

## **Minimum-Winning Coalitions and Personalization in Authoritarian Regimes**

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I am grateful to Kathy Bawn for help with ideas about bargaining, to Ken Jowitt for his insights about Leninist regimes, and to John Zaller for comments on everything.

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Although we tend to think of authoritarian governments as highly centralized, narrowly based, and orderly to a fault, immediately after seizures of power most are unstructured and somewhat chaotic. How decisions will be made and carried out is uncertain and unclear even to participants. Leadership within the junta or other governing entity tends to be collegial, with hierarchies and routines for making and implementing decisions not yet established; personnel within the junta may change in rapid succession; the implementing arms of government often remain in the hands of supporters of the old regime, so actual policy may be an incoherent mix of old and new; and citizens, especially those with personal links to members of the governing group, often have considerable access and ability to influence decisions. Within about three years, if the regime survives, a clear hierarchy will have been established and decision making within the junta, central committee, or clique will have become less collegial. The citizen coalition supporting the dictatorship will have narrowed and become more defined. Only a few citizens will be able to influence government decisions.

This broad brushstroke description is based on my examination of over 170 post-1945 dictatorships. In the paper, I draw on standard bargaining models to theorize this post-seizure narrowing of authoritarian rule. I show that minimum-winning coalition logic prevails in dictatorships as well as democracies and that changes at the top in authoritarian regimes are often a by-product of the bargaining between leaders and lieutenants over the distribution of power within the authoritarian government.

This argument generalizes and extends ideas in a seminal article by Kenneth Jowitt (1975). In it, Jowitt proposes an implicitly evolutionary argument that successful Leninist regimes would have different sets of traits during different stages of their existence. During the chaotic period of power seizure, when they needed considerable popular support in order to gain political control, he emphasized that two characteristics would contribute to survival and success: collegial

relationships within the party that left cadres with the autonomy and discretion to respond to rapidly changing circumstances; and a responsive attitude toward the populace. A different set of traits would, he claimed, contribute to survival during the post-seizure period when the drive to consolidate political power led leaders to try to destroy potential bases of opposition in society, including cadres who had previously developed local bases of popular support. During this time, hierarchy within the party and a more combative relationship with the populace would aid regime survival. Leninist regimes would evolve yet another set of traits when the society and economy had been successfully transformed and the regime could afford a less security-oriented stance toward citizens.

In this essay, I build on Jowitt's insights about Leninist regimes and my own examination of a large number of dictatorships to make several arguments about typical developmental stages most other kinds of authoritarianism go through. I argue first that Jowitt's observations about Leninist regimes at the time political power is seized accurately describe most other authoritarian regimes as well, and for exactly the reasons Jowitt identified. Second, I argue that the Consolidation stage Jowitt describes in Leninist regimes is one possible outcome of the narrowing processes and leadership struggles that occur in all authoritarian regimes after the seizure of power. I show that the narrowing of the seizure-coalition characteristic of authoritarian regimes during the first few years in power is caused by the same kind of minimum-winning coalition logic that limits the formation of universal coalitions in democracies. Personalization of rule accompanies narrowing, I argue, when the dictator can form a viable coalition with multiple separate lieutenants, each with his own following, rather than having to ally with a unified pre-existing party or professional military.

In making these arguments, I use standard rational choice ways of thinking about the world and information I have collected about more than 170 authoritarian regimes, as well as Jowitt's insights. Empirical generalizations in this study are based on information about nearly all authoritarian regimes of three years duration or more at any time between 1946 and 2000.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Monarchies and regimes in countries created after 1989 or with populations under one million are excluded. Within this data set, regimes are classified as: professional military, meaning the military rules as an institution, for example, Argentina 1976-83; single-party (including Leninist),

first section explains why seizure-groups<sup>2</sup> tend toward collegiality and responsiveness to popular demands during the transition period. The second section draws on bargaining models that have been used to explain coalition formation in democracies to illuminate the logic behind several typical features of post-seizure authoritarian politics: the narrowing of the regime's support coalition; struggles for supreme power among rivals within the seizure-group; the very unequal distribution of power and material benefits within most seizure-groups; and the post-seizure personalization of rule.

#### During the Seizure of Power

During the drive for control of political power, which may occur in a bloodless military coup or take years of armed struggle either before or after the seizure of the organs of the state, the seizure-group must eliminate the political and military power of incumbent elites. Jowitt (1975) argues that to accomplish this in a turbulent and unpredictable environment, Leninist cadres must have the autonomy to make decisions in the field in response to whatever conditions arise. They must take risks and try new strategies. The need for initiative and discretion during the struggle thus limits the centralization and hierarchy that can be maintained within the Leninist party, despite its commitment to principles of democratic centralism.<sup>3</sup> The experiences of many non-Leninist seizure-groups also follow the pattern described by Jowitt.

It is useful at this point to make Jowitt's implicit evolutionary argument explicit. Many are called to the revolutionary vocation, but the vast majority of seizure-groups fail. Some are jailed or killed by the governments they sought to overthrow, and many more fritter their time away in

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meaning that the party really penetrates society to the village level and that officials and leaders must come up through the party, for example, the CCM in Tanzania and the KMT in Taiwan; and personalist, in which despite possibly wearing a uniform and creating a support party, policies and personnel are chosen and disposed of at the whim of the ruler, for example, regimes led by the Duvaliers in Haiti and Hastings Banda in Malawi. Regimes that have characteristics of more than one regime type are put in intermediate categories, for example: the Castro regime is classified as single-party/personalist; the Abacha regime in Nigeria is classified as military/personalist; and the Algerian regime from 1963-92 is classified as military/single-party. For more details on the data, see Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), chap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> I use this infelicitous neologism as a way to refer to the members of a coup conspiracy, leaders of a revolutionary party, or clique surrounding an individual leader bent on the non-constitutional acquisition of national political power without specifying which kind of group they belong to. Once they have secured power, I use the label seizure-coalition to avoid confusion.

<sup>3</sup> Many non-communist seizure-groups have borrowed this feature of Leninist party organization.

endless arguments and schisms. Although hierarchy contributes to discipline and secrecy – both of which help revolutionary groups survive in a hostile environment – too much centralization creates vulnerability to several potentially fatal ills. Over-centralized out-of-power organizations can fail because of (1) an inability to maintain the loyalty of activists, (2) lack of responsiveness toward potential supporters, or (3) decapitation.

Out-of-power seizure-group leaders cannot usually impose heavy costs on cadres who desert the cause. Consequently, if leaders demand too much obedience and subordination from militants, they may simply desert, leaving the group too small to accomplish the task – the fate of all the western communist parties rigidly controlled by the Comintern.

