The Regime Party as an Instrument of Authoritarian Cooptation and Control

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Abstract

Why do some dictatorships establish and maintain a regime-sanctioned political party? I explain when and why a regime party becomes an effective tool of authoritarian governance. Three institutional features account for the effectiveness of parties as instruments of authoritarian cooptation: hierarchical assignment of service and benefits, political monopoly over appointments, and selective recruitment and repression. These features of internal party organization accomplish more than distribute rewards in exchange for party members’ support of the regime: they effectively exploit the opportunism and career incentives among the population in order to create a stake in the perpetuation of the regime among the most productive and ideologically agreeable segments of the population. However, because the establishment and maintenance of a regime party requires that the ruling elite control and give up significant resources, the feasibility and attractiveness of a regime party as an instrument of authoritarian governance depends on the cost of its chief alternative – repression. I develop a new formal model of authoritarian regime parties and test its empirical predictions using new data on parties and ruling coalition stability across dictatorships.

HIGHLY PRELIMINARY AND INCOMPLETE; ALL COMMENTS WELCOME!

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Chapter 6

The Regime Party as an Instrument of Authoritarian Cooptation and Control

“My children were born in this apartment. And so was my grandson. This is our home. But I know that someone in Miami has a claim on the building. Given my position in the government, we would be certain to be evicted if the regime were to change. We are in bad shape now, but that fate would be worse.” A Cuban government ministry employee quoted in Domínguez (2003, 436).

A growing body of research finds that dictatorships with a single or a dominant political party represent an especially resilient form of authoritarian rule. In a seminal paper, Geddes (1999a) classified dictatorships into personalist, military, single-party, and their hybrids, and showed that single-party dictatorships are less likely to break down and democratize than
the remaining categories of dictatorship. Research on an institutionally related category of dictatorship – dominant or hegemonic party regimes – similarly concludes that these regimes are particularly robust, even in the face of economic crises and popular opposition (Brownlee 2007; Magaloni 2006; Smith 2005; Slater 2003). In a complementary line of research, Gandhi and Przeworski (2007) report that leaders in single-party regimes survive longer in office, and Boix and Svolik (2007), observe that leadership in these regimes is less likely to be deposed by coups or revolutions.

What is it about the institution of the party that contributes to the survival of dictatorships? In spite of this growing body of research and the emerging consensus that parties contribute to authoritarian resilience, we still lack a precise statement of the political mechanism by which authoritarian parties facilitate the survival of dictatorships.

Consider two prominent views of how authoritarian parties contribute to the survival of dictatorships. According to one view, parties are the vehicles through which the regime rewards its supporters (Geddes 1999b; Gandhi 2008) – a mechanism typically called cooptation – which frequently takes the form of patronage (Blaydes 2010; Magaloni 2006). Yet dictatorships without parties also commonly appease popular discontent via policy concessions or material handouts, and patronage networks pervade many societies, operating both within and outside of authoritarian parties. What makes authoritarian parties such particularly apt vehicles for the cooptation of the masses?

According to another prominent view, parties facilitate cooperation and prevent factionalism among the regime’s elites (Brownlee 2007; Geddes 1999b; Magaloni 2006). According to Geddes (1999b; 2003), for instance, in single-party regimes “everyone is better off if all factions remain united and in office” (Geddes 2003, 59). Arguably, however, incentives to
“stick together or hang separately” – to paraphrase Benjamin Franklin – generically exist in most dictatorships. What is the mechanism by which authoritarian parties so uniquely maintain elite cohesion?

In this paper, I attempt to advance existing research on the role of parties in authoritarian governance by developing arguments that explain i) how and which institutional features of authoritarian parties contribute to authoritarian resilience, ii) why these beneficial functions could not be carried out without the institution of the party, and iii) why some dictatorships establish and maintain a regime-sanctioned party while others do not.

I identify three institutional features of successful authoritarian parties that account for the effectiveness of parties as instruments of authoritarian cooptation, both at the popular and elite level. These features are hierarchical assignment of service and benefits, political monopoly over appointments, and selective recruitment and repression. Crucially, these features of internal party organization accomplish much more than simply distribute rewards in exchange for party members’ support of the regime, as the existing literature often concludes. I examine the political logic that underlies these institutional mechanisms and show that they effectively exploit the opportunism and career incentives among the population in order to create a stake in the perpetuation of the regime among the most productive and ideologically agreeable segments of the population. Authoritarian regimes that coopt via a party with these institutional features survive under less favorable circumstances because they create a stake in the regime’s survival that goes beyond the immediate benefits that members receive and is absent in dictatorships without a party, even if the latter spend the same resources on cooptation.

In order to examine the political logic that connects internal party organization, career
incentives among the population, and the survival of dictatorships, I build on existing research on parties and develop a series of simple formal models of cooptation. This analysis highlights that one typical feature authoritarian parties that I identify – hierarchical allocation of service and benefits – contributes to the survival of dictatorships via two distinct political mechanisms. The first of these may be called the *cooptation mechanism*. When the regime assigns costly party service to lower levels of the party hierarchy – and hence early in party members’ career – and the benefits of party membership to higher levels of the party hierarchy – and hence later in the party members’ career – party members’ costly service becomes sunk investment by the time they reap the benefits of party seniority. In turn, they become hostages of their own career success, with a stake in the perpetuation of the existing regime.

Hierarchical assignment of benefits and service contributes to authoritarian resilience via another, conceptually separate mechanism, which we may call the *production mechanism*. This mechanism refers to the immediate objectives of party activity, such as mobilization and the maintenance of political discipline (see e.g. Friedrich and Brzezinski 1965). Smith (2005), for instance, identifies the ability authoritarian parties to mobilize their constituencies in times of crisis as the key aspect of party “strength”, Geddes (2008) argues that new dictators create mass parties in order to balance threats form the military, and Magaloni (2010) emphasizes that lasting parties are essential for effective cooptation. The analysis here highlights how particular features of internal party organization – the party’s recruitment, promotion, and retirement policies – ensure that sufficient incentives exist for key segments of the population to join the party and, in turn, provide the political service that results in party “strength”. By examining how optimal recruitment, promotion, and retirement
policies depend on the regimes’ resources, ideology, and non-partisan opportunities for career advancement, we gain a better understanding of the connection between the internal features of authoritarian parties and the potential and limits to their “strength”.

