by the communists. Hence, elections only ratified the distribution of parliamentary seats and the specific appointees of the Communist Party. One way to think of this “multipartism” is that it represented a menu of contracts, allowing people characterized by different political attitudes (and differing degrees of opportunism) to sort themselves out. Membership in each party entailed a different degree of identification with the regime: highest for members of the PUWP, lower for those joining the Peasant Party, the lowest for the Catholic groups. In exchange, these memberships offered varying amounts of perks and privileges, in the same order. Someone not willing to join the Communist Party, with the social opprobrium this membership evoked among Catholic peasants, may have joined the Peasant Party. This choice entailed a less direct commitment and fewer perks, but it did signify identification with the regime, and it did furnish perks and privileges. This separating equilibrium maximized support for the regime and visibly isolated those who were not willing to make any gesture of support.

Hough (1980, 33) makes a similar point, claiming that “the Soviet government has thus far been skillful in the way it has tied the fate of many individuals in the country to the fate of the regime. By admitting such a broad range of the educated public into the party, it has provided full opportunities for upward social mobility for those who avoid dissidence, while giving everyone in the managerial class reason to wonder what the impact of an anti-Communist revolution would be on him or her personally.”

The value of a regime party is not restricted to only Communist countries. For example, Magaloni (2006) provides a good description of the types of mobilization techniques that the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) used for many years in Mexico to signal its own strength and highlight the weakness of the opposition. For example, she describes how the PRI regime put in place a series of policies that prevented peasants from rising out of poverty, thereby making them systematically dependent on state patronage through the PRI. Magaloni goes on to talk about the “tragic brilliance” of the regime, in which “citizens’ choices are free, yet they are constrained by a series of strategic dilemmas that compel them to remain loyal to the regime” (2006, 19). She also describes how the PRI established various institutions to maintain the loyalty of its party members. For instance, the PRI imposed term limits, which increased the dependence of legislators on the party for future jobs, and at the same time kept ambitious politicians in check as they waited for their turn in power.

After authoritarian monarchies, dominant-party dictatorships are the longest-lived dictatorships (Brownlee 2009; Geddes 2003). Party cadres in a dominant-party dictatorship are similar to politicians in a democracy in that they want to hold office. The best strategy for maintaining access to office is to stay united. Although policy differences and competition for leadership positions are likely to produce factionalism in dominant-party regimes just like they do in other types of dictatorship, everyone is better off if they can stay united and maintain access to power (Geddes 2003, 59). Splits run the risk that an opposition party will come to power. And even if one of the factions is able to stay in office following a split, its grip on power is often significantly weakened. This is why majority factions within regime parties try to co-opt minority factions rather than exclude them from power. When crises do emerge, the dominant faction usually responds by “granting modest increases in political participation, increasing opposition representation in the legislature, and granting some opposition demands for institutional change” (Geddes 2003, 68).

This logic helps to explain why regime parties often engage in widespread electoral fraud even when they know they’re going to win elections. Until recently, the traditional view of electoral fraud was that it is most likely to occur when elections are expected to be close, that is, when the incumbent feels she needs to buy some votes to push her over the finish line. However, this view of electoral fraud is not consistent with the empirical record (Simpser 2008, 2013). Incumbents frequently engage in electoral fraud even when there is little chance they’ll lose. As an example, consider Georgia’s president, Eduard Shevardnadze. As Simpser (2008, 1) points out, Shevardnadze was expected to be reelected in the 2000 presidential elections by a very wide margin. One poll shortly before the election suggested he would win 52 percent of the vote compared with just 19 percent for his closest rival. Nevertheless, Shevardnadze engaged in widespread electoral manipulation and won with close to 80 percent of the vote. One reason for engaging in electoral fraud in this type of situation is that it can help deter regime party defections, discourage opponents in the future, and reduce the likelihood of protests against the dictatorship. In effect, lopsided electoral victories signal the strength of the regime party and the futility of challenging it.

The types of co-optation strategies employed in dominant-party dictatorships obviously require that the dominant faction have sufficient resources to buy off potential rivals and convince minority factions that they’re better off sticking with the regime party than siding with the opposition. This suggests that economic downturns can create problems with stability for dominant-party regimes. Stability is also threatened when opposition parties or rival factions do better in elections than expected. Given the tools that dictatorial regimes have at their disposal to guarantee electoral victory, a close-run election can signal weakness in the regime, thereby encouraging opponents. When combined with an economic downturn or widespread protest, a close election result can trigger mass defection from the regime party. As Way (2011) writes, “If a crisis convinces ruling elites that continued loyalty threatens their future access to patronage, it may trigger a bandwagoning effect in which politicians defect en masse to the opposition. As one defecting member of the ruling UNIP party in Zambia that collapsed in 1991 put it, ‘only a stupid fly . . . follows a dead body to the grave.’”³ Arguably, this is the scenario that preceded many of the colored revolutions that occurred in Eastern Europe in the early 2000s.⁴

³Lucan Way, February 21, 2011 (blog post). “Some Thoughts on Authoritarian Durability in the Middle East.” *Monkey Cage* blog (http://themonkeycage.org/blog/2011/02/21/some_thoughts_on_authoritarian/).

⁴The phrase *colored revolutions* refers to revolutions, such as the Bulldozer Revolution in Serbia in 2000, the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 (Tucker 2007).

Personalist Dictatorships

In contrast to the leaders in dominant-party dictatorships who use regime parties to maintain their hold on power, some civilian dictators attempt to establish a more personalist form of rule. “Institutionally, what [these **personalist dictatorships**] have in common is that although they are often supported by parties and militaries, these particular organizations have not become sufficiently developed or autonomous to prevent the leader from taking personal control of policy decisions and the selection of regime personnel” (Geddes 2003, 53). Indeed, a personalist dictator often deliberately undermines these institutions so they can’t act as a power base for a potential rival. For example, it’s typical for regime personnel to be rotated frequently at the whim of the leader to prevent them from building independent bases of support. These dictatorships are also often characterized by a weak or nonexistent press, a strong secret police, and an arbitrary use of state violence that keeps the population living in constant fear.

Many of these dictators cultivate elaborate personality cults in an attempt to maintain the loyalty of their support coalition and the citizenry more generally. These personality cults often seem strange to outsiders. Consider Saparmurat Niyazov, who ruled Turkmenistan from 1985 to 2006. His book, the *Rubnama* (Book of Souls), which was part spiritual and moral guidance, part revisionist history, and part autobiography, served as the chief textbook for students at all levels of the education system from elementary schools to universities. The *Rubnama*’s influence extended well beyond the education system, with new government employees tested on the book during interviews and all citizens seeking a driving license required to take a sixteen-hour course on the book (“Turkmenistan Wrestles” 2004). Gurbangly Berdimukhammedov, who replaced Niyazov following his death in 2006, eventually removed the *Rubnama* as a mandatory subject in Turkmen schools. However, he appears to have simply replaced the *Rubnama* in the school curriculum with several books of his own (Fitzpatrick 2011).

Kim Jong-il, who ruled North Korea from 1994 until his death in December 2011, inherited a similar personality cult from his father, Kim Il-sung, the “eternal president” (“Toughs at the Top” 2004). Kim Jong-il, who was referred to as the “Supreme Leader,” “Dear Leader,” “Our Father,” and “the General,” claimed to be able to control the weather with his mood and to be able to teleport from place to place (Hassig and Oh 2009; Kang and Rigoulot 2005). He was also known to issue various hairstyle guidelines as part of grooming and dress standards. These guidelines have in the past emphasized the negative effects of long hair on human intelligence, noting that long hair consumes a great deal of nutrition and thus robs the brain of energy (“N Korea Wages War on Long Hair” 2005).

Muammar al-Qaddafi is another dictator who also established a cult of personality before his death in 2011. In a similar way to Niyazov in Turkmenistan, al-Qaddafi forced a generation of Libyans to grow up studying his *Green Book* as a great work of social and political theory. Some have described the book as part Chairman Mao, who himself had written the *Red Book*, and part Marx and Engels (“What Now for Colonel Gaddafi’s Green Book?” 2011). It appears that tablet-like statues of its three volumes were erected in many Libyan towns. Al-Qaddafi often portrayed himself as a revolutionary against colonial powers who didn’t seek power for himself. In keeping with the precepts set out in *The Green Book*, “Colonel [al-Q]addafi eventually gave up any official title in the Libyan government, giving rise to one of the prime examples of Libyan doublespeak. While everyone in Libya regards Colonel [al-Q]addafi as the all-powerful ruler behind every decision of state, he often answers critics calling on him to surrender power by saying it is too late—he already has” (Kirkpatrick 2011).

Al-Qaddafi's outlandish claims perhaps peaked during the Arab Spring in 2011 when he claimed that the people protesting his rule were high on drugs supplied by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida ("Libya Protests" 2011).

Given how strange these personality cults seem to outsiders (and presumably insiders), it's worth thinking about exactly what role they play in keeping authoritarian leaders in power. Personality cults are often viewed in the media as the creation of narcissistic and megalomaniacal dictators who wish to be flattered and deified. However, this view, while almost certainly true in many respects, probably understates the role that personality cults play in maintaining dictatorial rule. The standard story with respect to personality cults is that they gradually alter the beliefs of the citizenry through a steady process of state indoctrination. By eliminating alternative sources of information, it's thought that personalist dictators are able to use their control of the state media to persuade citizens of their amazing powers and leadership qualities, thereby generating support and loyalty. In effect, the standard story suggests that personality cults are designed to create citizen loyalty by producing false beliefs in the population.

The problem with this story, though, is that the personality cults are often ridiculously unbelievable. Did the North Koreans really believe that Kim Jong-il could control the weather with his mood and teleport from one place to another? Marquez (2011) suggests that although "cults of personality can sometimes 'persuade' people of the superhuman character of leaders . . . or . . . draw on people's gullibility in the absence of alternative sources of information and their need for identification with high status individuals, they are best understood in terms of how dictators can harness the dynamics of 'signaling' for the purposes of social control."⁵



ALFRED/SIPA/AP Photo

Protesters ripping up Muammar al-Qaddafi's *The Green Book* in the Libyan town of Benghazi in February 2011.

⁵The following discussion of personality cults is based on a very interesting blog post by Xavier Marquez, a political scientist at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, on March 14, 2011 (<http://abandonedfootnotes.blogspot.com/2011/03/simple-model-of-cults-of-personality.html>).