In most political movements, leaders and other militants, whose activism is required for revolutionary success, favor more extreme policies (such as collectivization and reliance on violence) than do potential followers, whose support is also needed.<sup>4</sup> Ordinary people are much more likely to want an end to violence and land reform to bring about individual ownership. The imposition on the populace of extremist strategies chosen by seizure-group leaders can alienate potential followers, cutting the seizure-group off from crucial information about the enemy. Without good information, a guerrilla strategy cannot succeed. Popular hostility also makes it much harder and more costly to recruit manpower and collect the food needed to keep a revolutionary army on its feet. Hostile peasants have betrayed many a potential revolutionary to authorities. The fates of Che Guevarra and the pre-Leninist Russian revolutionaries are well known examples.

In addition, extremely hierarchical revolutionary groups can be destroyed by decapitation, as the rapid disintegration of Sendero Luminoso after the capture of its leader Abimael Guzmán shows. For these and other reasons, extremely hierarchical groups that espouse ideological positions and practical strategies opposed to the interests and values of ordinary people are unlikely to succeed in seizing power. Those groups that do succeed are thus more likely to have somewhat more collegial relationships among cadres and leaders and to be somewhat more responsive to popular will -- prior to their accession to power -- than disquisitions on democratic

centralism or military hierarchy would lead one to expect. The more centralized and unresponsive tend to die out during the struggle.

The selection mechanisms that favor collegial and responsive traits are always at work on groups that aspire to seize power, but they work more forcefully on groups that must undertake long struggles rather than quick coups and on groups reliant on ordinary people for resources. In contrast to these groups, military coup plotters already have the weapons and manpower they need and so can seize power with less popular support, though they need some -- along with consensus within the officer corps and a propitious moment. Seizure groups that can fund their military effort by picking up alluvial diamonds from streambeds need even less popular support. They can buy or coerce manpower and elite cooperation. They can survive for a long time without popular support and even take power sometimes, though decapitation is still a danger.<sup>5</sup>

Even if these traits did not contribute to group survival, most leaders lack the means to enforce central decisions prior to the seizure of power. Those who disagree with a leader can simply leave the party or coup conspiracy, which is one of the reasons that radical parties so frequently dissolve into schisms. We have an image of revolutionary parties as tightly centralized and disciplined, but this image comes from Stalinist communist parties in power and never-to-achieve-power communist parties under the thumb of the Comintern. It is not generally an accurate portrait of the parties and other conspiratorial groups that later actually achieved power.

In order to maintain the minimum support needed for effective action, leaders must consult and be somewhat responsive to the ideas and interests of members of the group. The leader has little ability beyond moral authority and force of personality to enforce discipline. He usually has no police apparatus at his disposal and little ability to intimidate. Consequently, leaving the party or coup conspiracy entails few costs for the one who leaves. It is estimated, for example, that 90

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<sup>4</sup> See James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) for a thoughtful analysis of this tension.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Taylor of Liberia is the classic example. The capture of Foday Sankoh, leader of RUF, which seems to have finally ended the civil war in Sierra Leone is an example of the vulnerability of this kind of movement to decapitation. On the relationship between the availability of lootable resources and civil war, see Michael Ross, "How Does Natural Resource Wealth Influence Civil Wars? Evidence from Thirteen Cases" *International Organization*, forthcoming, and "What Do We Know about Natural Resources and Civil War?" *Journal of Peace Research* (March 2004); and William Reno *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

percent of those who joined the Communist Party in the U.S. had left by the end of the first year. The loss of comrades can be quite costly to remaining conspirators, who may be left with too few allies for effective action and may even be turned in to the authorities by their former colleague. Consequently, seizure-groups tend to be relatively collegial before and immediately after the seizure of power.

Seizure-groups need some support from the populace and thus must also be somewhat responsive to popular aspirations. A group bent on seizing power does not need majority support, but it needs some support. If the struggle is prolonged, it needs to be able to draw manpower and other resources from the society, and it cannot do this entirely through coercion. Regardless of the mode of seizing power, it needs the “contingent consent” of the ruled.<sup>6</sup> No regime can rely on coercion for everything. Instead, it must make credible promises of a better life after the ouster of the old regime. It makes these promises credible by actually providing some benefits. For example, during the period of struggle, both Soviet and Chinese communists carried out popular land reforms in areas they controlled. They did not collectivize – a deeply unpopular policy -- until after they had secured full military and political control.

Because they need some popular support, seizure-groups are more likely to succeed when they: (1) articulate an ideology or point of view attractive and intelligible to many ordinary people and make credible promises of a better life after the transition; and (2) choose a moment to intervene when disgust with incumbents has spread through much of the populace. When both these conditions have been fulfilled, seizure-groups can attract broad, though often temporary, public support. Elite groups as well as ordinary citizens often support a seizure of power simply because they want to oust the old order, which they deem incompetent, venal, or self-serving. Most authoritarian regimes have begun with reasonably widespread popular support.

Fidel Castro’s march into Havana, for example, was initially supported by many of those who subsequently moved to Florida. His public ideological stance had become more and more moderate from the time of the attack on the Moncada Barracks until the actual seizure of power -- to the point where his public position at the time of the march on Havana was indistinguishable

from the statements of other nationalistic opposition movements (Draper 1965, 15). Meanwhile, Batista's government first demonstrated its incapacity to defeat even such a small and amateurish force as Castro's and then took the money and ran, leading to a further withering of support for it. In consequence, although most ordinary Cubans had only superficial knowledge about Castro before he took power, they supported his overthrow of Batista.

Similarly, much of the Nicaraguan elite, as well as many workers and peasants, supported the Sandinistas against Somoza. That broad coalition of support developed in response to Somoza's very visible venality in handling the aid money that poured into the country after the Managua earthquake and was reinforced by the brutality and ineffectiveness of his effort to defeat the Sandinistas.

Most African single-party regimes rode the wave of popular nationalism to power. With colonial rulers as the foe, it took remarkably little time and organization to mobilize widespread popular support behind a nationalist party or particular leader.<sup>7</sup>

Very few public opinion surveys are taken in the immediate aftermath of authoritarian seizures of power, but those we have indicate widespread public support. One of the earliest was carried out in 1966 in Argentina. During the administration of an unsuccessful and uncharismatic elected president, the Argentine military appealed to the public by claiming they would return the country to prosperity and order. Over sixty percent of the Argentine public supported the military coup of 1966 (O'Donnell 1973). An even higher proportion of Peruvians supported Fujimori's *autogolpe* in 1992 (Stokes 2001). Fujimori promised to end the civil war and carry out economic reforms that would restore growth. In both Argentina and Peru, attractive promises in a context of widespread disgust with the current situation led to broad popular support for a coup.