The results of this formal analysis both corroborate and qualify existing explanations of how authoritarian parties contribute to the survival of dictatorships. Brownlee (2007), Geddes (1999b; 2003), Gehlbach and Keefer (2008), and Magaloni (2006, 2010) argue that parties help resolve elite conflicts. The analysis below outlines the logic by which particular features of the internal organization of successful authoritarian parties generate a stake in the regime’s survival that grows with an individual’s rank within the party hierarchy and goes beyond the immediate benefits the individual receives. Yet in contrast to arguments that emphasize the contribution of parties to elite-level power-sharing, the analysis here underscores that cooptation via parties is most effective when the possibility of career advancement within an authoritarian party is available to select segments among the general population, not only to the elites.

The present paper shares the focus on the cooptation of the masses with Blaydes (2010), Gandhi and Przeworski (2006,2007), Gandhi (2008) and Malesky and Schuler (2010). Gandhi and Przeworski (2006,2007) and Gandhi (2008) prominently argue that dictators establish political parties as a concession to a mass opposition that may otherwise stage a rebellion. Yet existing literature rarely considers cooptation alongside another, quintessential instrument of authoritarian governance – repression.¹ In fact, most dictatorships with single and dominant party maintain a large repressive apparatus. The analysis here helps us understand the complementarity of the two instruments of authoritarian governance. When I juxtapose

¹See Wintrobe (1998) for an exception.
cooptation via an authoritarian party and repression, I find that dictatorships coopt most effectively when they aim at the ideologically most proximate segments of the population rather than actual opposition - scarce resources are more effectively spent on the former. Thus the logic of selective cooptation via authoritarian parties is to enlist those segments of the masses that will best help marginalize actual opposition. This finding is consistent with historical and qualitative research on the highly selective nature of party recruitment and promotion policies.²

Although the questions that drive the research in this paper are primarily theoretical, I start by examining the empirical association between authoritarian political parties and the survival of a dictatorships. I conduct a stronger test of this relationship than has been attempted in existing research. Specifically, I avoid confounding the effect of parties with the strength of individual leaders by measuring the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions rather than individual leaders and I employ direct, institutional indicators of the partisan organization of dictatorships. I find that, once we account for the legislative strength of regime sanctioned political parties in dictatorships with multiple parties, dictatorships with parties that control a supermajority of seats in the legislature survive on average about as long as ruling coalitions with single parties. Hence what appears to be key to the survival of dictatorships is the presence of a strong party, not necessarily a single one.

These results are based on comprehensive, original data on authoritarian ruling coalitions, restrictions on political parties in dictatorships, and legislative strength of regime sanctioned authoritarian parties that cover the period 1946-2008. When I examine this data in the next section, I find that regime sanctioned authoritarian parties effectively take one of three

²See e.g. Domínguez (1978, Chapter 8), Grzymala-Busse (2002), Shambaugh (2009), and Staar (1988).
distinct forms. The first are regime parties in single-party regimes, which account for about of 35% of all country-year observations. The remaining two groups exist in dictatorships that allow for multiple parties: the first group consists of hegemonic or dominant parties, which on average control roughly 76% of all legislative seats and account for 32% percent of all country-year observations; the second group consists of parties under a conceptual category of dictatorship frequently characterized as electoral or competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way 2002; Schedler 2006). Authoritarian parties in this last group typically control a bare majority or minority of legislative seats and account for about 11% of all country-year observations. The existing literature has so far examined the categories of hegemonic/dominant parties and parties under competitive authoritarianism using primarily qualitative data. The analysis in the next section contributes to this literature by identifying subgroups of these conceptually categories in comprehensive, large-N data on the legislative strength of authoritarian regime parties.

6.1 Regime Parties and Authoritarian Resilience

Does the establishment and maintenance of a sanctioned political party contribute to the survival of a dictatorship? Existing empirical research takes two approaches to this question. The first was initiated by Geddes (1999a), who classified dictatorships into personalist, military, single-party, and their hybrids and studied the differences in the survival of these

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4A fourth, smallest group of authoritarian parties are those that control only a fraction of legislative seats and typically exist in transitioning regimes: 18% of all dictatorships ban political parties. See Section 6.1 for details.
regime categories. The second is exemplified by Gandhi and Przeworski (2007), who study the association between the number of parties under dictatorship and the survival of dictators.

While both approaches find that authoritarian parties are associated with the survival of regimes or leaders, they face two limitations: Because Geddes’s classification of dictatorships is not based on formal and exclusively party-based institutional criteria, inferences based on this data raise questions about whether the longer survival of single-party regimes can be attributed to the institution of the authoritarian party. On the other hand, studies that examine the association between the number of parties and the survival of dictators may be confounding the effect of parties with the strength of individual leaders.

Consider, first, the approaches based on Geddes’s classification of dictatorships into personalist, military, and single-party regimes, and the hybrids of these ideal types. Geddes’s discussion of the rationale behind her classification indicates that she devised it in order to describe the distinct patterns of leadership origin, political interests, and exercise of power across dictatorships; it is not a classification based on formal institutional characteristics.

This classification design limits our inferences about the effect of authoritarian parties on the survival of dictatorships in two ways. First, because Geddes’s classification is not based on formal institutional characteristics, some personalist and military dictatorships in fact have either multiple political parties (e.g. Brazil during the military dictatorship from 1965 to 1979) or maintain a single party (e.g. the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement under Paul Biya between 1985 and 1990). On the other hand, some single-party regimes allow for

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6See also Gandhi and Przeworski (2006) and Gandhi (2008).

a nontrivial participation of more than one party (e.g. PAN, and later PRD, in Mexico). In turn, because Geddes’s classification is based on a set of criteria that attempt to reflect the functioning of a dictatorship broadly rather than concrete institutional characteristics, the distinction between the categories of personalist, military, and single-party provides only a limited measure of the restrictions on and the presence of political parties across these categories.