This alternative view of personality cults is premised on something we discussed in Chapter 7, namely, that individuals living in dictatorships often engage in preference falsification. The **dictator's dilemma** is that he relies on repression to stay in power, but this repression creates incentives for everyone to lie so that the dictator never knows his true level of support (Wintrobe 2001). In effect, a dictator is often confronted by two rather unsatisfactory choices. On the one hand, he can limit repression and allow free debate, thereby learning his true level of societal support. This often occurs when the dictator has insufficient resources to establish a reliable spy network to monitor the population (Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009). On the other hand, he can use repression, but run the risk that he'll be surprised by his lack of support at some future point in time.

This is where personality cults can be useful. As Marquez (2011, para. 7) notes, "The dictator wants a *credible* signal of your support; merely staying silent and not saying anything negative won't cut it. In order to be credible, the signal has to be costly: you have to be willing to say that the dictator is not merely OK, but a superhuman being, and you have to be willing to take some concrete actions showing your undying love for the leader." These actions often include things like denouncing others who lack sufficient faith in the leader and ostentatious displays of the dictator's image or ideology. This view of the role of personality cults helps to explain why dictators often make outlandish claims that strain credulity. By slowly raising the degree to which his claims are "over the top," a dictator can better gauge his true level of societal support by finding the point at which the population is no longer willing to publicly accept his "incredible" claims.

In effect, personality cults have three benefits from the perspective of the dictator, in addition to stroking his ego. First, they make it hard for opposition groups to organize and coordinate their actions. Citizens are unwilling to reveal their true preferences for fear of being denounced by others, thereby making it difficult for opposition groups to evaluate their true strength. Second, they help the dictator gain a better handle on his level of societal support. And third, they will, in fact, persuade some segments of society to become "true believers" in the dictator. Marquez (2011, para. 11) writes that personality cults can be difficult to establish in the first place but goes on to note that "once the cult of personality is in full swing, it practically runs itself, turning every person into a sycophant and basically destroying everyone's dignity. It creates an equilibrium of lies that can be hard to disrupt unless people get a credible signal that others basically hate the dictator as much as they do and are willing to do something about that."

To a large extent, we can think of intra-regime politics in a personalist dictatorship as involving the leader's faction and a minority rival faction, with the leader's faction having to decide how much of the spoils of office to share with the rival faction to keep it from defecting (Geddes 2003, 60). Whereas it's common for majority factions in dominant-party dictatorships to try to co-opt or buy off minority factions, this is much less the case in personalist dictatorships, where the leader's faction frequently keeps tight control over the spoils of office. The reason the leader's faction can do this has to do with the huge risk that the minority faction faces if it defects. Recall that in a personalist dictatorship, all spoils from office come from remaining loyal to the leader. If the rival faction defects, it risks everything—life, liberty, and property. The payoff from successfully overthrowing the dictator may well be large, but so are the costs of failure. This, combined with a highly repressive security apparatus that limits the likelihood of a successful overthrow, explains why the leader's faction rarely shares the benefits of office with the rival faction. In effect, the leader's faction gives just enough benefits to the rival faction to prevent it from defecting and keeps the rest for itself.

As with dominant-party systems, the stability of personalist dictatorships rests on them having enough economic resources to keep their support coalitions satisfied. As a result,

economic crises can have a destabilizing effect on both types of dictatorship. However, it's generally the case that the depth and duration of the economic crisis has to be greater in a personalist dictatorship than in a dominant-party dictatorship before it becomes unstable. There are at least three related reasons for this. First, the concentration of office benefits in the leader's faction means that a personalist dictator can more easily ride out periods of poor economic performance. Although ordinary citizens may well suffer in an economic downturn, it's often the case that the dictator will retain sufficient resources to keep his support coalition satisfied. Second, the highly repressive nature of the security apparatus in a personalist dictatorship means that the probability of successfully overthrowing the regime is quite low. And third, members of the leader's faction in a personalist dictatorship have less valuable exit options than members of the regime party in a dominant-party dictatorship. Due to the fact that personalist dictators retain personal control of policy decisions and the selection of personnel, members of their support coalition are very closely linked to the incumbent regime. As a result, it's often difficult for them to successfully defect to the opposition, and they typically have to go into exile if the regime is threatened. A consequence of this is that elites in personalist dictatorships often fight to the very end when their access to power is threatened. This helps to explain why personalist dictatorships are more likely to end in violence than other types of dictatorship. On the whole, then, personalist dictatorships tend to become unstable only when there's an economic catastrophe as opposed to a mild downturn, when the security apparatus and military defect, or when the leader dies and the system of patronage based around him collapses.

BOX 8.1 ELECTORAL AUTHORITARIANISM: A NEW TYPE OF DICTATORSHIP?

Elections are increasingly common in dictatorships. Only Brunei, China, Eritrea, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have failed to hold national-level elections at some point in the postwar period (Golder 2005). The increasing frequency with which elections are taking place in dictatorships has led some scholars to suggest that we're observing the emergence of a new type of dictatorship that goes under the heading of "electoral authoritarianism" (Schedler 2002, 2006). In an **electoral authoritarian regime**, leaders "hold elections and tolerate some pluralism and interparty competition, but at the same time violate minimal democratic norms so severely and systematically that it makes no sense to classify them as democracies" (Schedler 2002, 36). The extent to which competition is allowed in electoral authoritarian regimes varies (Diamond 2002). In some countries, the leader's party routinely wins with overwhelming majorities, and there's no meaningful contestation. These

regimes are often called **hegemonic electoral regimes**. In other countries, though, competition is more real and opposition parties are able to win substantial minorities at election time. These latter regimes are often called **competitive authoritarian regimes** (Levitsky and Way 2002). Electoral authoritarian regimes can be contrasted with **politically closed authoritarian regimes** in which no opposition party is granted a legal space in the political arena.

Until recently, there were two rather divergent views about elections in dictatorships. For those who had hegemonic electoral dictatorships in mind, elections were often seen as forms of institutional window dressing with few political consequences. For those who had competitive authoritarian regimes in mind, elections were often seen as a prelude to further shifts toward democratization. Both of these views have been shown to be wrong. The overall consensus is that authoritarian elections have

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very significant political consequences, and that dictators use them to help stabilize their rule, not hasten their demise.

Elections can help dictators in at least three ways (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). First, they can help them co-opt elites (Boix and Svobik 2013), party members (Magaloni 2006), or larger societal groups (Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006). In effect, elections can be used as an arena for patronage distribution and as a means of recruiting and rewarding local political elites. Second, elections can help dictators co-opt opposition groups, as well as divide and control them. By allowing opposition groups to compete in elections, dictators provide access to political office and some decision-making authority. This provides these groups with a stake in maintaining the existing power structure. And by allowing only some, and not all, opposition groups to compete in elections, dictators sow the seeds of division within the opposition, thereby making it harder for opposition groups to overthrow them (Lust-Okar 2005). Third, elections can provide important information to the dictator. For example, dictators can use

the results from multiparty elections to identify their bases of support and opposition strongholds (Brownlee 2007; Magaloni 2006). In this way, dictators can use election results to identify which regions they should reward and which regions they should punish. Election results can also provide dictators with information about the performance of their local officials (Blaydes 2011). For example, dictatorial elites in China sometimes use low support at the polls in local elections to identify incompetent and poorly performing local officials (Birney 2007).

Although there's a growing literature on electoral authoritarian regimes, we have doubts about whether these regimes truly represent a new "type" of dictatorship. In our opinion, electoral competition is simply a dimension along which all dictatorships can be classified. Brownlee (2009) provides evidence in support of this when he maps data on the degree of electoral competition—politically closed, hegemonic electoral, and competitive authoritarian—onto our existing typology of authoritarian regimes. In Table 8.2, we use Brownlee's data to list the number of country-years that have occurred under each

TABLE 8.2 ■ Number of Country-Years by Authoritarian Regime and Degree of Electoral Competition, 1975–2004

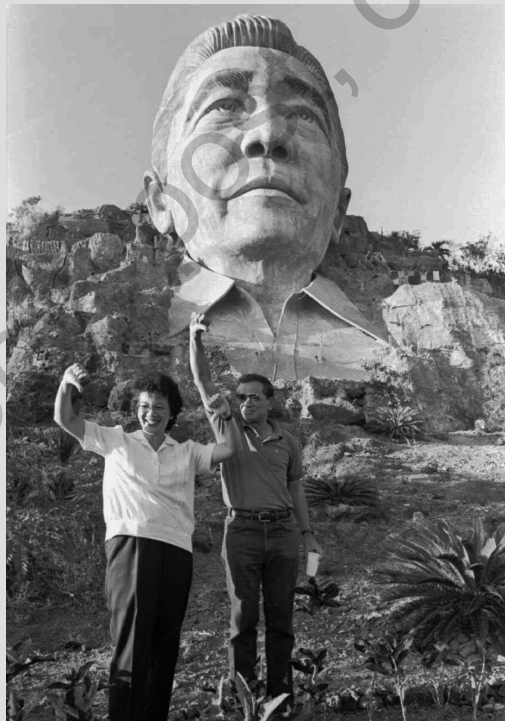
Degree of electoral Competition				
Regime type	Politically closed	Electoral authoritarianism		Total
		Hegemonic electoral	Competitive authoritarian	
Military	178	47	61	286 (14.2 percent)
Personalist	296	86	155	537 (26.7 percent)
Dominant party	586	165	187	938 (46.6 percent)
Monarchy	203	51	0	254 (12.6 percent)
Total	1,263 (62.6 percent)	349 (17.3 percent)	403 (20.0 percent)	2,015

Note: Numbers are based on data from Brownlee (2009).

type of authoritarian regime for each category of electoral competition. The main point to note is that there's considerable variation in the degree of electoral competition across all forms of authoritarian regime. For example, all types of dictatorship come in both "politically closed" and "open" variants. A substantial minority of military, personalist, and dominant-party regimes can be classified as electoral authoritarian regimes, and in all three cases, the nature of electoral authoritarianism is fairly evenly split between hegemonic and competitive authoritarianism. Monarchic dictatorships, in contrast, have a strong tendency toward being politically closed.