The general point is that even military coups need and usually have quite a bit of civilian support at the time they take power. To get that support, military seizure-groups typically make

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<sup>6</sup> Phrase coined by Margaret Levi, *Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> See, among many others, descriptions in Aristide Zolberg, *Creating Political Order: The Party-States of West Africa* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966) and Samuel Decalo, *The Stable Minority: Civilian Rule in Africa, 1960-1990* (Gainesville: Florida Academic Press, 1998)



promises to restore things nearly all citizens want, such as public order and growth. Other kinds of seizure-groups make different but equally attractive promises.

Where the struggle to oust the old regime has been prolonged and the seizure-group has needed to maintain popular support for some years and also to draw manpower and other material resources from the population, successful groups have generally provided more than promises. As Samuel Popkin (1979) argued long ago, change-oriented organizations are more likely to succeed in attracting a mass base if they can provide real benefits to those they seek to organize. Since they have few material benefits to hand out, they often provide public goods such as land reform and organization for self defense in the areas they control, along with individual benefits that require cadre labor but little money. Literacy and vaccination campaigns are common strategies. These benefits are highly valued by the recipients and create loyalty that ideology and promises alone could not elicit. Leninist parties in China and Vietnam relied heavily on these strategies during the years prior to the seizure of power, as did Sendero Luminoso in Peru.<sup>8</sup> Popkin (1979) describes similar strategies used by the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Catholic missionaries in Vietnam, and nationalist parties pursued similar strategies during the struggle for independence in several African countries.

As an abstract summary of the situation at the time of the authoritarian transition, the bargaining power of followers relative to leaders within the seizure-group and of ordinary citizens relative to the seizure-group are much stronger before the seizure of power than after. They are also stronger in the immediate aftermath of the seizure, when the regime is still uncertain of its grip and reliant on much of the pre-seizure bureaucratic and military apparatus, than later when the implementing arms of government have been transformed into loyal instruments of the new leadership.

#### The Post-Seizure Narrowing of Power

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<sup>8</sup> See Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Communist China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), for descriptions of the organization of self defense and literacy campaigns in China; see Cynthia McClintock, *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN & Peru's Sendero Luminoso* (Washington DC: U.S. Institute for Peace Press, 1998), for a useful description of the early strategies of Sendero Luminoso.

After the seizure of power, most authoritarian governments reduce the size of the ruling group, excluding, and sometimes executing, previously valuable “heroes of the revolution” and other loyal members of the seizure-group. Typically, those who are demoted but not otherwise punished remain loyal to the regime. The citizen coalition that actively supports and benefits from the regime also usually narrows, and unbenefited citizens typically acquiesce in this change. At the center of government, leadership struggles are common during the first years in office, and those leaders who win usually try to concentrate vast resources and powers in their own hands. Sometimes the seizure-coalition acquiesces in this concentration, and sometimes they successfully resist it. When they cannot resist, they acquiesce in this change as well. Narrowing and concentration of power in one man are often antithetical to the egalitarian ideology of the seizure-group, the positions they espoused prior to taking power, and the informal comradeship of pre-seizure activities. It seems puzzling that individuals and groups willing to take up arms against the old regime should then be willing to acquiesce in their own exclusion from the spoils and other benefits of governing and to go along with the monopolization of power by one of themselves who has no constitutional or traditional legitimation for his actions and used to be their near equal. In this section of the paper, I first describe this narrowing and concentration and then use a bargaining model to illuminate the logic that underlies it. I explain why regime narrowing occurs after most seizures of power, and I analyze the circumstances that increase the likelihood of the personalization of power by the leader.

In all kinds of authoritarian regimes, once the seizure-group has captured political power, the various incentives that had tended to keep the group collegial change, as do those that impelled the group to maintain broad popular support. As soon as the group is securely in power with the police, military, judicial, and taxing apparatuses under control, the costs of hierarchy are reduced and the capacity to achieve it increased. This does not mean that hierarchy necessarily contributes to regime survival, but only that since it no longer undermines survival chances, it will tend to develop because it benefits leaders.

After the takeover, leaders put a high premium on cadre obedience. In the stable environment created by the successful conquest of power, daring, autonomous cadres able to

use their own judgment no longer help the seizure-group to succeed. Instead, leaders shift their concern to bringing under control partially autonomous cadres who may have begun to develop their own regional bases of popular support. They also try to eliminate potential challenges from society. Instead of responding to popular aspirations, rulers may try to reshape the economy and culture in ways most ordinary people oppose. Ideology and policy become dogmatic rather than opportunistic and responsive. As the new rulers try to consolidate their hold, the regime becomes more centralized and hierarchical. Leadership narrows and often becomes more personalized, which limits the points of access for both members of society and activists. The security forces can become the most important instrument of the regime, and violence is used against activists and supporters, not just enemies.

All this is possible because of the changes in political circumstances brought about by control of the state. When a leader can tax his subjects and controls the state's coercive apparatus, his bargaining power relative to that of members of the seizure-coalition increases. The cost to the leader of losing members all but disappears; in fact, typically converts and opportunists flock to groups in power, so deserting cadres can be replaced easily. The cost of desertion to cadres, however, rises. They may lose leadership positions and jobs; they may be harassed, beaten, and jailed; they may have to go into exile; they may be killed. In short, the relative bargaining power of the leader and cadres is reversed.

At the same time that the ruling group is becoming more disciplined and centralized, the logic of minimum-winning coalitions also asserts itself, even in authoritarian settings. In democratic theory, politicians are expected to form minimum-winning coalitions rather than larger ones if the policies being voted upon involve divisible distributive goods. Each member of the coalition can get more for his or her constituents if the number among whom the benefits have to be spread is as small as possible, given that a majority is needed to maintain control of the government (Riker 1962). An analogous logic applies in authoritarian settings. Rulers need some support -- though there is no magic 50 +  $\epsilon$  percent rule -- and they have to provide some benefits to their supporters. To the extent that the government trades private or individual goods for support, the coalition has a strong incentive to keep itself as small as it can while still surviving in power. The

minimum-winning logic is the same: the smaller the number of individuals to receive distributive goods, the more each can have. It is thus very common to see the regime alliance narrow as it becomes more sure of its control. Less support is needed to maintain control than to seize it.