Second, and more importantly, if we are interested in whether political parties contribute to the survival of dictatorships, the contrast between personalist, military, and single-party dictatorships is not the conceptually appropriate one. Rather, the relevant conceptual distinction should reflect differences in the partisan organization across dictatorships. Some regimes ban political parties entirely, some sanction the existence of a single party, and others allow multiple parties to operate. Hence the proper conceptual baseline to which single-party regimes should be compared are not military or personalist dictatorships but instead those that ban parties entirely and those that allow for multiple political parties. Crucially, single-party regimes may compare to either of these categories differently than they compare to the categories of military and personalist dictatorships. Therefore the latter may not be the appropriate comparison groups when we are interested in the effect of political parties on the survival of dictatorships.

Meanwhile, approaches that use the length of leader tenures in order to assess whether authoritarian parties contribute to authoritarian survival potentially confound the effect of parties with the strength of individual leaders. Consider for instance the Popular Movement of the Revolution, which was founded and maintained as the sole party in the Congo by Mobutu, between 1967 and 1997. In spite of Mobutu’s long tenure in office, the Popular
Movement of the Revolution did not survive his fall from power and appears to have merely been Mobutu’s propaganda tool, lacking any substantive institutional structure (Callaghy 1984, 10, 320). By contrast, Mexican presidents left office every six years, yet the same party ruled Mexico for more than 70 years and, according to most accounts, was a key factor behind the regime’s stability (Magaloni 2006).

Hence the duration of leader tenures is an imperfect metric of the potential contribution of authoritarian parties to regime survival: First, they may confound the effect of the party with that of the leader, especially when the latter uses his power to establish a weak single-party that collapses when the leader is removed from power or dies. Second, they potentially underestimate the contribution of the party to authoritarian survival when the same political coalitions remains in power in spite of frequent leadership changes within the governing party.

**Regime Parties and the Survival of Authoritarian Ruling Coalitions**

I address these limitations of the existing approaches in two ways: I develop a new measure of authoritarian stability and employ direct, institutional indicators of the partisan organization of dictatorships.

In order to measure authoritarian stability, I study the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions. A *ruling coalition* consists of the uninterrupted succession in office of politically affiliated authoritarian leaders. More precisely, I say that a leader was affiliated with the previous *regime*, and hence from the same ruling coalition, if he was a member of the government, a government party, the royal or ruling family, or a military junta under the previous authoritarian leader.

Table 6.1 summarizes the political affiliation of all authoritarian leaders during the pe-
Table 6.1: Political affiliation of authoritarian leaders, 1946-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Affiliation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regime</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>60.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>11.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The unit of observation is an authoritarian leader. See the codebook for details about coding rules for each category.

We see that about 60% of all dictators come from the same ruling coalition as their predecessor. Prominent examples of ruling coalitions that span multiple leaders include the leadership in communist and Baathist regimes, Mexican presidents under the PRI, hereditary successions in many Middle Eastern monarchies, and the leadership of the Argentine and Brazilian military governments. But note that leadership changes within the same ruling coalition do not always occur peacefully or constitutionally. To name one example, before becoming the president of Syria in 1970, Hafez al-Asad served as a Minister of Defence in the Baath government that came to power in 1966. Al-Asad came to power by staging a coup against the de facto head of government Salah Jadid, after growing disagreements over the direction of the country between Jadid’s ideological and al-Asad’s pragmatic faction within the Baath party and military (Seale 1990, chapter 11).

When recording the political affiliation of those authoritarian leaders who were not affiliated with the previous regime, I distinguish between leaders who were in opposition, unaffiliated leaders, and leaders of newly independent countries. A leader was in opposition, if he openly opposed the previous leader prior to assuming office, typically as a guerilla leader.
or an opposition candidate in an executive or legislative election. I say that a leader was unaffiliated with the previous authoritarian leader, if he did not openly or unambiguously state support or opposition to the preceding government. As Table 6.1 indicates, these two categories account for approximately 12% and 20% of all authoritarian leaders, respectively. Finally, I separately record leaders who came into office at a time when their country gained independence. This category is coded separately because the nature of political conflicts and alliances during independence struggles is very different from those within sovereign polities. These leaders make up about 8% of all leaders and are a mix of independence fighters who opposed the previous (typically) colonial government and those who served in the previous colonial administration or legislature.
The information in Table 6.1 allows us to measure the duration of distinct authoritarian ruling coalitions by adding up the lengths of tenures of individual leaders from within the same regime. The resulting data contains 374 ruling coalitions whose length varies between 1 and 63 years and 54 of which were in existence as of 2008. The mean and median duration of a ruling coalition is 16 and 8 years, respectively. The distribution of ruling coalition durations is summarized by a histogram in Figure 6.1.

In order to study the effect of authoritarian parties on the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions, I directly measure two features of the partisan organization of dictatorships: restrictions on political parties and the maintenance of a regime party.

When measuring restrictions on political parties, I distinguish between authoritarian regimes that ban political parties (e.g. Chile under Augusto Pinochet’s military dictatorship between 1973 and 1987), sanction the existence of only a single party (e.g. the Soviet Union throughout its existence), and those that allow multiple parties to operate (e.g. Mexico under the PRI).9

Figure 6.2 summarizes the pattern of restrictions on political parties in dictatorships throughout the period 1946-2008. The two vertical axes display the cumulative proportion across individual categories by year; for the reader’s convenience, the right vertical axis displays the cumulative proportion across the categories of each conceptual dimension in the opposite direction. Thus Figure 6.2 shows that in the year 1970 about 18 percent of all dictatorships banned political parties, 44 percent maintained a single political party, and the remaining 38 percent allowed multiple parties to exist. We see that the proportion of dictatorships that banned political parties remained relatively stable throughout the period.

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9Gandhi (2008) and Cheibub et al. (2010) employ a similar measure of restrictions on political parties.
Figure 6.2: Restrictions on political parties in dictatorships, 1946-2008.

1946-2008; the most prominent change is the sharp decrease in the proportion of single-party dictatorships in favor of multi-party dictatorships after the Cold War.