Further evidence for our claim that electoral authoritarianism is not a separate category of

dictatorship comes from the fact that the degree of electoral competition varies across time *within* authoritarian regimes. Consider, for example, the authoritarian regime of Ferdinand Marcos, which ruled the Philippines from 1972 to 1986. In terms of its support coalition, the Marcos regime is generally considered a personalist dictatorship (Geddes 2003). But what about in terms of its degree of electoral competition? Prior to 1979, the Marcos regime is classified as "politically closed." From 1979 to 1983, though, it's classified as "hegemonic electoral" because Marcos won the 1981 presidential elections in a landslide. One reason for the landslide, and hence the "hegemonic electoral" classification, was that the major opposition parties boycotted these elections. From 1984 to its downfall in 1986,



AP Photo/Alberto Marquez

During the 1986 presidential campaign, presidential candidate Corazon Aquino and running mate Salvador Laurel flash the thumbs down sign under an enormous bust of incumbent president Ferdinand Marcos at a campaign stop in La Union province in northern Philippines.

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the Marcos regime is classified as “competitive authoritarian.” This is because the major opposition parties decided to compete in the 1986 presidential election and unite behind the candidacy of Corazon Aquino. Corazon Aquino and the opposition parties registered such a strong showing in the 1986 presidential elections that when the National Assembly declared Marcos the winner, it set off the “People’s Power Revolution” that ultimately led to Marcos’s removal from power.

Although the degree of electoral competition varied significantly during the time that Marcos was in power, few scholars would argue that the Philippines experienced three different authoritarian regimes between 1972 and 1986. From his declaration of martial law in 1972 to his removal from office, there was one Marcos regime. What changed over time were the strategies of the incumbent leader and the opposition. At times the dictator found it helpful to allow elections, and at times the opposition found it useful to participate. While the literature on “electoral authoritarianism” points to an important source of variation across authoritarian regimes, the degree of electoral competition also constitutes an important source of variation *within* authoritarian regimes. The example of the Marcos regime also highlights that the degree of electoral competition at any given point in time is driven in large part by the strategic interaction of dictators and their opposition. For these reasons, we believe that it’s best to consider the degree of electoral competition in a dictatorship to be an outcome or policy choice that varies within and across regime types rather

than a defining feature of a particular type of authoritarian regime.

To some extent, our concerns with identifying electoral authoritarianism as a “type” of dictatorship also apply to the common typology of authoritarian regimes that we’ve presented in the main text. To what extent, for example, are military dictatorships really a distinct type of authoritarian regime? One could reasonably argue that civil-military relations represent a continuum and that all authoritarian (and democratic) regimes vary in the extent to which the military is willing and able to intervene in civil affairs. The same is true for personalist dictatorships. All authoritarian (and, again, democratic) regimes vary in the extent to which the leader has personal discretion over policy and personnel choices. We understand that many political scientists like typologies because they seem to simplify the complexity of the world into distinct categories, and students, like yourself, probably value this simplicity as it gives them an accessible way to talk about the diverse forms of authoritarian rule that exist around the world. However, it might be more useful to recognize that authoritarian regimes can be characterized on multiple different (and often continuous) dimensions. Rather than examine the causes and consequences of different discrete types of dictatorship, we could look at why some authoritarian regimes score high on some dimensions but low on others and what this means for their survival and how they behave. In fact, we examine one such approach a little later in the chapter when we discuss selectorate theory.

THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE

So far we’ve examined different types of authoritarian regimes separately. Political scientists, though, have identified two fundamental problems of authoritarian rule that exist in all dictatorships—the *problem of authoritarian power-sharing* and the *problem of authoritarian control* (Svolik 2012).⁶ These two problems highlight the fact that threats to dictatorial rule

⁶In discussing the two fundamental problems of authoritarian rule we follow the theoretical framework outlined by Svolik (2009, 2012) and Boix and Svolik (2013).

can come either from within the authoritarian elite or from the masses. In this section, we take a brief look at each of these problems and examine some of the institutional solutions authoritarian rulers have developed to mitigate them.

The Problem of Authoritarian Power-Sharing

The problem of authoritarian power-sharing focuses on intra-elite conflict. Dictators never come to power on their own, and they rarely control enough resources to govern alone. Instead, dictators rely on a support coalition. As we've seen, this support coalition might include members of the armed forces, key allies in the royal family, economic and religious elites, and so on. If the dictator retains the support of this support coalition, the authoritarian regime stays in power. When the dictator first comes to power, there's an implicit, and possibly explicit, agreement on how to share economic and political rents among the members of the support coalition. The problem is that in a dictatorship there's no independent third-party actor to enforce this "power-sharing" agreement.

The members of the support coalition know that the dictator always has an incentive to alter the power-sharing agreement to his benefit. In effect, the dictator will want to acquire more power at the expense of his allies. The only thing stopping the dictator from grabbing more power is the ability of the support coalition to replace him. When the threat to remove the dictator is credible, we have a contested dictatorship where power is shared between the dictator and his allies. Removing a dictator, perhaps via a coup, can be costly, though. There's a chance the coup will fail, in which case the coup-plotters are likely to be imprisoned or killed. Even if the coup succeeds, it can leave lingering divisions that destabilize the authoritarian regime. Significantly, members of the support coalition have only limited information about exactly what actions the dictator is taking. After all, the dictator is unlikely to publicly announce his intention to usurp power. A consequence of this is that it can be difficult for the support coalition to distinguish between a situation in which the dictator is making a power grab and one in which he's allocating rents in the pre-agreed manner. This can result in "unnecessary" coups where the support coalition attempts to remove a dictator who's following the original power-sharing agreement and "missed opportunities" where the support coalition fails to act against a dictator who is concentrating power in his own hands.

This uncertainty about the dictator's actions and the reluctance of the support coalition to rebel creates incentives for the dictator "to try his luck and attempt to acquire power at their expense" (Svolik 2012, 55). If the dictator is able to make successive power grabs without being stopped, it's possible for him to accumulate sufficient power that the "support" coalition no longer has the ability to credibly threaten to remove him. At this point, the authoritarian regime has shifted from a "contested" dictatorship in which the dictator is constrained by his allies to a "personalist" dictatorship in which the dictator has effectively monopolized power (Svolik 2012). In this account, personalist dictatorships arise when the support coalition repeatedly fails to act in response to a series of power grabs by the dictator. This is essentially the trajectory followed by all personalist dictators, including Mao Zedong in China, "Papa Doc" Duvalier in Haiti, and Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union. In the case of Stalin, he rose from relative obscurity to become one of the most powerful dictators in the modern era (Suny 1998). He didn't achieve this status immediately, though. Instead, he consolidated power gradually over many years, first eliminating rival factions headed by people like Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin and then subordinating the power of the Communist Party and the Red Army in what became known as the Great Purges (Svolik 2012, 53–54). The transformation of Stalin into a personalist dictator was possible only because members of his support coalition didn't successfully step in early enough to prevent him from consolidating his hold on power.



AP Photo

General Antonio Kerekou pins a cordon on Dr. François Duvalier, nicknamed “Papa Doc,” at Duvalier’s presidential inauguration ceremony in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, October 22, 1957. Following an attempted coup in 1958, Duvalier consolidated power, partly by purging military leaders and setting up his own militia (the Tonton Macoute). In 1964, he took the title of President for Life, remaining in office until his death in 1971.

What can the dictator do to solve this power-sharing problem? Dictators and their support coalitions clearly have an incentive to create a power-sharing agreement that allows the dictator to stay in power and the support coalition to benefit from the dictator being in power. However, when the members of the support coalition can’t fully monitor the dictator’s actions and can’t be confident the dictator is following the agreement rather than trying to surreptitiously consolidate power, they might either launch an unnecessary coup or, through inaction, find that they’ve been marginalized (or worse). For a stable power-sharing agreement to exist, the support coalition and the dictator must find a solution to this “monitoring problem” such that the support coalition receives credible information about the dictator’s actions. The dictator can’t simply promise to abide by the power-sharing agreement because such a promise isn’t credible.

Svolik (2012) suggests that the “monitoring problem” at the heart of intra-regime conflict can be solved, or at least minimized, with appropriate political institutions. In particular, decision-making bodies within legislatures or parties can provide a forum for exchanging information and

deliberating about policy. These decision-making bodies, sometimes called *ruling councils* or *politburos*, “typically establish formal rules concerning membership, jurisdiction, protocol, and decision making that both facilitate the exchange of information among the ruling elite and provide for an easy assessment of compliance with those rules” (Svolik 2012, 7). These decision-making bodies are useful because they provide the members of the support coalition with information about the actions of the dictator, making it less likely the dictator can stealthily consolidate power without being called to account for his actions. Having formal rules and protocols makes it easier to see when they’ve been violated. It’s commonly thought that dictators adopt institutions such as legislatures and political parties to reward their allies in the support coalition or to co-opt members of the opposition (Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; see also Chapter 7). The story here, though, is slightly different—dictatorships institutionalize to solve *informational problems* within the authoritarian elite.

Information on its own, though, isn’t sufficient to create a stable power-sharing arrangement (Svolik 2012). In addition to being able to detect power grabs, support coalitions must also have the ability to credibly punish the dictator if he reneges on their agreement. This raises the issue of whether support coalitions can overcome the collective action problems that arise when attempting to remove a dictator. Support coalitions will find it easier to overcome collective action problems and punish “rule-breaking” dictators when the distribution of power between the dictator and the support coalition is fairly even. A balance of power in the authoritarian regime means that it’s feasible for the support coalition to punish the dictator. If the dictator is particularly powerful, there’ll be disagreement among the various factions in

the support coalition as to whether they should, or are even able to, move against the dictator. Thus, stable power-sharing agreements in authoritarian regimes require institutionalization *and* a fairly even distribution of power between the dictator and his support coalition.

The argument here has implications both for when we'll see institutionalization in dictatorships and for the effectiveness of authoritarian institutions (Boix and Svobik 2013). If authoritarian leaders have been able to consolidate their hold on power and establish a personalist dictatorship, they have no need to institutionalize. If institutions, like parties or legislatures, exist in these circumstances, they won't have the power to constrain the dictator. If the dictator is relatively weak, he has an incentive to institutionalize so as to establish a stable power-sharing agreement. In these circumstances, institutions will allow the support coalition to monitor the dictator's actions, and the dictator will choose not to violate the agreement because he knows the support coalition can credibly punish him. If the dictator has middling levels of strength relative to his support coalition, things are more complicated. Institutionalization will improve the monitoring capacity of the dictator's support coalition. If there's a sufficient balance of power between the dictator and his support coalition, the dictator will abide by the power-sharing agreement. However, if there's an imbalance in the distribution of power that favors the dictator, we're likely to see the effectiveness of institutional constraints on the dictator gradually erode over time as the dictator successfully consolidates his hold on power.