Those who are excluded usually continue to cooperate with the government – just as opposition parties in democracies do – because the dictatorship is the only safe game in town. They can usually do better as unrewarded regime supporters than as regime opponents.

This narrowing affects the elite, support groups, and the beneficiaries of economic policy. A seizure-group that promised something vague and attractive like “increased growth” must, after coming to power, select a particular set of policies that inevitably help some citizens and hurt others – usually some of those who initially supported them. Any choice of economic policy concentrates benefits in some groups while reducing the income of others, and these changes are highly visible.

Analysts have given lots of attention to the radicalization of economic policy in leftist regimes, which causes many elite supporters to desert the coalition, as in post-revolutionary Nicaragua and Cuba.<sup>9</sup> The selection of economic policies not advertised before the seizure of power is also common in other kinds of authoritarianism, whether personalist dictatorships carrying out state interventionist policies or right-wing military regimes defending western Christian culture from the communist threat. For example, Hastings Banda, the autocratic ruler of Malawi for more than three decades, achieved power at the head of a nationalist movement but, to the dismay of allies and fellow party members, pursued conservative economic policies that included only moderate Africanization of the economy and bureaucracy (Decalo 1998). In Chile, few of the officers or citizens who supported the military intervention of 1973 expected or supported the extreme economic liberalization carried out by the Pinochet government. Many manufacturers of import-competing goods, who had been among the supporters of the coup, were driven into bankruptcy by these policies. As in both of these examples, the regime’s choice of an economic policy often causes many erstwhile supporters to desert it (though they usually do not protest in public).

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<sup>9</sup> See Forrest Colburn, *Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua: State, Class, and Dilemmas of Agrarian Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) for a really insightful analysis of Sandinista economic policy and its consequences.

The narrowing of the coalition base after seizures of power occurs concurrently with another standard feature of post-seizure consolidation: the struggle for leadership within the seizure-coalition. Autonomous authoritarian regimes come to power in three principal ways. Most colorfully but least frequently, they defeat incumbents in a revolutionary insurgency or civil war. Authoritarians can also come to power via internal transformation of a constitutional government. Elected ruling parties or leaders can engineer rule changes that outlaw opposition parties, tilt the electoral playing field, and close or purge non-executive branches of government. This was the strategy used by most African single-party regimes. They initially achieved power in competitive elections but then changed the rules in ways that guaranteed their indefinite control of high office. The most common means of seizing power, however, is the military coup.

Military interventions usually aim either to replace one civilian government with another more competent and/or moderate one<sup>10</sup> or to initiate rule by the military itself as an institution. Typically, revolution and the illegalization of opposition parties aim to result in single-party rule. In both military and single-party regimes, however, changes in the formal and informal rules that define them often occur during the first years after a seizure of power. These changes can result in the personalization of political power in either military or single-party regimes. By personalization, I mean the concentration of decision-making and coercive power in the hands of one person, unfettered by a party central committee or institutionalized military decision-making process.<sup>11</sup>

### *Leaders' Incentives*

An explanation of the struggles over leadership that frequently occur in authoritarian regimes begins with thinking about the incentives facing leaders and their potential rivals for power within the regime. Before or immediately after seizures of power, groups “choose” a leader. In some instances, the leader has in effect chosen the group; that is, he founded and organized the group, as Castro did, and has maintained his central position despite the vicissitudes of the struggle. In such cases, followers do not make a separate leadership choice, but rather choose the leader

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<sup>10</sup> Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) labels these interregna “moderating military interventions,” and he notes that prior to the 1960s they were the primary form of military intervention in South America.

along with the group they have chosen to support. In others, however, the group either has a less defined hierarchy before the seizure of power or the original leader dies during or shortly after power is secured. In these instances, top members select a leader and often make rules about who should help the leader make policy and how these lieutenants should be chosen. They also often make rules about how leadership succession should be handled and how often leadership should rotate.

Professionalized militaries, which are legalistic and rule-bound, may negotiate quite detailed rules about consultation and succession prior to coups – especially if they have had past experience with the post-seizure personalization of power by an erstwhile colleague.<sup>12</sup> They respect established military hierarchy but nevertheless try to make rational decisions about which among the set of top active or retired officers should be chosen to head the government. If the head of the armed forces is chosen, he is often required to retire before taking the presidency as a check on his personal control over the two main sources of coercive power. Military conspirators often consciously choose an individual considered legalistic and uncharismatic in order to reduce the likelihood of personalization. It has been reported that Augusto Pinochet, a late comer to the Chilean coup conspiracy, was chosen for that reason. Experience shows, however, that personality traits exhibited in a constraining and rule-bound institution like the military do not predict behavior very well in the much less rule-bound situation facing the paramount leader of an authoritarian regime.

Out of office parties have standard ways of choosing leaders, making strategy choices, and delegating tasks. In general, members seem to assume that the same procedures will be followed after the seizure of power, so they engage in less explicit negotiation beforehand than do militaries.

Once the seizure of power has occurred, however, most leaders seek to remain at the top, regardless of the rules about consultation and rotation to which they have previously agreed. The

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<sup>11</sup> See Bratton and van de Walle 1997 for detailed and careful descriptions of the attributes of what I label personalist rule but they refer to as patrimonialist. Linz's category "sultanistic" is also quite similar (Linz and Chehabi 1998).

drive to concentrate resources and decision-making power arises not only from material greed but more importantly from the need to have continuing personal discretion over their distribution in order to use them strategically in the political game. It may sound contradictory to say that the leader wants to monopolize his own control in order to distribute strategically, but what he wants to avoid is the long-term delegation of powers to lieutenants. Such delegation depletes his own strategic arsenal while increasing the power base of the lieutenant. The impulse to consolidate personal power is not universal, but it seems to be quite common among those who scramble to leadership positions in seizure-groups. Among the 172 authoritarian regimes I have examined, initial leaders voluntarily maintained fairly collegial consultative bodies and handed power to a successor not selected by themselves in only a few cases.

From the leader's desire to secure his position from challenges – both those arising from within the ruling group and those from outside -- a number of behaviors flow. Leaders seek to gain more individual discretion over policy decisions and more control over other party members. They seek to preserve their own discretion over all the kinds of resources and decisions that can be used strategically in the future to attract support. They resist delegating functions or regions to the long-term governance of lieutenants who may use the area they control as the basis for building their own autonomous power base. In short, they seek to concentrate power and resources in their own hands. The bargaining described next determines whether they succeed.