In addition to restrictions on political parties, I also record whether a dictatorship maintained a regime party. We may say that a dictatorship has a *regime party* when the head of the executive is a member of a party or endorses a particular political party (or a party front). This was trivially the case in single party regimes. However, dictatorships that allowed for multiple parties did not have a regime party in about one-fourth of the country-years in the data. Many of these cases are military dictatorships and monarchies that do not ban all parties but at the same time do not openly endorse a particular party, as has been the case.
Table 6.2: Restrictions on political parties and the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions, 1946-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restrictions on Party Organization</th>
<th>At the beginning of a Ruling Coalition</th>
<th>At the end of a Ruling Coalition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Mean (95% CI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties banned</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.56 (12.33,20.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single party</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29.87 (24.51,34.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple parties</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.91 (13.10,18.53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The unit of observation is an authoritarian ruling coalition. 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Largest ruling coalition durations are right-censored; means are therefore underestimated.

in Morocco since its independence.

Do parties contribute to the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions? Table 6.2 presents the estimated mean and median survival times of ruling coalitions by the type of restriction on political parties. I list the 95% confidence interval below each estimated quantity in Table 6.2. Because restrictions on political parties may vary throughout the duration of a ruling coalition, I present estimates based on the type of restrictions on political parties in place both at the beginning and at the end of a ruling coalition’s existence.

Table 6.2 indicates that ruling coalitions with single parties indeed survive between two and three times longer than either those without parties or those ruling coalitions that allow for the existence of multiple parties. We see that this difference is statistically significant as

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10These confidence intervals are calculated using the Kaplan-Meier estimator, accounting for the presence of right-censored data in the sample; see Klein and Moeschberger (2003, chapter 4).

11We may directly account for the variation in restrictions on political parties by including this information as a covariate in a survival model. Estimates based on both the Cox proportional hazard model and parametric accelerated failure-time models lead to conclusions that identical to those discussed here.
Table 6.3: Do the survival functions of authoritarian ruling coalitions differ depending on their restrictions on political parties?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restrictions on Party Organization</th>
<th>At the beginning of a Ruling Coalition</th>
<th>At the end of a Ruling Coalition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Log-rank</td>
<td>Wilcoxon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single party v. Parties banned</td>
<td>11.77***</td>
<td>19.56***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single party v. Multiple parties</td>
<td>16.83***</td>
<td>25.64***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple parties v. Parties banned</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The unit of observation is an authoritarian ruling coalition. Significance levels *10%, **5%, ***1% are for the $\chi^2$ statistic.

there is almost no overlap between the 95% confidence intervals for the mean or the median of ruling coalitions with single parties and those of the other two categories. However, there is a substantial overlap between the confidence intervals for either the mean or the median of ruling coalitions without parties and those with multiple parties. Hence only single-parties appear to contribute to the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions; ruling coalitions that allow for the existence of multiple parties have a much shorter lifespan and do not significantly differ from ruling coalitions that ban parties.

This conclusion is partially corroborated by tests for the overall equality of survivor functions. In Table 6.3, I report the $\chi^2$ statistics based on the log-rank and Wilcoxon tests, which compare survivor functions – rather than particular summary statistics – across the three forms of restrictions on political parties in dictatorships. Both tests indicate that the survival dynamics of ruling coalitions in dictatorships with single parties is significantly different from the remaining two categories. However, the tests do not lead to an unambiguous conclusion about the differences in the survival dynamics of ruling coalitions without parties and those with multiple parties; the two categories differ significantly when we compare restrictions on
Do regime parties in dictatorships that allow for multiple parties contribute to their survival at all? If – as the above analysis indicates – single parties significantly contribute to the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions, then we may wonder whether, even in those dictatorships that allow for multiple parties, strong parties still contribute to regime survival, even if they do not control all legislative seats. The histogram in Figure 6.3 summarizes the distribution of the share of legislative seats controlled by authoritarian regime parties across all dictatorships with multiple parties.

Figure 6.3: The share of legislative seats controlled by authoritarian regime parties in dictatorships with multiple parties, 1946-2008.
Table 6.4: Three subgroups of authoritarian regime parties by legislative seat share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Fraction</th>
<th>Legislative Seat Share</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>95% Conf. Int.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant/hegemonic parties</td>
<td>69.35%</td>
<td>75.78</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>(73.41,78.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties under competitive auth.</td>
<td>22.88%</td>
<td>51.39</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>(48.90,53.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional cases</td>
<td>7.78%</td>
<td>19.57</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>(17.21,21.94)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The unit of observation is a country-year. Maximum-likelihood estimates of a 3-component mixture of Normal densities.

A notable feature of the distribution in Figure 6.3 is that it appears to contain three qualitatively distinct groups of observations. Going from left to right, there first appears to be small subset of regime parties that only have a minority of legislative seats, next there is a larger group of parties that on average control a bare majority of legislative seats, and finally, there is a large group of regime parties that command a supermajority of legislative seats.

In order to better understand and quantify the differences between these three groups, I fit to this data a mixture of three Normal densities. As Table 6.4 summarizes and the density plots in Figure 6.3 illustrate, the three groups are reasonably well represented by Normal densities with mean seat shares of 19.57, 51.39, and 75.78. The estimates in Table 6.4 also indicate that the three groups are considerably distinct: the 95% confidence intervals for the three means do not overlap.

The largest of these subgroups contains roughly 69% of all observations and describes parties that on average control about three-fourths of all legislative seats. Two examples of

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12Since the share of legislative seats is bounded between 0 and 1, the Normal distribution is not the most appropriate probability model for this setting; I adopt it primarily because its parameters are easily interpreted. On the estimation of finite mixture models, see McLachlan and Peel (2000).
well-known observations in this subgroup are the PRI in Mexico during the period between 1946 and 1987 and Golkar in Indonesia under Suharto (1971-1998). The observations in this subgroup thus correspond to a conceptual category that has been alternately referred to as dominant parties \cite{Greene2007, Magaloni2010, Reuter2010} or hegemonic parties \cite{Magaloni2006, Blaydes2010}.

The second largest of these three groups has the mean legislative seat share of 51.39% and accounts for roughly one-fifth of all observations. In this group, the regime party has close to a bare majority or minority in the legislature. One prominent observation in this subgroup is the Kenya African National Union (KANU) after Daniel Arap Moi restored multiparty elections in 1992; KANU controlled 53% and 51% of legislative seats in the two terms between 1992 and 2002. Another example is the PRI which only controlled 52% and 48% of legislative seats in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies for parts of Carlos Salinas’s and Ernesto Zedillo’s presidencies.\footnote{This are the legislative terms of 1988-1990 and 1998-2000, respectively.} As these cases illustrate, significant legislative opposition exists in this subgroup of regimes, even if it is divided. Hence the political setting under which regime parties in this subgroup operate may be conceptually characterized as “electoral authoritarianism” \cite{Schedler2006} or “competitive authoritarianism” \cite{Levitsky2002}.