The Problem of Authoritarian Control

In addition to facing threats from within the authoritarian elite, dictators also face threats from the masses over which they rule. This is referred to as the problem of authoritarian control. What's to stop the masses from rising up and overthrowing the dictator? To a large extent, dictators have two distinct strategies for solving the problem of authoritarian control—they can either repress the masses or co-opt them (Svobik 2012).

From the dictator's point of view, repression is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, repression can keep the masses under control. On the other hand, the dictator must rely on other actors, typically the military, to do the actual repressing, and these actors may or may not share the same preferences as the dictator. By providing the military with the resources necessary to successfully repress the population, the dictator effectively empowers the military to act (if it wishes) against the dictator. If the dictator becomes sufficiently reliant on the military to stay in power, the military can use this leverage to demand policy concessions and other rents from the authoritarian regime. As you can see, dictators face a trade-off. They can keep the military weak but run the risk that they'll be overthrown in a revolution if the masses rise up, or they can maintain a strong military and expose themselves to threats from the military.

How this trade-off is ultimately resolved is likely to depend on the nature of societal opposition (Svobik 2012). When dictators are faced with large-scale, organized, and armed opposition, they'll have little choice but to rely on the military to stay in power. Whereas the internal security forces and secret police may be able to deal with small and irregular protests, only the military has the institutional capacity to put down more widespread and violent unrest. In return for services rendered to the dictator, the military will demand policy concessions, large budgets to buy weapons and attract recruits, and autonomy from authoritarian control (Geddes 2003). Importantly, both the dictator and the military recognize the pivotal role the military play in sustaining the authoritarian regime in this type of situation. As a result, the military won't have to overtly intervene in the day-to-day running of the country. As Svobik (2012, 125) notes, "A politically pivotal military should be an *eminence grise* behind the throne," a situation he refers to as "military tutelage."

If dictators are faced only with small-scale intermittent protests, they're likely to keep the military weak. In these circumstances, dictators will prefer to rely on internal security forces, such as the police, to repress societal opposition. In many cases, the dictator will provide only limited resources to the military writ large but generously reward a small "palace guard" that's loyal to the dictator. This was the general strategy adopted by Tunisian president Zine El Abidene Ben Ali (1987–2011). Historically, there had been few large-scale violent protests in Tunisia. Feeling relatively safe, Ben Ali kept the military small and under-equipped. This came back to haunt him during the Arab Spring in 2010–2011, though, when protests were so large and widespread that they overwhelmed the ability of the police to keep law and order, and the military refused to step in to save his regime. Given that the military is kept weak when the prospects for societal unrest are low, the military doesn't have the ability to openly intervene in the day-to-day running of the country; the civilian government has control over the military in this type of situation.

Svolik (2012) argues that direct military intervention in the political system is likely to occur only when the probability of mass unrest is moderately high. As we've seen, direct military intervention is unlikely to occur when the probability of mass unrest is high. This is because the dictator recognizes the pivotal role the military plays in ensuring his regime's survival and will do whatever the military wants. Direct military intervention is also unlikely to occur when the probability of mass unrest is low. This is because the dictator will keep the military so weak that it's unable to successfully intervene in the political system even if it wants to. Direct military intervention will occur only when the probability of mass unrest is moderately high. This is because the dictator and the military are more likely to hold different beliefs about the probability of mass unrest in these circumstances, and hence, different beliefs about the importance of the military to the survival of the authoritarian regime. Svolik (2012) refers to these types of situations as "military brinkmanship."

In situations of military brinkmanship, the military has incentives to exaggerate or even promote evidence of social unrest in order to highlight its importance to the dictator. The military may also be sufficiently well resourced that it feels tempted to threaten the dictator with military intervention in order to obtain material and policy concessions. In contrast, the dictator may not believe the military is critical to his regime's survival and may also be willing to call the military's bluff on its threat to intervene in the political system. If the military misjudges the resolve of the dictator to stand firm, or the dictator misjudges the military's resolve to intervene, we can end up with a military coup that neither side really wants. In effect, the bargaining that occurs between the dictator and the military in situations of military brinkmanship can easily spiral out of control and lead to direct military intervention.

All of this raises an interesting point about how we judge the power of the military in civil-military relations. You might have thought that military coups or military dictatorships are a sign that the military is strong. In some sense they are. However, the framework we've discussed here suggests that this isn't quite correct. In cases where the military is truly strong, it has no need to conduct coups or directly hold the reins of power. As we noted back in Chapter 3, it's often difficult to identify who has power simply by observing the actions that different actors take. Truly powerful actors rarely need to use their power openly.

Rather than repress the masses, the dictator can try to co-opt them. You'll recall that we discussed this strategy to some extent in Chapter 7 when we discussed top-down transitions to democracy. In that discussion, we suggested that social unrest can produce a split in the authoritarian regime between soft-liners and hard-liners. If the soft-liners gain prominence, they might try to liberalize the regime and broaden the social base of the dictatorship. Liberalization policies typically entail a controlled opening of the political space and are associated

with the formation of political parties, holding elections, writing a constitution, establishing a judiciary, opening a legislature, and so on. The goal of this “institutionalization” is to co-opt opposition groups (Blaydes 2011; Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; Lust-Okar 2005; Malesky and Schuler 2010). As we’ve discussed in this chapter and elsewhere, elections, legislatures, and political parties give regime outsiders access to regime rents they can distribute among their supporters, as well as a formal say in the policymaking process.

But why do dictatorships create institutions to co-opt opposition groups rather than just buy them off directly? Why, for example, don’t dictatorships simply use cash transfers, land reform, programmatic redistribution, and other policies to co-opt opposition groups? Well, the answer to some extent is that they do. As Ross (2011, 3–4) notes, Saudi Arabia spent billions of dollars increasing public sector wages, unemployment benefits, and housing subsidies at the height of the Arab Spring protests. One issue with this type of strategy, though, is that dictators tend to make direct transfers when their survival is under threat from mobilized opposition groups but then reverse course once protesters have returned to their homes. If opposition groups recognize this, then direct transfers may not satisfy them and they won’t be co-opted. In effect, the dictator’s promise to provide direct transfers to opposition groups may not be viewed as credible. As you’ll recall from Chapter 5, one solution to credible commitment problems is to create political institutions, such as legislatures, that enable opposition groups to maintain some influence over the dictator into the future, when protesters have left the streets.

Even if direct transfers are considered credible, institutions can provide additional advantages when it comes to co-opting opposition groups. Regime parties are often considered a key institution when it comes to co-opting the masses (Magaloni 2006; Svobik 2012). Members of dominant regime parties gain access to a more rewarding set of benefits as they work their way up the party hierarchy. Initial recruits to the party typically have to engage in costly activity on behalf of the party to prove themselves. The most lucrative benefits of party membership come only after working one’s way up the party ranks. After exerting costly effort in the lower echelons of the party, party members develop a stake in seeing the regime survive as this is the only way they can obtain the fruits of their labor. In effect, regime parties not only provide the masses with access to rents, something that can be achieved with direct transfers, but they also incentivize the masses to work on behalf of the regime’s survival.

SELECTORATE THEORY

In the remainder of this chapter, we’ll examine why there’s so much variation in the economic performance of different countries around the world with the help of something called *selectorate theory*. We live in a world that tends to associate good outcomes with democracy and bad ones with dictatorships. In reality, the world is much more complex than this. Although democracies tend to produce relatively high levels of material well-being for their citizens, they don’t regularly outperform all dictatorships. Some dictatorships perform quite well even though others perform extremely poorly. Classifying the world into democracies and dictatorship fails to explain this variation in the performance of dictatorships. According to selectorate theory, the key to a country’s material well-being has less to do with whether it’s democratic or authoritarian and more to do with the size of its “winning coalition” and “selectorate.” As we’ll see, the typology of dictatorships we presented at the beginning of this chapter fits neatly into the theoretical framework provided by selectorate theory.

The basic assumption underpinning selectorate theory is that all political leaders are motivated by the desire to gain office. Of course, political leaders may have other goals as

well, such as implementing particular policies or helping certain groups in society. Although selectorate theory doesn't deny this, it argues that the competitive nature of politics forces leaders in all regimes, democratic and authoritarian, to at least behave "as if" they desire to gain office. Political actors who fail to exert effort in an attempt to win power are likely to be replaced by competitors who do exert such effort. Knowing they can achieve whatever goals motivate them only if they win, all political leaders are, therefore, forced to act as if they care about gaining office even if this isn't their primary motivation.

A key part of this perspective is that there's a challenger willing, at any moment, to replace the incumbent leader. It's important to recognize that leaders always face political competition. It's often easier to identify political challengers in democracies than in dictatorships. Competitors who seek to replace a dictator are likely to face significant threats to their lives, and as a result, they tend to keep a low profile until they deem the moment right to challenge the dictator. The fact that we're not always able to identify who the competitors are in a dictatorship, though, shouldn't lead us to think that there's no political competition or that the dictator's unchallenged. Someone else always wants to be the leader, and incumbent leaders must continually guard against losing power to these competitors.

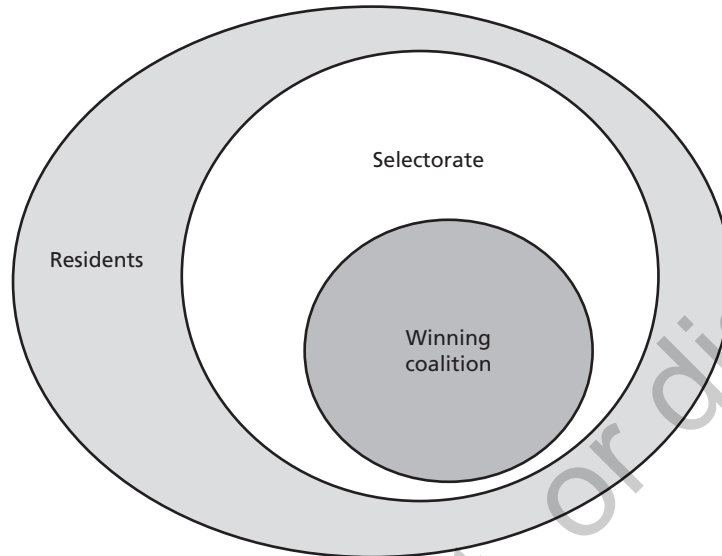
The puzzle posed by the authors of selectorate theory, Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siver-son, and Morrow (2003; hereafter referred to as BDM²S²), is the following: If all political leaders have the same (induced) goals—to gain office—why do we get so much variation in political outcomes? In other words, why do some leaders produce good economic outcomes and some leaders produce bad ones? Why do some leaders provide public goods but others don't? Why do some leaders engage in corruption but others don't?