#### *Bargaining over the Distribution of Resources and Power*

Once in power, leaders' interests diverge somewhat from their lieutenants'. Before the seizure, the highest priority for both was the achievement of power, but afterward, although both want the regime to survive, each also wants to increase his own power and resources at the expense of the other. Bargaining begins when, after coming to power, the leader decides whether to stick to the procedures established before the seizure or to renege on the implicit or explicit agreement. The leader controls some discrete amount of goods and powers that both he and other members of the seizure-coalition value highly. These include access to material goods,

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<sup>12</sup> See the description in Andrés Fontana, "Political Decision-Making by a Military Corporation: Argentina, 1976-83" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1987) of the months long negotiation over rules within the Argentine military before the 1976 seizure of power.

such as monopoly rights to import certain products, and also control over various aspects of policy and the choice of personnel to fill high and low office. These goods are valuable both to have and to be able to give to clients to help build one's own political base. The leader decides how to distribute these goods to best secure the adherence of needed supporters. His lieutenants expect to be consulted about these decisions, but their expectations cannot usually be enforced.

Once the leader has demonstrated the way he intends to handle the resources associated with his office, other members of the seizure-coalition can acquiesce in the distribution of power and resources the leader has proposed or contest it. Contestation is costly, not only to those who take the risk of expressing open disagreement but also to the leader, because disagreement and factionalization weaken the whole group's hold on power. In authoritarian regimes, the only really effective form of opposition is ousting the leader, and lieutenants' capacity to influence the leader's distribution decisions depend on the credibility of threats to oust.

Trying to remove authoritarian leaders is always risky, however, and no one plotting such a course can be certain of success. Serious consequences follow the discovery of plots. Consequently, fewer lieutenants plot than are dissatisfied with their share. If a dissatisfied faction could oust the current leader and take his place, they would of course achieve a larger share of power and resources. Factors affecting the likelihood of plotting are discussed below.

If a plot succeeds, leaders can face serious consequences. How serious varies depending on regime type and other characteristics of the political situation. In military regimes, ousted leaders are usually allowed to retire in peace, so the cost of ouster is moderate. Ousted single-party leaders may be also be allowed to retire, though not if they are perceived as potential focal points for later opposition. The cost to personalist leaders is usually very great, however. It is not uncommon for them to be killed along with members of their families and close allies. Jail and exile also affect their retirement plans.

To sum up this section, authoritarian leaders bargain with their lieutenants over the distribution of both the material advantages associated with high office and discretion over policy. All leaders need some support, which they must reward, but the desire to remain at the top gives



them strong incentives to concentrate discretion over resources and decisions in their own hands. When the leader succeeds in concentrating a great deal in his own hands, observers label the regime personalistic, patrimonial, or sultanistic. Lieutenants want to share the spoils and power, but have little bargaining power beyond the threat to withdraw support and replace the leader. Failure to agree on a distribution is costly to both leaders and lieutenants.

Summarizing these features of post-seizure authoritarian consolidation as a bargaining game illuminates the logic underlying the empirical regularities we observe. The bargaining over distribution in authoritarian regimes is surprisingly similar to the sequential bargaining model explored by Baron and Ferejohn (1989). Their model demonstrates minimum-winning coalition logic in the passage of bills in democratic legislatures.

Their basic result is that the individual who can propose legislating a particular distribution has a great advantage over those legislators who can only react to proposals. The proposer needs only a majority vote to pass legislation, so she can completely exclude almost 50 percent of the other deputies from benefits. Those who will vote on the bill decide whether to support it by comparing what it offers with what they can expect from defeating it and continuing to bargain. Baron and Ferejohn's simplest game is finite and in the last round, the continuation value to all deputies except the proposer is zero (because the game ends); thus they will agree to any distribution at that point, and the proposer can get away with proposing that she will keep everything herself. With the knowledge of what will happen in the last round, the continuation value of the game to a deputy in the penultimate round is simply the probability that he will be selected as proposer in the last round. In this game, proposers are selected randomly, so the deputy's continuation value is  $1/n$ , discounted by the costs of bargaining. This leads to the central and counterintuitive result that the deputies will vote for bills that give them much less than a "fair" share because they compare their proposed share with the continuation value, which is small.

The leader can thus successfully propose a distribution that gives himself the lion's share of the pie and distributes to a little more than half the deputies amounts equal to the low probability of their being selected as proposer discounted by the costs of bargaining. The finite game seems

implausible, but Baron and Ferejohn prove that subgame perfect equilibria in the infinite game have the same properties as equilibria in the finite game.

The game I propose to illuminate the logic of authoritarian regime narrowing modifies the simplest Baron and Ferejohn game. I use it to show how authoritarian leaders can monopolize power and resources and why other members of the seizure-coalition acquiesce in very unequal distributions. In this game, shown in Figure 1, the leader “proposes” a distribution of a fixed amount of benefits and powers between himself and his lieutenants. Because the amount is fixed, we can treat it as equal to 1. In standard coalition bargaining models, the proposer is selected at random, but here the proposer is selected by members of the seizure-group when they choose a leader, and this selection is treated as exogenous in the first round. The distribution he offers can either match that of the pre-seizure agreement (arbitrarily shown in the figure as egalitarian), which is what would be seen as “fair” by others, or he can renege on it and try to keep more for himself. Regardless of what he offers, his lieutenants can accept the distribution he proposes or try to remove him from power in order to replace him with a new leader who has agreed to a preferred distribution. (Even if his offer is “fair,” the lieutenants can be greedy.) Plots are risky and partly unpredictable, however, so their outcome is shown as a play by Nature in which the probability of success is  $p$ ,  $0 < p < 1$ , and the likelihood of failure is  $1-p$ . If the plot fails, plotters are excluded from the game, and the game ends for them. (In life, the leader would again propose a distribution to those who remain or are added to the seizure-coalition, and they would face the choice of whether to accept it.) If the plot succeeds, the leader is ousted and the game ends for him. (In life, a new leader would then propose a different distribution, and lieutenants would again choose whether to accept it.)

Failure to agree on a distribution is costly to all members of the seizure-coalition because factions and disagreements weaken the regime and increase the likelihood that all will be overthrown by an exogenous force. Thus both leader and lieutenants are assumed to have a discount factor equal to  $\delta$ . The game is shown as finite because dictators and their lieutenants cannot squabble too long without becoming vulnerable to overthrow by outsiders, which would

end the game. To keep things simple, I show only two rounds of bargaining, but the basic logic would not change if several more rounds were added to the finite game.<sup>13</sup>

This game shares two basic features with the standard bargaining game. First, the logic of minimum-winning coalitions prevails. That is, the proposer only needs to offer benefits to the number of members from whom he needs support in order to remain in power. The other original members of the seizure-group and the parts of its support coalition associated with them can be excluded without endangering the regime, and there is a strong incentive to exclude them because their “share” can then be kept by the proposer or distributed to others whose support he needs. Second, the leader can get away with keeping the lion’s share of the pie for himself, just as the proposer in standard coalition bargaining games can. Note that although Baron and Ferejohn’s result does not fit empirical reality in democracies very well, that is, prime ministers do not generally keep the lion’s share of resources for themselves, it is eerily consistent with the reality of astonishing conspicuous consumption and Swiss bank accounts in many dictatorships.