The last of these three groups may seem somewhat perplexing: with the mean legislative seat share of only 19.57%, the authoritarian leader’s party is hardly in charge of the legislature. However, once we examine the observations corresponding to this group, we see that they primarily reflect temporary transitional scenarios, in which either a democracy just transitioned to dictatorship or a dictatorship is about to democratize. Alberto Fujimori
is an example of the former: Before he subverted democracy in Peru, he established Cambio 90, a party whose primary purpose was to promote his presidential candidacy in 1990. Although its strengthened its standing in the legislature in 1992 and 1995, Cambio 90 initially won only 17% of the seats (see e.g. Klaren 1999). Empirically, these temporary transitional scenarios are rare and account for only 8% of all observations.

Does the legislative strength of regime parties in dictatorships that allow for multiple parties parallel the contribution of single parties to the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions? In Table 6.5, I present an estimate of the association between a regime party’s legislative seat share and the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions based the Cox survival model. Model 1 preserves the largest number of observations, models 2 and 3 control for economic and institutional covariates typically employed in the research on authoritarian survival. The estimated coefficients are presented in the form of a hazard ratio: a coefficient smaller than 1 implies that the associated covariate reduces the relative risk that an authoritarian ruling coalition loses power.

We see that there is a strong association between legislative seat share and the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions: Each percentage point increase in the regime party’s seat share lowers the risk of a ruling coalition’s demise by about 2%. For instance, an increase a regime party’s legislative seat share from 55% to 75% corresponds to a 30% reduction in the annual risk of a ruling coalition’s demise. This association survives even after controlling for economic and institutional covariates typically employed in the research on authoritarian survival. The only other covariate that is significantly associated with the

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14The data on GDP per capita and GDP growth are from Maddison (2008); the data on fuel and ore exports are from World Bank (2008); the data on democratic neighbors was constructed by combining the contiguity data from the Correlates of War Project (2006) and regime data based on Przeworski et al. (2000), Boix (2003), Cheibub et al. (2010), and the author’s data collection.
Table 6.5: The effect of a regime party’s legislative seat share on the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Seat Share</td>
<td>0.982***</td>
<td>0.983***</td>
<td>0.976***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of GDP per capita</td>
<td>0.975</td>
<td>1.367</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.153)</td>
<td>(0.453)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth</td>
<td>0.983</td>
<td>0.953</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td>(0.031)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel exports (% of total exports)</td>
<td>0.977**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ore exports (% of total exports)</td>
<td>1.010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.010)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian (v. military)</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.319)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>1.382</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.591)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic neighbors</td>
<td>1.301</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.861)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ruling coalitions 126 108 65
Country-years 1,224 1,035 534

Note: A change-point Cox survival model, coefficients are expressed as hazard ratios. Breslow method for ties. Significance levels *10%, **5%, ***1%. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

The survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions is the percentage of fuel exports. In fact, each point increase in fuel exports as a percentage of a dictatorship’s total exports has roughly the same effect on regime survival as does a corresponding increase in the regime party’s legislative seat share.

In order to illustrate this association, I plot the mean age of authoritarian ruling coalitions against the mean share of legislative seats that the coalition’s regime party controlled in Figure 6.4. To simplify the presentation, the latter quantity is grouped into ten equally
spaced intervals. We see that dictatorships with regime parties that control a supermajority of legislative seats survive on average almost as long as those with single parties.

The empirical analysis so far offers several insights and qualifications about the possible contribution of regime parties to the survival of dictatorships.

First, the empirical association between dictatorships with single parties and the survival of the regimes that maintain them is robust. I attempted a stronger test of this association than has been attempted in existing research: I avoid confounding the effect of parties with the strength of individual leaders by measuring the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions.
rather than individual leaders and I employ direct, institutional indicators of the partisan organization of dictatorships.

Second, what appears to be key to the survival of authoritarian ruling coalitions is the presence of a strong party, not necessarily a single one. Once we control for the regime party’s legislative strength in dictatorships with multiple parties, we see that ruling coalitions with parties that control a supermajority of seats in the legislature survive on average about as long as ruling coalitions with single parties. Therefore, in order to better understand the institutional origins of this resilience, we may focus on those institutional features of regime parties that are common to both single parties and hegemonic or dominant parties.

Third, original data on the legislative seat share of authoritarian regime parties suggest that these parties come in three distinct forms: hegemonic or dominant parties, parties under competitive authoritarianism, and parties in transitioning regimes. Since the first two groups account for more than 90% of all observations, the present analysis suggests that regime parties in multiple-party dictatorships effectively take one of these two forms. Importantly, the same party may take each of these forms, depending on the regime’s evolving strength, as the example of the PRI illustrates.

Finally, any causal interpretation of the association between authoritarian regime parties and the survival of dictatorships based on the above analysis must be qualified in several respects. [INCOMPLETE]
What are the institutional features of authoritarian parties that facilitate the survival of their ruling coalitions? Historical and case-based research on single and dominant parties reveals a striking degree of similarity in the internal makeup of authoritarian regime parties across a wide range of cases. In this section, I build on historical and case-based research on single and dominant parties and examine the political logic by which three common organizational features of authoritarian parties contribute to the survival of dictatorships: hierarchical assignment of service and benefits, political monopoly over appointments, and selective recruitment and repression.

Hierarchical Assignment of Service and Benefits

Most authoritarian parties entail a hierarchical apparatus that spans several levels of membership. As a representative example, consider the Syrian Baath Party. In the 1980s, according to Hinnebusch (2002, Chapter 4), the internal structure of the party consisted of 11,163 cells that were grouped into 1,395 basic units at the level of villages, factories, neighborhoods, and public institutions; these in turn formed 154 sub-branches at the district or town level; and these then constituted 18 branches in the provinces, cities, and major institutions. The leadership of the party consisted of regional and national commands, with the general secretary at the very top (Hinnebusch 2002, 75-79).