Given that all political leaders wish to gain power and keep it, you might think that they would all want to produce good economic performance. It turns out, however, that good economic performance doesn't necessarily result in longevity in power. For example, BDM²S² (2003, 273–276) provide both a list of the twenty-five "best" leaders in regard to their provision of peace and prosperity from 1955 to 2002 and a list of the top twenty-five longest-ruling leaders in the same period. It turns out that there's *no overlap* between the leaders on the two lists. The high-performing leaders, with an average economic growth rate of 7 percent, last just six years in office on average, whereas the longest-ruling leaders, with an average growth rate of 4.4 percent, last 35.1 years. These data would seem to suggest that producing good performance leads to short terms in office, whereas poor performance produces long stretches of time in office. Why, then, do some political leaders ever produce good performance? What explains the variation in the economic performance of political leaders?

Institutions

Selectorate theory argues that the variation in the performance of political leaders can be explained with regard to the institutional environment in which they operate. Some institutional environments encourage political leaders to behave in ways that benefit society, whereas other environments encourage them to behave in ways that benefit only themselves and a few others. Each country has a fundamental set of institutions or rules that govern interactions between residents within its borders. These include rules that define who is **disenfranchised**, who is part of the **selectorate**, and who is part of the **winning coalition**. The relationship between the disenfranchised, the selectorate, and the winning coalition in a country is shown graphically in Figure 8.4.

The disenfranchised are all those residents who don't have the legal right to participate in choosing the government. The selectorate (*S*), in contrast, is the set of people who have a legitimate say, if they so choose, in the selection of the leader. The term *selectorate* is chosen

FIGURE 8.4 ■ The Institutional Environment in Selectorate Theory

deliberately so as to indicate that the people “selecting” a leader don’t necessarily have to do so by voting. In other words, the selectorate isn’t always the same as an electorate. In some forms of dictatorship, the selectorate is quite small. For example, the selectorate in a monarchy typically comprises only members of the royal family or, perhaps, the wider nobility and certain religious leaders. Similarly, the selectorate in a military junta usually consists only of members from the armed forces or, perhaps, the heads of each of the military branches. In other forms of dictatorship, though, the selectorate can be quite large. For example, the selectorate arguably consists of all adult citizens with the right to vote in dominant-party dictatorships that hold elections. Although the selectorate can be small or large in dictatorships, it’s nearly always large in democracies. In a democracy, the selectorate comprises all those who are eligible to vote. In the past, certain groups such as women, nonwhites, and those without property were ineligible to vote in particular democracies. For example, nonwhites were banned from voting in apartheid South Africa between 1948 and 1994, and women didn’t get the right to vote until 1945 in France and until as late as 1971 in Switzerland. In most contemporary democracies, however, the selectorate means all adult citizens.

The winning coalition (W) consists of those members of the selectorate whose support is necessary for the leader to remain in power.⁷ If the leader is ever unable to keep his winning coalition loyal, he’ll lose his position to a challenger. In democracies, the winning coalition is always quite large and comprises those voters who are required to elect the winning candidate or government. If there are only two candidates or parties at election time, the winning coalition is as large as a majority of the electorate. In contrast, the winning coalition in a dictatorship is always quite small. For example, the winning coalition in a military junta might

⁷To make meaningful cross-national comparisons, the winning coalition and the selectorate are not conceptualized in terms of the absolute numbers of residents who belong to them; rather, they’re conceptualized in terms of the proportion of residents they represent.

be a majority of the officers or a small group of colonels and generals who together control the armed forces. In countries like China, the winning coalition is often just a small subset of the Communist Party. In a monarchy, the winning coalition might consist of a majority of the nobility. Earlier in the chapter, we classified dictatorships in terms of the identity of their “support coalitions,” and we indicated that dictators needed to keep these support coalitions satisfied if they’re to stay in power. It’s now easy to see that these support coalitions are essentially the same as the winning coalitions in selectorate theory.

Mapping *W* and *S* onto a Typology of Regimes

Selectorate theory is able to differentiate various forms of government—monarchic dictatorships, military dictatorships, dominant-party dictatorships, personalist dictatorships, democracies, and so on—by the size of their selectorate and winning coalition. In Figure 8.5a, we plot the *theoretical* location of these various forms of government in a two-dimensional institutional space, where one dimension is the size of the selectorate and the other dimension is the size of the winning coalition. As you can see, selectorate theory differentiates between different types of dictatorships, as well as between dictatorships and democracies. The key factor that distinguishes democracies from dictatorships is the size of the winning coalition. Whereas all dictatorships have small winning coalitions, all democracies have large winning coalitions. And the key factor that distinguishes between the different types of dictatorship is the size of the selectorate. The selectorate is large in dominant-party and personalist dictatorships, particularly those that hold elections. BDM²S² refer to these types of systems as “rigged election systems.” In contrast, the selectorate tends to be small in military juntas and monarchies.

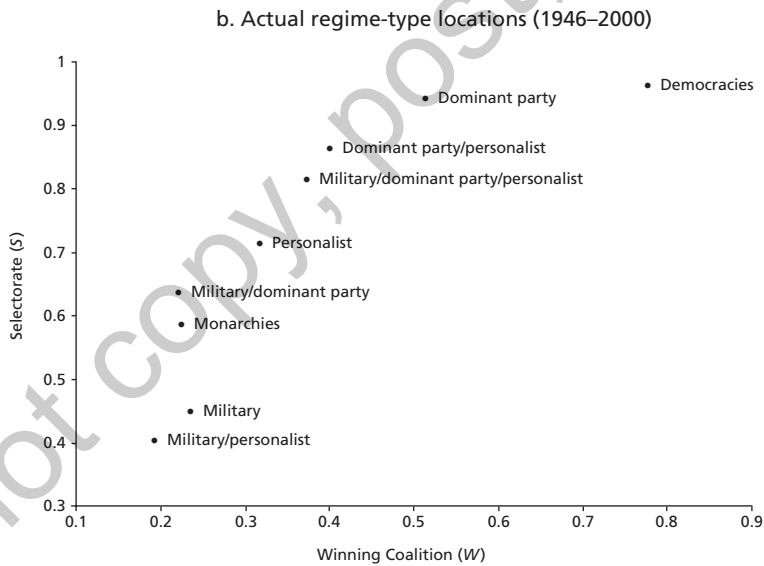
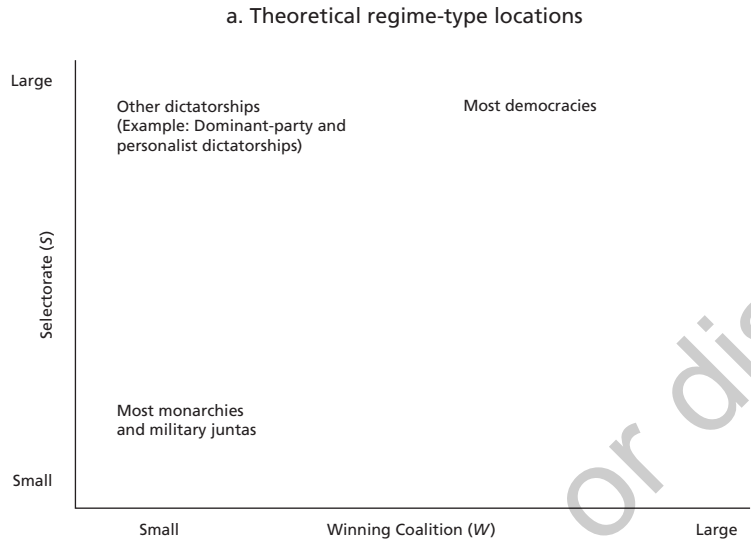
As you can imagine, measuring the size of a country’s winning coalition and selectorate in the real world is extremely difficult. Nonetheless, BDM²S² have attempted to do precisely this.⁸ In Figure 8.5b, we plot the *actual* location of different forms of government by their average selectorate and winning coalition scores from 1946 to 2000. Even though BDM²S² don’t use information about the form of government to measure the size of a country’s selectorate and winning coalition, Figure 8.5b reveals that the scores for each country situate the different forms of government in the two-dimensional institutional space in a manner that is entirely consistent with the theoretical locations shown in Figure 8.5a. As expected, the average size of the winning coalition in a democracy is much larger than that in any of the various forms of dictatorship. Also as expected, there’s considerable variation in the average size of the selectorate among dictatorships. Monarchic and military dictatorships have small selectorates, whereas personalist and dominant-party dictatorships have large selectorates.

Government Performance

How does the institutional environment in which a leader operates influence government performance? According to selectorate theory, political leaders must keep members of their winning coalition happy to stay in power. They can do this by distributing public goods or private goods or both. As you’ll recall from Chapter 7, public goods benefit everyone in society regardless of whether they’re in the winning coalition or not. This is because they’re nonexcludable (once they’re provided, anyone can enjoy them) and nonrivalrous (the amount

⁸For precise details on how the size of a country’s selectorate and winning coalition are measured, see BDM²S² (2003, 133–140).

FIGURE 8.5 ■ Selectorate Theory and Regime-Type Locations



Source: Data on the size of W and S are from Bueno de Mesquita and colleagues (2003); data on the different forms of dictatorships are from Geddes (2003).

Note: W and S both range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 1. Geddes (2003) classifies dictatorships into four types: (1) personalist, (2) military, (3) dominant-party, or (4) hybrid mixtures of these pure types. Countries that are not classified as one of these four types of dictatorships are either monarchies or democracies; we employ data from Polity IV to determine which were monarchies and which were democracies.

of the good available to be consumed isn't diminished by the number of people who consume it). Examples of public goods might be increased spending on education, health care, and infrastructure. In contrast, private goods benefit only some members of society and not others. In effect, private goods, such as business or export licenses, private jets, and villas in the South of France, can be given directly to members of the winning coalition. Those individuals who aren't members of the winning coalition don't receive private goods. It's the job of an incumbent leader to figure out how many public and private goods to distribute in order to keep his winning coalition loyal.

In addition to deciding what mix of public and private goods to hand out to his winning coalition, the leader must pick a tax rate. This tax rate ultimately determines how much money the leader has at his disposal to pay for the provision of public and private goods. Depending on the tax rate chosen, residents decide how to allocate their time between economically productive activities and leisure. At the same time the incumbent is deciding his tax rate and announcing his offer of public and private goods, a challenger also makes an offer to the selectorate (a combination of public goods, private goods, and a tax rate) in an attempt to put together an alternative winning coalition. The bottom line is that the political entrepreneur—the incumbent leader or challenger—who's best able to meet the needs of the winning coalition wins.