The agenda setter has a major advantage in both democracies and dictatorships. This is so because, as in the Baron and Ferejohn game, supporters will decide what to accept based on comparing what the leader offers with what they expect to get if bargaining continues. In the last round of a finite game, they expect nothing if they fail to reach agreement, so lieutenants will agree to the proposal that the leader keep everything since it is no worse than what failure to agree would bring them.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, in the penultimate round each lieutenant’s expectation if bargaining continues is simply the probability that he will be the next leader and be able to propose a distribution. This probability varies for reasons discussed below, but is usually low.

Despite these similarities, the game shown here also differs from the standard bargaining model in several important ways. Most notably, if the lieutenants reject the leader’s distribution offer and plot to oust him, they fail with probability  $(1-p)$ . If, however, the plot succeeds, each

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<sup>13</sup> Baron and Ferejohn (1989) show that subgame perfect equilibria in the infinite game are the same as equilibria in the finite game, and I suspect that would be true here too.

<sup>14</sup> This is counterintuitive and unlikely to describe reality, but no more so in the Dictatorship Game than in the standard finite bargaining model. The finite model is used to demonstrate the logic because it is easier to understand than the infinite. If subgame perfect equilibria in the infinite game have the same properties as equilibria in the finite game, as Baron and Ferejohn show, we need not be concerned about the implausible assumptions built into the finite game.

member of the plotters' group has  $1/k$  ( $k$  = the number of plotters) chance of becoming the next leader himself (if all are equal – unlikely, but we will return to this).

A further difference between this model and the standard one is that dictators do not need majorities to support them. They may be able to get by with support from less than half of the seizure-coalition, or they may need most of it. Ex ante, we cannot make assumptions about how much support they need, but we know they need the support of some number of the group,  $k \leq n$ , the number in the group.<sup>15</sup>

Baron and Ferejohn (1989) show that coalition members will accept the distribution proposed if each is offered the continuation value of the game to him,  $\delta/n$  in their simplest game. Because he need not distribute anything to members left out of the ruling coalition, the proposer can keep for himself  $1 - \delta(n-1)/2n$ .<sup>16</sup> This advantage arises not because the leader bears lower costs of bargaining than his lieutenants but because the agenda setter's advantage allows him to capture the "share" of those whose support is not needed in order to pass the proposed legislation.

In the Dictator's Game, the continuation value of the game depends on whether the plot to oust the dictator fails or succeeds. If it fails, those lieutenants who participated in it are excluded from the game and receive a pay-off of zero. The continuation value of the game in the first round is thus  $p\delta/k$ , that is the likelihood of being the leader in the next round if the plot succeeds,  $1/k$ , times the probability that the plot will succeed,  $p$ , discounted by  $\delta$ .<sup>17</sup> If the security apparatus is competent and securely under the control of the leader,  $p$  will be small, and lieutenants will thus accept a small share of the pie. Leaders can keep for themselves  $1 - p\delta$ . As in the standard bargaining game, the leader can capture the share of those whose support is not needed, but he also reaps an advantage from the riskiness of plots. The more unlikely a plot is to succeed, the larger share of the pie a leader can keep. This game thus makes clear why members of authoritarian coalitions often acquiesce in the concentration of power and resources in the hands

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<sup>15</sup> I assume that since  $k$  members might be able to oust the dictator, he needs  $k$  supporters to survive in power.

<sup>16</sup> He distributes  $\delta/n$  to a bare majority,  $(n-1)/2$ , so he can keep  $1 - \delta/n[(n-1)/2] = 1 - \delta(n-1)/2n$ .

<sup>17</sup> I assume that only those who have participated in the plot have any chance of becoming leaders if the plot succeeds.

of the leader. When the leader successfully concentrates everything in his own hands, observers label the regime personalistic.

In the real world, some members of groups of plotters are of course much more likely to become post-ouster leaders than others. We can make the game more realistic by assigning to each lieutenant a probability of becoming leader after a successful plot,  $q_i$ , such that  $0 \leq q_i \leq 1$  and  $\sum q_i = 1$ . Then each lieutenant's individual continuation value would be  $p\delta q_i$  rather than  $p\delta/k$ . Because the continuation value for some lieutenants is much higher than that for others, their support would be much more costly to the leader. Leaders might therefore try to find sufficient support among those lieutenants who were less likely to end up as later leaders and thus less costly. In a democracy, where only the number of votes counts, it is a safe strategy for the leader to "buy" the cheapest votes he can. In dictatorships, we sometimes see a similar phenomenon in which the leader pushes all strong potential successors out of the inner circle of the ruling clique or party and surrounds himself with relatives and sycophants. But since those lieutenants who would be most likely to end up as leaders after a successful overthrow may also be those most capable of organizing a successful plot, buying the cheapest supporters is not always a safe strategy for dictators. It is safer when the dictator personally controls a strong security apparatus to deter plots. In cases where a dictator surrounds himself with nonentities, either killing or pushing into opposition his most talented lieutenants, we usually find a capable, all-pervasive security apparatus under the dictator's personal control.

#### *The Effect of Binding Pre-Commitments on Personalization*

So far I have treated lieutenants as separate actors. They might be, for example, the leaders of multiple ethnic or regional groups who cooperate to throw out the old regime or the colonial power. If leaders can make separate bargains with individual lieutenants, they will compete for the leader's favor and drive the price of support down. Unorganized individual lieutenants also face a collective action problem when plotting to overthrow the leader, which makes plots both more costly and more risky (lowers  $p$  in the game), and thus makes the threat of overthrow less credible during bargaining. For these reasons, leaders facing lieutenants in recently organized, undisciplined parties or unprofessional militaries riven by ethnic factions can drive a hard bargain.

They can concentrate resources and power in their own hands; in other words, they can personalize the regime, as did a number of African leaders who initially came to office as heads of recently created nationalist parties or conspiracies by recently Africanized officer corps.