Understandably, the administration of any large organization requires a vertical command structure, which may account for the hierarchical aspects of the party apparatus. Yet
a notable feature of such party hierarchies is the differentiated allocation of the benefits and service associated with party membership across the levels of the party hierarchy. Put simply, lower ranks within the party provide most of the service, while higher ranks of party membership reap most of the benefits. In fact, most political party service – frequently in the form of ideological work and popular mobilization – occurs at the lowest level of the party hierarchy. Accordingly, many single and dominant parties have entry-level membership ranks, such as that of candidate member, apprentice, or “friend of the party”. Party statutes commonly condition the advancement to full membership on grassroots party service and sometimes even stipulate a minimum time that a prospective member must spend in such probationary status before acquiring full membership.  

15 For instance, probationary membership in the Iraqi Baath Party took a minimum of seven years and entailed a progression through the ranks of sympathizer, supporter, candidate, and trainee (Sissons 2008).

Some aspects of party service understandably differ between dictatorships with single and dominant parties because the latter have multiparty elections, even if highly manipulated. While party service in single-party regimes may involve activities whose purpose is to maintain political discipline, social stability, and turnout at regime sanctioned events, party service in dictatorships with dominant parties additionally involves voter mobilization and campaigning in multiparty elections.  

16 According to Chan (1976), for instance, candidates for the People’s Action Party in Singapore were chosen based on their potential to play one or more of four basic roles: technocrat, mobilizer, Malay vote-getter, and Chinese-educated intellectual. Evidence from other dictatorships with dominant parties indicates that voter

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15 On communist parties, see e.g. Simons and White (1984) and Staar (1988); on Baath parties, see Perthes (1995, Chapter 4) and Batatu (1978, Chapter 58).
mobilization and the delivery of set vote quotas, possibly by engaging in electoral fraud and voter intimidation, are a key part of rank and file-level party service.\textsuperscript{17}

On the other hand, the benefits of party membership range from employment for full-time party functionaries to better promotion prospects within the government bureaucracy and government-controlled enterprises, privileged access to educational opportunities and social services, such as child care or public housing (see e.g. \textit{Walder 1995}). Such benefits typically increase with one’s rank within the party and many positions of economic or social significance may only be accessible to those with established partisan credentials. Nonetheless, the complete scope of benefits to party membership is rarely officially recognized. Consider, for instance, the nomenklatura system adopted by the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and China and emulated by the Baathist regimes in Syria and Iraq. The system was – and in the case of China still is – based on a list (or several lists) of lucrative positions for which a history of service within the party and a demonstrated loyalty to the regime in an essential precondition. In the Soviet Union and China, the nomenklatura lists have been administered by the Organization Department of the party’s Central Committee and contain positions within the party, government, the military, state controlled enterprises, and other institutions of social or political significance (e.g. universities). Although the nomenklatura system probably represents the most systematic form of administrative formalization of benefits to party membership and service, the precise content of nomenklatura lists and criteria for promotion to a position on the lists have been rarely publicly stated.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17}See \textit{Magaloni (2006), Greene (2007), and Langston and Morgenstern (2009)} on the PRI in Mexico; \textit{Brownlee (2007) and Blaydes (2010)} on the National Democratic Party in Egypt, \textit{Elson (2001) and Smith (2005)} on Golkar in Indonesia, and \textit{Abrami et al. (2008) and Malesky and Schuler (2010)} on Vietnam .

\textsuperscript{18}On the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, see \textit{Grzymala-Busse (2002) and Voslensky (1984)}; on China, see \textit{Landry (2008) and Shambaugh (2009)}; on Cuba see \textit{Dominguez (1978)}. 26
What are the political consequences of such hierarchical assignment of service and benefits within authoritarian parties? Before examining in detail the political logic behind this feature of authoritarian parties, consider a simple illustration of how this institutional feature contributes to the survival of dictatorships. To keep this illustration as simple as possible, suppose that a dictator needs the active support of two citizens in order to stay in power. The active support costs each citizen a cost $c/2$ and the dictator compensates each citizen’s support for the regime by a benefit $b/2$, $b > c$. Hence if a challenger attempted to replace the dictator, he must attract the support of these two citizens, who will join him if he offers each a compensation of at least $(b - c)/2$. Hence a challenger must have a budget of at least $b - c$ in order to replace the incumbent. We may consider this a benchmark setting of non-institutionalized cooptation.

Now consider cooptation within the institutional structure of a regime party. To stay with the simplest possible concept of a hierarchical party structure, suppose that the party apparatus consists of two ranks of membership, junior and senior members. Only juniors provide costly support for the regime at the individual cost $c$, whereas seniors enjoy the individual benefit $b$. For now, assume that citizens live for two periods only; a junior automatically becomes a senior after one period of service and all seniors retire after one period.

A challenger that would like to attract the two citizens now has to consider not only their current costs and benefits but also the effect of the party hierarchy on their incentives to defect. To explicitly contrast cooptation with and without a regime party, suppose that the challenger does not have a party and simply offers a period-by-period benefit to each of the two citizens. In order to defect to the challenger, the senior now has to be offered at least $b - c$ – the benefit she will obtain from the incumbent in the current period. On the other hand,
Table 6.6: Cooptation with and without a regime party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party rank</th>
<th>No party per-period payoff</th>
<th>Regime party per-period payoff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current rank payoff</td>
<td>Expected lifetime payoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>( \frac{b-c}{2} )</td>
<td>( b )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>( \frac{b-c}{2} )</td>
<td>( -c )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

as in the setting without a party, the junior expects to receive \( b - c \) over the two stages of her career in the party and therefore has to be offered an average payoff of at least \( (b - c)/2 \) in each period in order to defect to the challenger. Table 6.6 contrasts the costs of coopting the two citizens’ with and without a regime party.