Loyalty Norm

Exactly how leaders distribute public and private goods depends on the size of the winning coalition and the size of the selectorate. Recall that the goal of the incumbent leader is to stay in power and that to do this he must keep the winning coalition happy. The key for the leader, then, is to stop members of the current winning coalition from defecting. Given this, let's start by thinking about the conditions under which a member of the current winning coalition might decide to defect and shift her loyalty to a challenger. Clearly, any disgruntled member of the winning coalition must weigh the potential risks and rewards from defecting. Oftentimes, there'll be more than one potential defector in a winning coalition or multiple challengers to whom they can defect or both. Moreover, it's almost always the case that there'll be members of the selectorate who aren't in the winning coalition but who'd like to be. As a result, individuals who defect from the current winning coalition have no guarantee that they'll end up as part of the next leader's coalition. Indeed, any promise by a challenger to make them part of the future winning coalition if they defect and bring down the incumbent leader isn't credible for obvious reasons. Thus, individuals who choose to defect risk losing access to the private goods they presently enjoy as members of the current winning coalition.

The risk that members of the winning coalition face when they think about defecting is embodied in the ratio of the size of the winning coalition to the size of the selectorate (W/S). The ratio W/S essentially represents the probability that a member of the selectorate will be in any winning coalition. This is because S people could be in the winning coalition, but only (some portion) W of them will actually make it into the winning coalition. As you can see, W/S indicates the probability that someone who defects from the current winning coalition will be in the next winning coalition. Members of the selectorate have only a small chance of being in the winning coalition when W/S is small (when few people in the selectorate are needed to form a winning coalition), but they have a large chance when W/S is large (when many people in the selectorate are needed to form a winning coalition). As you can imagine, the size of W/S has important implications for the loyalty of members in the current winning coalition. If W/S is small, members of the winning coalition are likely to be intensely loyal to the incumbent leader, because they realize they're lucky to be part of the winning coalition and that they have a low probability of being in anyone else's winning coalition. As W/S gets

larger and the probability of being in the next leader's winning coalition increases, this loyalty to the incumbent leader naturally declines.⁹ In effect, *W/S* represents a sort of **loyalty norm**: there's a strong loyalty norm in small *W/S* systems and a weak loyalty norm in large *W/S* systems.

The existence or absence of a strong loyalty norm has important implications for the performance of leaders in power. For example, political leaders in small *W/S* systems with strong loyalty norms have greater opportunities to engage in **kleptocracy** and **corruption** than leaders in large *W/S* systems with weak loyalty norms. Why? Consider two societies, A and B. In both societies, the political leader has \$1 billion in tax revenue to distribute among the 1,000 members of his winning coalition and himself. The only difference between the two societies is that the electorate is made up of 100,000 people in Society A and just 10,000 people in Society B. In effect, Society A has a stronger loyalty norm (smaller *W/S*) than Society B. It's easy to see that the leaders in both societies could pay each member of their winning coalitions up to \$1 million in private goods to win over their support, that is, \$1 billion divided equally among the 1,000 people in the winning coalition. As we'll see, though, neither leader has to actually pay out this much to ensure the loyalty of his winning coalition. In fact, we'll see that by taking advantage of the strong loyalty norm in his country the leader of Society A doesn't have to pay out as much as the leader of Society B to keep his winning coalition happy. Ultimately, this means that the leader in Society A can keep more of his tax revenue for his own discretionary use. How does this all work exactly?

Let's start with Society A. The probability that a member of the current winning coalition will be a member of the next leader's coalition if she defects is just 1 percent; that is, $W/S = 1,000/100,000 = 0.01$. It's this low probability of being in the next leader's coalition that generates the strong loyalty norm we mentioned earlier. Anyone who defects from the current winning coalition in Society A has a 1 percent chance of obtaining (at most) \$1 million in private goods and a 99 percent chance of obtaining nothing.¹⁰ As a result, the maximum expected value of defecting in terms of private goods is just \$10,000.¹¹ All the incumbent leader, therefore, has to do to stay in power is to offer each member of his winning coalition slightly more than \$10,000 in private goods and come close to matching the provision of public goods promised by any challenger. In effect, the incumbent can skim off for himself the difference between the \$1 million per supporter he could have distributed and the something over \$10,000 per supporter he needs to distribute to stay in power. If the incumbent's challenger offers a particularly attractive set of public goods, the incumbent can give some of this "slush fund" to his supporters to purchase their continued loyalty (Bueno de Mesquita 2006, 421).

What about Society B? Well, the probability that someone in the current winning coalition will be a member of the next leader's coalition if he defects is now 10 percent; that is, $W/S = 1,000/10,000 = 0.1$. This is somewhat higher than in Society A, and as a result, the loyalty norm in this society is weaker. The maximum expected value of defecting from the current winning coalition in terms of private goods is now \$100,000.¹² This means that the incumbent leader in Society B has to pay a little more than \$100,000 in private goods

⁹In the language of the exit, voice, and loyalty theory examined in Chapters 3 and 5, a large *W/S* indicates that members of the winning coalition have credible exit threats; that is, they can defect and still have a high probability of being in the next leader's winning coalition.

¹⁰A million dollars is the most that a defector can receive because that is the most that a challenger can offer to each member of the winning coalition if all tax revenue is spent on private goods.

¹¹This is calculated as $\$1 \text{ million} \times 0.01 + \$0 \times 0.99 = \$10,000$.

¹²This is calculated as $\$1 \text{ million} \times 0.1 + \$0 \times 0.9 = \$100,000$.

to each member of his winning coalition and come close to matching whatever provision of public goods a challenger has promised in order to stay in power. In Society B, the incumbent gets to skim off for himself the difference between the \$1 million per supporter he could have distributed and the something over \$100,000 per supporter he needs to distribute to stay in power. This is still a lot of money, but it's considerably less than the leader in Society A can skim off for himself.

Although we might think that all leaders want to engage in kleptocracy and corruption, the institutional arrangements in a country influence their ability to do so without jeopardizing their hold on power. Specifically, leaders in small *W/S* systems (Society A) have greater opportunities to “steal” from their citizens by skimming off tax revenue into their own pockets than do leaders of large *W/S* systems (Society B). As an example of widespread kleptocracy and corruption, consider the small *W/S* system of Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko (1965–1997). Mobutu was reportedly able to put as much as a third of the national budget under his personal control and skim off a quarter of all the profits from the country's vast copper mines. As Rose-Ackerman (1999, 116) notes, “Corruption and predation undermined the formal private sector, and grandiose infrastructure projects were used as sources of payoffs” for Mobutu and his supporters. Indeed, in the thirty-two years that Mobutu was in power, he's estimated to have stolen a staggering \$4 billion. As another example, consider the small *W/S* system of the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos (1965–1986). Marcos is thought to have stolen somewhere between \$5 billion and \$10 billion during the thirty-one years he was in office (BDM²S² 2003, 167).

The strong loyalty norm that encourages leaders in small *W/S* systems, such as dominant-party and personalist dictatorships, to engage in kleptocracy also generates incentives for poor public policy more generally. Note that members of the winning coalition in these systems are loyal because (1) the leader provides them with more private goods than any challenger can and (2) they have to worry about being cut out of the next leader's coalition if they decide to defect. It follows from this that as long as members of the winning coalition are being sufficiently “bribed,” they don't really care about the material well-being of the citizenry more generally (Bueno de Mesquita 2006, 423). As a result, leaders in small *W/S* systems have no incentive to produce good public policy—it doesn't help them stay in power. Leaders in small *W/S* systems recognize that they stay in power by keeping their supporters happy with private goods. “Just think of Saddam Hussein's success in holding on to power even after a worldwide trade embargo against Iraqi goods left his nation's economy in shambles. . . . As long as Saddam Hussein continued to pay the military well and keep his clansmen happy, he was unlikely to suffer an internal coup” (Bueno de Mesquita 2006, 424). We should note that not only does good public policy fail to help leaders in small *W/S* systems stay in power but it may actually get the leader ousted as well. This is because allocating resources to things like public goods that benefit the citizenry more widely opens up an opportunity for a challenger to credibly promise to provide more private goods to members of the winning coalition than are currently being provided by the incumbent.

In contrast to these types of systems, large *W/S* systems, such as democracies, don't have strong loyalty norms. For example, voters in a democracy are unlikely to lose access to private goods, such as particular tax policies or redistributive schemes that benefit them if they switch their support from the incumbent leader to the leader of an opposition party. As a result, leaders in large *W/S* systems have to work harder to keep their supporters happy and can't afford to skim off too many resources if they want to stay in power. Moreover, because leaders in large *W/S* systems need more resources to keep their winning coalition loyal, they have a strong incentive to produce good overall economic performance. As a result, they're unlikely

to tax or steal from their citizens too much lest this cause the citizens to spend more time relaxing and less time working. Remember that if the citizens don't work, there'll be a smaller economic pie with which the leader can win over the winning coalition. All in all, government performance should be better in large *W/S* systems than in small *W/S* systems—kleptocracy should be lower, taxation and state predation should be lower, economic growth should be higher, and so on.

Although large *W/S* systems encourage leaders to perform well in office, there's no guarantee that their good performance will translate into longevity in office. Due to a weak loyalty norm, leaders in large *W/S* systems are likely to survive in office for shorter periods of time than leaders in small *W/S* systems even if they produce better government performance. This helps to explain why democratic leaders rarely last as long in office as even the poorest performing dictators in dominant-party or personalist dictatorships.

The Size of the Winning Coalition

In addition to the strength of the loyalty norm (*W/S*), selectorate theory indicates that the manner in which leaders distribute public and private goods also depends on the size of the winning coalition (*W*). Leaders always prefer to use private goods rather than public goods to satisfy their winning coalition. An incumbent leader is always able to defeat a challenger if competition is restricted to the distribution of private goods. This inherent advantage comes from the simple fact that challengers can't credibly guarantee to put would-be defectors in their own winning coalition. Recognizing the uneven playing field, challengers, therefore, attempt to defeat incumbents by emphasizing the provision of public goods. Not only does this help to explain why challengers spend considerable time criticizing incumbents for their poor performance in tackling corruption and providing food, health care, education, and the like, but it also helps to explain why these same challengers frequently maintain the preexisting system of corruption and do little to increase the provision of public goods when they finally come to power. In this regard, we can think of people like Jomo Kenyatta, who railed against corruption in Kenya before coming to power in 1963, but who then did little to stamp it out while in office (BDM²S² 2003, 374–375). Kenya has consistently ranked at the bottom of Transparency International's list of corrupt countries. Selectorate theory suggests that foreign countries that today promote and support seemingly public-minded opposition leaders shouldn't necessarily expect government performance to significantly improve if these opposition leaders ever come to power.