What if, however, some or all of the members of the seizure-group are organized into a party or military hierarchy with a pre-existing binding commitment to bargain as a unified group? Leaving for another paper the question of how and why some parties and officer corps develop these binding commitments, we need only note here that on average more binding commitments have been formed prior to the seizure of power in parties that have led revolutionary struggles or resistance to foreign occupation than in those organized in less demanding circumstances and in Leninist parties than in nationalist parties. More professionalized militaries have developed more binding commitments to military norms of unity, obedience, and rule-boundedness than have less professionalized or recently indigenized militaries.

Where leaders have to bargain with a unified and disciplined party or a professionalized military with its hierarchy intact, the threat of ouster is much more credible and the price of support is likely to be higher. Leaders in this situation face unified groups that, like labor unions, can drive a harder bargain than the individuals in it could drive separately. In these circumstances, leaders usually find it expedient to consult with brother officers or the party central committee, and they usually distribute resources of various kinds broadly within the support group. In the bargaining model, prior commitment by the seizure-group to make decisions as a unitary actor turns the negotiation into a two-person game. In a two-person game where exclusion is not possible without ending the game and  $\delta$  is the same for both players, the division of the pie will be equal (Rubinstein 1982). Consequently, the prior organization, unity, and discipline of the seizure-group reduce the likelihood of later regime personalization.

In the real world, seizure-coalitions can be made up of any combination of individuals and precommitted groups. To aid in the prediction of personalization, we can classify them from most likely to be personalized to least likely, as follows:

\*All members of the seizure-coalition are individuals with clientele networks, possibly regional or ethnic, to supply.

\*The coalition includes one or more precommitted groups with less than  $k$  (the number needed by the leader to remain in power) members and also some individual members.

\*The coalition includes at least one precommitted group with membership greater than  $k$  and some individuals.

\*The coalition includes one precommitted group with membership equal to  $n$ .

The leader's relative bargaining power depends on both the size of the pre-committed group,  $g$ , and the amount of seizure-coalition support he needs to survive in power,  $k$ . Where the pre-committed group is small relative to the number needed to maintain the regime, the leader has a choice about whether to include them along with some individual lieutenants or to exclude them altogether and rely on the cheaper individuals. In this situation, personalization is likely. Where the pre-committed group is large, the leader has little choice but to propose a distribution that will satisfy them, making personalization unlikely. Table 1 summarizes these relationships more precisely.

Table 1: Relationship between Size of Pre-Committed Group and Available Bargaining Partners

<i>Size of Pre-Committed Group</i>	<i>Leader's Bargaining Partner</i>
$g < k \leq (n-k)$	Choice of $g + \sum^{k-g} i$ , or $\sum^k i$
$g \geq k \leq (n-k)$ and $g \leq (n-k)$	Choice of $g$ or $\sum^k i$
$g \geq k \leq (n-k)$ and $g > (n-k)$	$g$
$g \geq k \geq (n-k)$	$g$
$g = n \geq k$	$g$

$g$  = number of members in the pre-committed group

$k$  = number of members of the seizure-coalition whose support is needed by the leader in order to survive, i.e., the minimum-winning coalition.

$n$  = the number of members in the seizure-coalition

$n-k$  = size of the group that can safely be excluded from the distributive coalition

Any time the leader has a choice about who to include in his coalition, competition among those who might be included will drive the price down and make the threat to overthrow less credible. The leader has a choice whenever the pre-committed group is smaller than the group that can safely be excluded from the distributive coalition. When the pre-committed group is too large to exclude safely, however, the leader must bargain with them and, as long as they can

maintain their own unity, the leader will be forced to offer them an equal share or face an ouster effort.

Other members of the seizure-group who are not members of the pre-committed group, however, can be safely excluded, as were, for example, the elite (non-Sandinista) members of the broad coalition that overthrew Somoza. Observers have noticed that whenever broadly based coalitions that include a well-organized Marxist party oust a government, the non-Marxist members of the coalition are shed soon after power is secured. This phenomenon is not explained by the perfidy of Marxist parties, however, but rather by the logic of the post-seizure situation. Military coup makers and well-organized non-Marxist parties also tend to shed their less unified supporters once power has been seized.

Thinking about the relationship between leaders and lieutenants in this way has two theoretical consequences. First, it helps explain why the concentration of power in one individual's hands is so common in authoritarian regimes, even those with an egalitarian ideology and earlier history of collegial leadership. Second, it directs attention precisely to the characteristics of seizure-group and political situation that affect the kind of regime that tends to emerge during regime consolidation. Where professionalized militaries or disciplined parties lead authoritarian regimes, lieutenants are likely to be able to resist the personalization of power. Where instead militaries are incompletely professionalized and riven by factions or parties are recent creations by the leader himself or amalgams of multiple jostling factions, personalization of rule usually occurs.

#### *The Likelihood That Plots Will Succeed*

Other factors that affect the ease of ousting a leader with whom lieutenants are dissatisfied also influence the degree of personalization. These are the factors that determine the value of p in the bargaining game. Coups against the leaders of military regimes are relatively easy because the plotters have ready access to guns and troops. Coups that oust a military president without destabilizing the regime are common; they are analogous to votes of no confidence in parliamentary systems. In some single-party regimes, the central committee actually has the power to remove unwanted leaders, though such institutions are among the first that leaders want



to change if they can. Leaders who have just acceded to office after the death of an incumbent can be removed relatively easily because they have not yet managed to consolidate their personal hold over the party and state apparatus. In general, leaders who themselves control the security apparatus are much more difficult to remove. In such regimes, leaders become susceptible to overthrow as they become old or infirm and lose the ability to keep the security apparatus under tight personal control. If the likelihood of a successful plot to oust the leader is low, no one will try because the costs of detection are so very high.

In a dictatorship, the key question that must be asked if the leader reneges on promises to consult or allow himself to be succeeded after a certain period of time is: Can his lieutenants remove him? In a military regime, they usually can. When the military rules as an institution, the leader cannot monopolize the means of force. This is not to say that leaders drawn from the officer corps never marginalize the rest of the officer corps. The impulse to do so is as prevalent among officers as among others who aspire to leadership roles, and in the real world, they often succeed. If they do, however, they must find another base of support outside the military and thus redefine the whole regime, not just the relationship between the leader and other top officers. Where a party organization has developed in which able lieutenants have made their careers and penetrated the whole country to actually affect ordinary people's lives, party members are also more able to constrain and, if necessary, replace leaders.