We see that with the hierarchical assignment of service and benefits within the party, the challenger must command greater resources in order to replace the incumbent dictator than if he were facing an incumbent without a party, \( b + (b - c)/2 > b - c \). Or equivalently, the incumbent needs to command fewer resources in order to deter the same challenger when he coopts via a regime party. The hierarchical structure of the party generates this resilience by assigning costly service to the early stages of party members’ career and delaying the benefits of membership to the latter stages. Because they have already expended the costly service at the junior stage and only expect to reap the benefits, seniors have a stake in the incumbent dictator’s survival that is absent in a regime that co-opts without the institution of the party.
The Party Hierarchy and Incentives for Party Membership

As the above simple example illustrates, the key political advantage of allocating party service and benefits hierarchically is the stake in the regime’s survival that arises endogenously among the senior ranks of the party. A key challenge for authoritarian parties that structure party service and benefits hierarchically is to provide sufficient incentives for party service and membership at a manageable cost to the regime. When the demands on service and the entitlement to benefits vary across the ranks of the party, the provision of too large benefits may strain the regime’s resources whereas the demand of too much service may discourage new members.

In order to better understand the implications of the hierarchical assignment of service and benefits for the incentives to join the party, we may extend the above illustration as follows. Suppose that each citizen now lives indefinitely over time periods $t = 1, 2, \ldots$. In any period, a citizen who is not a party member earns a wage $w_t$. As above, if a citizen joins the regime party, she starts at the junior rank and provides party service that entails a per-period cost $c_t$; once promoted to the senior rank, she obtains the per-period benefit $b > w_t$.

A citizen’s payoff from a career within the party depends on the regime’s promotion and retirement policies. In any period, a junior member is promoted to a senior rank with the probability $p \in (0, 1)$. Meanwhile, a senior member is retired with the probability $r \in (0, 1)$ and receives the wage $w$ after retiring.\textsuperscript{19} Thus senior party member $i$’s expected discounted career payoff is

$$u^S_i = b + \delta [r u^N_i + (1 - r) u^S_i], \quad (6.1)$$

\textsuperscript{19} Lazarev (2005; 2007) develops a related model of a single party with two levels of membership and examines the optimal structure of promotion and retirement rules. The present model differs from Lazarev’s by explicitly comparing the costs of cooption in dictatorships with and without a regime party.
where $u_i^N = w/(1 - \delta)$ is the discounted career payoff non-members and $\delta \in (0, 1)$ is a discount factor.\(^{20}\) Solving equation (6.1) for $u_i^S$, we obtain

$$u_i^S = \frac{b + \delta ru_i^N}{1 - \delta(1 - r)}. \quad (6.2)$$

Then citizen $i$’s expected payoff from party membership, which begins at the junior level, is

$$u_i^J = -c + \delta [pu_i^S + (1 - p)u_i^J]. \quad (6.3)$$

Solving equation (6.3) for $u_i^J$, we get

$$u_i^J = \frac{-c + \delta pu_i^S}{1 - \delta(1 - p)}. \quad (6.4)$$

Thus citizen $i$ will have an incentive to join the party as long as

$$u_i^J \geq u_i^N \quad \text{or equivalently} \quad p \geq \frac{1 - \delta(1 - r)c + w}{\delta b - w}. \quad (6.4)$$

We may call inequality (6.4) the *party service constraint*. The party service constraint implies that, in order to maintain party membership, the regime must maintain a minimal rate of promotions and balance its promotion and retirement policies. More precisely, the minimal rate of promotions is positive and, intuitively, increasing in the cost of party of service $c$ and non-party wage $w$; it is decreasing in the benefit from seniority $b$.

At the same time, the total resources available to the regime will reasonably limit the

\(^{20}\)Since citizens are infinitely-lived, the discount factor $\delta$ may be interpreted as a natural mortality rate. That is, in each period, a citizen expects to die with the probability $\delta$. 

30
generosity of the benefits for senior party members, and hence the party’s promotion and retirement policies. Assuming that the regime intends to maintain constant party membership over time, the rate of retirement implies an upper bound on the rate of promotions. That is, in any period, junior members can only be promoted into vacancies created by retired seniors,

\[ rN^S = pN^J, \]  

where \( N^S \) and \( N^J \) are the number of seniors and juniors in the party. Thus equation (6.5) is an assumption about constant party size.\(^{21}\) When \( B \) are the total resources that the regime can spend on the party, the party’s retirement policy must respect the budget constraint

\[ B \geq N^S b. \]  

Combining the assumption about constant party size and the budget constraint, we see that the retirement rate must be at least

\[ r \geq \frac{pbN^J}{B}, \]

or equivalently, the promotion rate can be at most

\[ p \leq \frac{rB}{bN^J}. \]

Intuitively, when the regime has fewer resources it must retire senior ranks at a higher rate.

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\(^{21}\) This assumption can be easily relaxed: the evolution party membership at the senior rank is described by the equation \( N_t^S = (1-r)N_{t-1}^S + pN_{t-1}^J \). The analysis here assumes that \( N_t^S = N_{t-1}^S \) and thus strategies \( p \) and \( r \) are stationary.
and promote junior ranks at a lower rate.

Suppose that the regime values the benefit from a junior party member’s service at $s > 0$. If the regime did not need to consider incentives for party membership, it would never promote ($p = 0$) and retire immediately ($r = 1$). However, a resource constrained regime will adopt promotion and retirement policies that respect the budget constraint and hold the party service constraint at equality. Jointly, the resource and party service constraints imply a set of limits on the feasible structure of career incentives within the party hierarchy: in order for the promise of seniority to attract new members, the rate of promotions $p$ must be positive; in order to be fiscally sustainable, the retirement rate $r$ must be above a certain minimum level; and within these boundaries, a resource constrained regime will balance the two policies – a higher rate of promotions $p$ will be compensated by a higher retirement rate $r$ and vice versa. More precisely, the regime chooses promotion and retirement policies that maximize its discounted net payoff subject to a binding party service constraint and the budget constraint,

$$\max_{p,r} \left[ \frac{s}{1 - \delta(1-p)} - \frac{b}{1 - \delta(1-r)} \right] \text{ subject to } p = \frac{1 - \delta(1-r)c + w}{\delta b - w} \text{ and } r \geq \frac{b - (1 - \delta)B}{\delta B}.$$

In the Appendix, I list the closed form of the optimal promotion and retirement policies $p^*$ and $r^*$. Intuitively, the optimal promotion rate $p^*$ is decreasing in the benefit from party service $s$ and the compensation to seniors $b$; $p^*$ is increasing in the wage earned by non-party members $w$ and the costs of party service $c$. The party service constraint implies that any increase or decrease in $p^*$ will be compensated by a corresponding change $r^*$. The optimal trade-off between the promotion and retirement policies therefore reflects the relative
political relevance of the parameters $s$, $b$, $w$, and $c$.