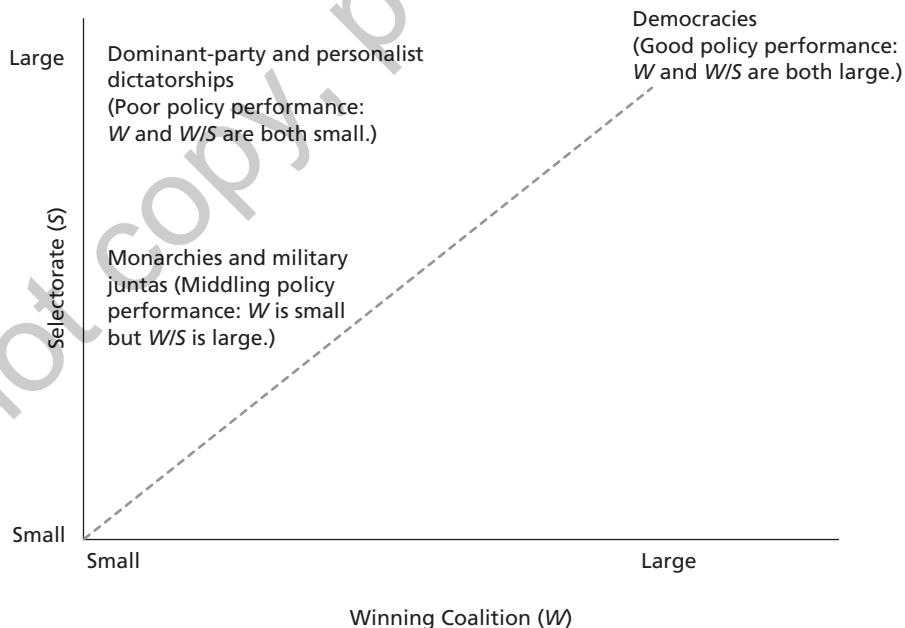
Although incumbent leaders always prefer to use private goods to keep their winning coalition loyal, this isn't always a viable strategy. Much depends on the size of the winning coalition. As the size of the winning coalition increases, the share of private goods that can go to each member of the winning coalition shrinks. In our earlier example, the leaders in both societies A and B had \$1 billion in tax revenues to distribute to the winning coalition. Because the winning coalition comprised 1,000 members, the maximum amount of private goods that any one member could receive was \$1 million. If the winning coalition in these societies had comprised one million members, then the maximum amount of private goods that any one member could have received would be just \$1,000. Clearly, the private goods deal looks a lot better when the winning coalition is small than when it's large. It follows that the advantage the incumbent has over the challenger in regard to the provision of private goods shrinks as the winning coalition gets larger. At some point, the winning coalition is so large that it's no longer efficient or viable for the leader to buy the support of the winning coalition with just the help of private goods. In effect, the value of the private goods going to

each member of the winning coalition becomes so small that the members would obtain more value if the leader provided public goods. An implication of this is that leaders in small W systems (dictatorships) will tend to use private goods to stay in power, whereas leaders in large W systems (democracies) will primarily use public goods. The fact that democratic leaders simply don't have sufficient resources to "bribe" all the people they need to win an election with private goods helps to explain why political competition in contemporary democracies is nearly always a contest over public goods—who has the best education policy, who has the best health care plan, and so on.

In Figure 8.6, we summarize how a leader's institutional environment (W and S) affects government performance and the material well-being of citizens. The dotted line indicates those positions where W/S is large; that is, the loyalty norm is low. Note that W/S can be large when both W and S are large, as in democracies, or when both W and S are small, as in monarchic and military dictatorships. As Figure 8.6 illustrates, we can think of three different levels of government performance—good, middling, and poor—depending on the institutional environment in place. Government performance is likely to be good when W and W/S are both large (democracies). This is because leaders are likely to provide public goods rather than private goods (W is large) and because the weak loyalty norm (W/S is large) forces leaders to work hard to stay in office.

In contrast, government performance is likely to be poor when W and W/S are both small (dominant-party and personalist dictatorships). In countries with this type of institutional environment, leaders have little incentive to care about the state of the national economy or the material well-being of the citizenry in general. Instead, they provide small amounts of

FIGURE 8.6 ■ Selectorate Theory and Government Performance



Note: W/S is large (and the loyalty norm is weak) along the dotted line.

private goods to members of their winning coalition and engage in highly kleptocratic and corrupt activities. The only thing keeping these types of leaders from excessive predation is the refusal of residents to work and therefore the lack of anything to prey on. This constraint is obviously much weaker if the country is rich in natural resources, such as oil and minerals, or if the leaders receive significant amounts of foreign aid.

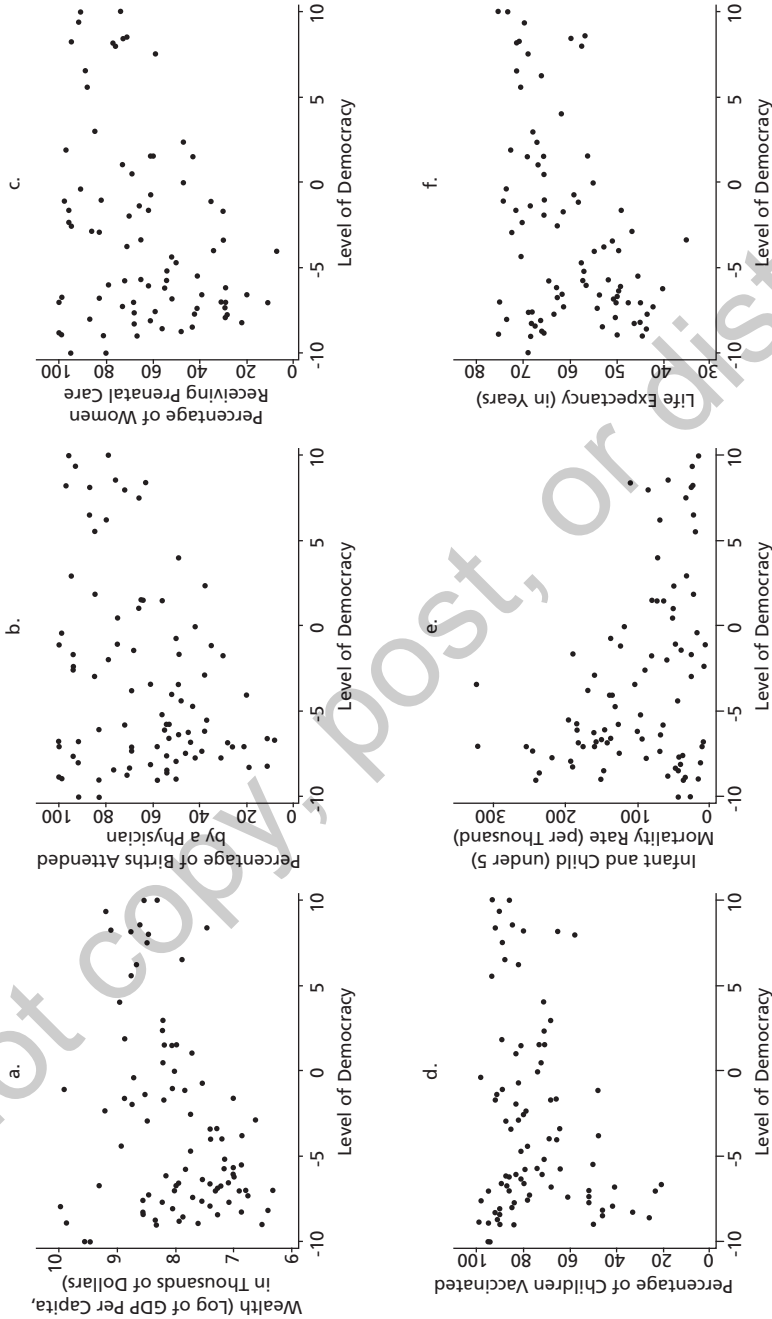
Government performance is likely to be middling when W is small and W/S is large (monarchies and military juntas). Although leaders in these types of system provide few public goods to the general citizenry, they're forced to care about their overall performance in office because of the weak loyalty norm at work. For example, leaders have an incentive to produce reasonably good economic performance, because this is the only way of generating the necessary resources to pay off their not-so-loyal winning coalition. That these leaders are interested in good economic performance necessarily means they also care, to some extent, about the material well-being of the residents who make up the workforce and thus have an incentive to provide some basic public goods.

Figure 8.6 shows a triangular pattern in the predictions that selectorate theory makes about the likely performance of different types of political systems. While democracies (large W) should perform relatively well, there should be considerable variation in the performance of dictatorships (small W). Some types of dictatorship (large W/S systems) should perform considerably better than other types of dictatorship (small W/S systems). What does the empirical evidence say?

In Figure 8.7, we show how the average level of democracy in eighty-eight countries is associated with six different indicators of material well-being: (1) wealth as measured by GDP per capita, (2) the percentage of births attended by a physician, (3) the percentage of pregnant women receiving prenatal care, (4) the percentage of infants and children receiving vaccinations, (5) infant and child (under five years of age) mortality rates per thousand, and (6) life expectancy as measured in years. Our measure of democracy, which comes from Polity IV, ranges from -10 (most dictatorial) to $+10$ (most democratic). The key thing to note in each plot is the "triangular" nature of the data. While democracies seldom perform poorly in terms of these indicators of material well-being, dictatorships exhibit much more variation. Although some dictatorships produce outcomes that are substantially worse than most democracies, some seem to perform every bit as well as democracies. This suggests that democracy is *sufficient* for ensuring some degree of success in these various areas of material well-being, but that it's not *necessary* for success. As we've seen, selectorate theory provides an explanation for this pattern of performance across different types of political systems. In particular, it provides an explanation for the varied performance of different authoritarian regimes.