The security apparatus plays an important role in determining whether the leader can be constrained. Where plots are unlikely to succeed because the leader has already managed to concentrate control of an effective security apparatus in his own hands, the implicit threat to overthrow that underlies lieutenants' bargaining power is not credible. If both leaders and lieutenants understand that plots are unlikely to succeed, the leader will concentrate additional resources and power in his hands, and lieutenants will acquiesce because, with  $p$  very low, the continuation value of the game to them is very low.

It is easier for leaders to gain control over the security apparatus in some situations than in others. Typically in professionalized militaries, a separate security apparatus is controlled by each force, which helps to prevent the personalization of control. Parties do not generally have

security organizations before they achieve power unless they have fought civil wars. Instead, they take over the state police and military, with more or less success, depending on their own prior history as well as the state's. Parties that have led revolutionary insurgencies and independence movements have some cadres specialized in security and violence, but only those that have fought lengthy civil wars are likely to have the specialized organization and personnel that would allow them to take over and/or replace state institutions rapidly and thoroughly. More frequently, a partly unreconstructed military remains a problem for authoritarian leaders after they achieve power and reduces their ability to rely on force to induce change. A number of African leaders tried to resolve this difficulty by creating militias, president's guards, or paramilitaries. These paramilitary forces, usually drawn from groups or regions especially loyal to the leader, can help to maintain a leader in power, but they are often undisciplined and venal. In addition, their existence further alienates the established military; rather than reducing the likelihood of a coup, the creation of these forces has precipitated the overthrow of many African dictators by the military.

Where a military or single-party leader does gain personal control of the security apparatus, as for example General Pinochet did, he has taken a giant step toward personalization of rule, even in countries with a professionalized military or unified party. In such settings, control of the security apparatus will not be enough to transform the regime completely; the military was marginalized in Chile but continued to serve as a bulwark of the regime, as did the Communist Party during Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union. These were both partially personalized dictatorships. In countries in which the military is incompletely professionalized prior to seizure or the party was recently founded by a particular leader and scarcely exists outside big cities, however, there is no countervailing force within the regime to limit the leader's impulse to concentrate power in his own hands. Because of the newness of parties and the recent Africanization of the officer corps in many African countries at the time of independence, many African authoritarian regimes were personalized after an initial seizure of power by the military or a peaceful transition from elected government to single-party rule (Cf. Bratton and van de Walle 1997).

The Leninist regimes Jowitt analyzed can be seen as the outcome characteristic of seizures of power carried out by parties that varied from somewhat to highly organized as a result of prior political and revolutionary experience. The Russian Leninist party was disciplined and unified before the seizure of power but small and limited in reach. It developed into a much larger and more penetrating entity while Lenin lived, but the overwhelming need for cadres to man the state apparatus and fight in the civil war led to a rapid and uncontrolled expansion of membership during the first years after the seizure of power. Many made quick and superficial conversions at that time, and many opportunists joined the party. Thus by the time Stalin began to consolidate personal power at the party's expense, the party was large but less capable of defending itself.

Parties that fought prolonged civil wars to achieve state power have developed more capacity to moderate the centralizing tendencies of leaders and even, at times, to remove them from decision making when their policies have gone seriously awry. Mao's eclipse after the disastrous Great Leap Forward is an example, though Mao eventually mobilized his own supporters for a comeback.

To sum up this section, whether power becomes personalized in the hands of a single man during the aftermath of an authoritarian seizure of power depends on the outcome of a struggle between the group's leader and his lieutenants. Among the 172 cases upon which generalizations in this analysis are based, more than half of all the authoritarian regimes initiated by militaries, parties, or a combination of the two had been partly or fully personalized within three years of the initial seizure of power. In about a third, the leader had succeeded in full personalization.

### Conclusion

For most of recorded history, most human beings have lived under dictatorial rule. Nevertheless, most theories of government explain leadership selection, coalition formation, and the interaction between government and citizens in democracies. Most studies that do deal with authoritarianism seek to explain its beginning or end rather than the way authoritarian governments work. In the present study I have sought to begin the process of filling in that lacuna in our understanding. I have argued that certain patterns of change in regime personnel,

coalition strategy, and interaction with society characterize most authoritarian regimes. I have also suggested general explanations for these patterns based on the logic of minimum-winning coalitions and bargaining within the regime leadership group.

I use a simple bargaining model to illuminate the logic underlying the typical early stages of authoritarian rule. The model shows how the bargaining between an authoritarian leader and his lieutenants over material resources and decision-making powers can result in both the narrowing of the post-seizure support coalition and also the personalization of rule. I explain the narrowing in authoritarian regimes as a consequence of minimum-winning coalition logic. That is, members of the regime alliance want enough support to survive in power, but no more because support must be paid for in resources and shared power, just as in democracies. The larger the number of individuals or groups over which resources must be spread, the less for each one. Because authoritarian governments need less support to remain in power after they have captured and transformed the state bureaucracy, courts, military, police, and taxing authority than for the initial seizure of power, they can get away with excluding some members of the seizure-coalition and large parts of the population from the distribution of benefits.

At the same time, after the seizure of power the leader's interests diverge from those of his lieutenants. Leaders who had been first among equals in an informal and collegial conspiracy before the ouster of the old regime often discover in themselves an intense desire to hold on to the top position in the regime and concentrate power and resources in their own hands. The bargaining model highlights the factors that affect the distribution of powers between the leader and his coalition partners as well as showing the logic behind coalition narrowing. I show that if the members of a large part of the seizure-group have been able to make binding pre-commitments to bargain as a unitary actor, leaders' efforts to concentrate power in their own hands will fail. In the real world, such binding pre-commitments have occurred in professionalized militaries and disciplined parties, especially those that have led revolutions or resistance against foreign occupiers. Where a conspiracy drawn from a recently indigenized officer corps or recently organized party seizes power, lieutenants usually fail to resist the

personalization of rule. Since 1946, leaders' efforts to personalize power in authoritarian regimes have had some success about half the time.

While these struggles are occurring within the elite, it is also common for large numbers of citizens to abandon the coalition supporting the dictatorship as they discover how its policies will really affect them. The regime's support base thus also narrows and becomes more ideologically defined.

Authoritarian regimes vary enormously from each other in levels of repression, distribution of costs and benefits across societal groups, policies followed, and ideological justification. Nevertheless, the impulse toward narrowing and personalization is common to all types. The bargaining model explains why these processes occur in such apparently different kinds of authoritarianism. In all the complexity and detail of particular authoritarian experiences, thinking about the strategic interaction between leaders and lieutenants within the seizure-group provides a starting point for trying to understand basic features of politics in authoritarian regimes.

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Figure 1  
Dictator's Game