What does all this mean for the *type* of leader necessary to generate good public policy? By now you should realize that implementing good public policy is not as simple as identifying decent human beings who genuinely want to improve their fellow citizens' lives and then ensuring that these people rise to political power. It turns out that having a civic-minded leader is neither necessary nor sufficient for successful public policies. Simply put, what's needed for good public policy is a set of institutions that creates a large W , large W/S system. If the political institutions in a country are such that a large proportion of the residents can participate in choosing their leader and the leader depends on a large proportion of that selectorate to remain in power, then only leaders who provide a sufficiently high level of government performance will be *able* to stay in power. It doesn't matter whether the leader cares about providing good government performance for its own sake or whether he cares about it only because it helps him stay in power; both goals dictate the same course of action. This

FIGURE 8.7 ■ Regime Type and Various Indicators of Material Well-Being



Source: Data from the Polity IV: Regime Authority Characteristics and Transitions Datasets provided courtesy of the Center for Systemic Peace.

Note: The horizontal axes measure a country's average level of democracy from 1960 to 1990 as coded by Polity. The democracy measure ranges from -10 (most dictatorial) to +10 (most democratic). The vertical axes of each graph capture distinct indicators of material well-being (McGuire 2002).

results in competition to provide more, and better, public goods, as well as good economic policies designed to generate higher overall revenue. Under such conditions, residents have incentives to invest, and the economy is expected to grow.

The bottom line is that even if there are two types of leaders in the world—those who are civic minded and those who aren't—all leaders are forced to govern well in large W , large W/S systems and poorly in small W , small W/S systems if they want to stay in power. This point is well illustrated by leaders who had the opportunity to rule over very different systems of government. Consider Leopold II (1835–1909), who was king of Belgium (large W , large W/S) and ruler of the Congo Free State (small W , small W/S). Consider also Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975), who ruled China (small W , small W/S) for twenty years and then Taiwan (large W , large W/S) for another twenty-five. In both of these cases, the two leaders provided more public goods and better government performance in the large W , large W/S systems that they governed (BDM²S² 2003, 208–213). For more details, see Box 8.2, “The Tale of Two Leopolds.”

It follows from this discussion that one's preference for the type of institutions in a country depends on one's position in the society. Leaders prefer to set up institutions that encourage a small winning coalition and a large selectorate, because these institutions help them not only to stay in power but also to enrich themselves at the expense of their citizenry. Members of the winning coalition like institutions in which W is small but W/S is large. This is because a small W means the leader will provide coalition members with private goods, and a large W/S guarantees the leader will have to provide large quantities of these goods to counteract the weak loyalty norm. Members of the selectorate and the disenfranchised classes like institutions in which both W and W/S are large. This is because a large W forces the leader to provide coalition members with public goods and the large W/S provides strong incentives for the leader to perform well in office to counteract the weak loyalty norm. In other words, leaders prefer to rule over dominant-party or personalist dictatorships, members of the winning coalition prefer to live in monarchic or military dictatorships, and everyone else prefers to live in democracies.

BOX 8.2 THE TALE OF TWO LEOPOLDS

Leopold II is remembered as an excellent king of Belgium (1865–1909) who provided his subjects with significant amounts of public goods. He instituted progressive reforms and promoted high levels of economic growth and industrial development. For example, he gave workers the right to strike, expanded the suffrage, set limits on child labor, introduced educational improvements, and supported massive public works projects designed to lower unemployment and enhance the economy.

While Leopold was presiding over this set of progressive policies in Belgium, he was taking a decidedly different approach in the Congo Free State (1885–1908), over which he also ruled. Leopold created a low-paid military force in the Congo, the Force Publique, and offered the soldiers additional wages based on commissions for goods such as rubber and ivory. Without laws to protect Congolese workers, the members of the Force Publique used slave labor, torture, and murder to meet its quotas. The soldiers

(Continued)

(Continued)



The Granger Collection

King Leopold II of Belgium.

were also given rewards for killing “antigovernment rebels,” although more often than not these were villagers who simply didn’t want to be forced into slave labor. The soldiers would bring hands (or heads) to the Belgian commissioner as proof of the number of “rebels” that had been killed; eyewitness accounts report that some of these hands obviously belonged to women and children and suggested that ordinary Congolese were being killed because doing so meant that soldiers could get higher wages. Leopold and the

Force Publique gained incredible riches from the sale of ivory and rubber on the world market. This revenue was not returned to the Congo Free State in the form of public goods to benefit its residents. The only goods exported to the Congo, in fact, were weapons for the Force Publique to keep the flow of goods (the result of slave labor) headed toward Belgium. Thus, Leopold was allowing—even promoting—slave labor in the Congo at the same time as he was promoting laws protecting workers in Belgium.

What was different about the institutions in the two countries? Belgium was a constitutional monarchy, which means that Leopold’s rule relied on the support of a popularly elected government. In effect, the winning coalition size in Belgium was reasonably large. By contrast, the Congo Free State was considered to be Leopold’s personal property. Leopold’s winning coalition in the Congo consisted of just himself and the members of the Force Publique. As selectorate theory predicts, Leopold worked hard to promote economic growth and provide significant amounts of public goods when his winning coalition was large (Belgium) but provided small amounts of private goods for his supporters and stole the rest of the revenue for himself when the winning coalition was small (Congo).

Which was the real Leopold? BDM²S² (2003, 208–213), who provide the account of the two Leopolds we’ve drawn on here, conclude that it must have been the “murderous ruler of the Congo” rather than the “civic-minded king of Belgium.” Why? Well, Leopold simply inherited his institutions in Belgium and acted accordingly. In contrast, he had free rein to set up any type of government arrangement he wanted in the Congo. Leopold’s actions in both countries were entirely consistent with the institutional incentives he faced.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we’ve examined the wide variety of authoritarian regimes that exist around the world. In the first section of the chapter, we examined a common typology of dictatorships. In this typology, dictatorships are classified in terms of the identity of their “support coalitions.”

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Such an approach indicates that there are three main types of authoritarian regime: (1) monarchic dictatorships, (2) military dictatorships, and (3) civilian dictatorships. Civilian dictatorships are sometimes further classified into those that are personalist and those that have a dominant regime party.

In the second section of the chapter, we focused on the two fundamental problems of authoritarian rule. The problem of authoritarian power-sharing focuses on potential conflict within the regime elite. Many authoritarian regimes create institutions such as legislatures to facilitate power-sharing agreements between the dictator and his support coalition. These institutions help the dictator credibly commit to not violating any power-sharing agreement as they enable the support coalition to better monitor his behavior. As we saw, though, these institutions are effective only if the support coalition can credibly threaten to remove the dictator, which requires power to be evenly distributed between the dictator and his support coalition. The problem of authoritarian control focuses on potential conflict between the dictatorial elite and the masses. Dictators have two strategies for controlling the masses, repression and co-optation. From the dictator's perspective, repression is often a dangerous strategy as the agents of repression, typically the military, may have different preferences from the dictator's and can turn their guns on the dictator rather than the masses. In these circumstances, the dictator can find himself as the figurehead of the regime, with true power lying in the hands of the military. Dictators often use institutions such as regime parties to co-opt the masses. In addition to being a vehicle for transferring regime rents to some opposition groups, these institutions give citizens a stake in promoting regime survival.

In the last part of the chapter, we examined selectorate theory. Selectorate theory provides a potential story both for why democracies produce a relatively high level of material well-being for their citizens and for why some dictatorships perform better than others. Starting from the simple assumption that all political leaders care about winning and retaining power, selectorate theory offers an explanation for the observed variation in the performance of different forms of government that focuses on the institutional structure surrounding political leaders. This "institutional structure" refers primarily to the size of a country's winning coalition and selectorate. Leaders in systems with large winning coalitions and weak loyalty norms like democracies have to provide public goods and a high level of overall government performance if they want to remain in office. In contrast, leaders in systems with small winning coalitions and strong loyalty norms, like dominant-party and personalist dictatorships, are "forced" to provide private goods and produce a poor level of overall government performance, because this is the best way to stay in power in these countries. In between these two ends of the performance spectrum are leaders in systems with small winning coalitions and weak loyalty norms, such as monarchies and military juntas. Although these leaders are more likely to provide private goods than public goods, they do have to care about their overall government performance because of the weak loyalty norm at work.

Selectorate theory provides an answer to an important question raised in Chapter 4. Recall that according to the contractarian view of the state, citizens delegate their right to use violence to the state, which acts as a third-party enforcer and punishes those who take advantage of their fellow citizens. Recall also, that while such a state solves the problem that exists between citizens in the state of nature, it raises the question of "who will guard the guardian?" That is, if the state has a near monopoly on the use of force, what is to stop the state from stealing from its citizens? Like the predatory view of the state discussed in Chapter 4, selectorate theory takes a grim view of the state and emphasizes the degree of competition faced by the incumbent leader. Leaders tend to act in a predatory manner unless they face a realistic chance of being replaced by a rival. Selectorate theory provides insight into the mechanism through which such competition arises. Specifically, leaders will limit their predation when the size of the winning coalition is large relative to the size of the selectorate.

Key Concepts

monarchic dictatorship—a dictatorship in which the executive holds power on the basis of family and kin networks

military dictatorship—a dictatorship in which the executive relies on the armed forces to hold power

civilian dictatorships—all dictatorships other than monarchic or military dictatorships

dominant-party dictatorship—a dictatorship in which a single party dominates access to political office and control over policy, though other parties may exist and compete in elections

personalist dictatorship—a dictatorship in which the leader, although often supported by a party or the military, retains personal control of policy decisions and the selection of regime personnel

dictator's dilemma—the dictator relies on repression to stay in power, but this repression creates incentives for everyone to falsify their preferences so that the dictator never knows her true level of societal support

electoral authoritarian regime—a regime in which leaders hold elections and tolerate some pluralism and interparty competition but violate minimal democratic norms so severely and systematically that it makes no sense to classify them as democracies

hegemonic electoral regime—a regime in which the leader's party routinely wins with overwhelming majorities

competitive authoritarian regime—a regime in which opposition parties win substantial minorities at election time

politically closed authoritarian regimes—a regime in which no opposition party is granted a legal space in the political arena

selectorate theory—a theory that characterizes all governments by their location in a two-dimensional institutional space; one dimension is the size of the selectorate and the second dimension is the size of the winning coalition

disenfranchised—residents who don't have the legal right to participate in choosing the government

selectorate (*S*)—those people who can play a role in selecting the leader

winning coalition (*W*)—those people whose support is necessary for the leader to stay in power

loyalty norm—the extent of the winning coalition's loyalty to the leader; its strength is determined by W/S —the probability that a member of the selectorate will be in the winning coalition

kleptocracy—when corruption is organized by political leaders with the goal of personal enrichment

corruption—when public officials take illegal payments (bribes) in exchange for providing benefits for particular individuals