This analysis illuminates several organizational dilemmas that we frequently observe in many single and dominant party regimes. The party service constraint implies that, in order to attract new members – who provide politically valuable service – the regime must maintain a minimal rate of promotions and, in turn, a positive rate of retirement. The Chinese Communist Party, for instance, has strived to maintain an appropriate balance between these two policies at various levels of the party hierarchy. In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping initiated efforts at rejuvenating the party’s leadership by promoting age limits for Politburo members; in 2002, Jiang Zemin instituted term limits and rotation for leading local cadres in the party and government (Bo 2007; Nathan 2003).

Understandably, we may expect senior ranks within the party to resist political retirement and the implementation of an appropriate balance in promotion and retirement policies may present a political challenge for the party leadership. Consider Nikita Khrushev’s proposal at the 22nd Party Congress in 1961 to revise CPSU’s statutes and implement a “systematic renewal of cadres” that would consist of term limits for individuals in elected party posts and rules for turnover in other party bodies (Burlatsky 1991, 129-30). Khrushchev’s putative motives as well as the party membership’s negative reaction to this policy change accords with the implications of the present model. According to Thompson, for instance, Khrushchev worried that “a gradual freezing of personnel policy would block up the system, and stagnation would occur” (Tompson 1995, 242-244). In terms of the present model, Khrushchev was concerned about the increasing costs of the existing retirement policy ($r$ and $b$ in the present model) and lack of incentives to provide party service among the junior ranks within the party. On the other hand, the membership of the Party opposed the proposed changes
because “older officials were faced with the constant threat of replacement by younger men, while younger officials believed that the rules would prevent them from enjoying long careers at the top” (Tompson 1995, 244).

The present model also clarifies the political risk that reforms that reduce benefits to senior ranks within the party entail. By curtailing the benefits to party seniority, Khrushchev was threatening those ranks within the party who would otherwise have the largest stake in his survival – as long as their benefits are preserved. As in the simpler model earlier, a challenger who would like to attract defectors from the leader’s ruling coalition must offer a per-period benefit of at least \((1 - \delta)u_i^J\) and \((1 - \delta)u_i^S\) to any junior and senior party member, respectively. Because the seniors’ cost of party service is sunk, they have to be offered more than juniors to be willing to defect, \(u_i^S > u_i^J\).

In fact, some attribute Khrushchev’s fall to the party elite’s hostility to these policies (Tompson 2003, 22). After he removed Khrushchev from power in 1964, Brezhnev reversed Khrushchev’s cadre policies and instead emphasized the “stability of cadres” – this earned him the loyalty of the party’s senior membership but at the long-term cost of an ossified leadership, the emergence of local fiefdoms, and lack of incentives for a younger generation of party members (Mawdsley and White 2000; Tompson 2003). A major internal policy theme in Gorbachev’s tenure as General Secretary was a correction to this trend (Bunce 1999).

The maintenance of an appropriate balance in promotion and retirement policies poses a distinct challenge in dominant party systems. Because these regimes have multiparty elections, disgruntled juniors who were passed up for promotion and seniors who are being pressured into retirement may challenge the party as independents or opposition candidates. When, in attempts at party “renewal”, Lee Kuan Yew pressured senior party members into
political retirement, he reluctantly kept the former government minister Toh Chin Chye as a member of parliament for the People’s Action Party – Toh could easily win his constituency as an independent. Only when the boundaries of his district have been redrawn could Toh be retired and even then he became one Lee’s most powerful critics (Mauzy and Milne 2002).

A related concern shaped the process by which presidential candidates for Mexico’s ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party used to be unveiled: The incumbent president tactically delayed the announcement as long as possible, so that all influential cabinet members believed that they stood a chance. Otherwise they might have attempted to defect from the party, as Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas did in 1988 after he unsuccessfully tried to win the presidential nomination within the PRI (Castañeda 2000). Although the official nomination to the presidential candidacy guaranteed the chosen candidate the presidency – and was therefore technically a promotion – it implied political retirement for most of the unsuccessful hopefuls.

The present model further implies that the desirability of party membership as well as the regime’s criteria for membership will depend on the attractiveness of the opportunities outside the party, captured within the model by $w$. In order to maintain incentives for party service, better outside opportunities $w$ must be matched by a greater promotion rate $p^*$. Consistently with this prediction, one observer of Cuba notes that admission standards for Cuba’s Communist Party membership rose and fell depending on the state of the economy: standards rose in the 1970s and 1990s, when the economy is doing poorly; standards declined in the 1980s, when the economy improved (Corbett 2002, 178). Similarly, Schnytzer and Sustersic (1998) report that membership in the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was positively correlated with unemployment and negatively with real wages across the federal republics. Since outside economic opportunities may vary across the population, recruitment
and promotion policies must be targeted accordingly. Guo (2005) documents the downward trend in interest in party membership among the college-educated in China during the economic rise of the 1980s and the ensuing targeting of the college-educated by the party in the 1990s via a screening process that favors those with a higher education.

### 6.2.1 Selective Recruitment and Repression

Suppose that, in addition to the material benefits from cooptation via the party, each citizen also considers the incumbent dictator’s and the challenger’s ideology when deciding whether to defect to the challenger. I am using the term ideology in a very broad sense, incorporating any nonmaterial factors that may affect a citizen’s preference for the incumbent dictator vis-à-vis the challenger, such as religious, ethnic, or charismatic attributes of the dictator and the challenger.

Suppose that the population’s ideology $g$ is distributed on the real line according to the probability distribution function $F(g) = Pr(g_i < g)$ and $g_i \in \mathbb{R}$ is citizen $i$’s ideology.

To keep the exposition simple, I will assume that ideological concerns enter each citizen’s preferences additively, in the form of a quadratic loss function $-(g_i - g_j)^2$, where $g_j \in \{g_I, g_C\}$ is the incumbent’s and challenger’s ideological position, respectively. Thus when deciding between supporting the incumbent dictator and defecting to the challenger, each citizen is comparing her material and ideological payoffs under the two regimes, $u_I = \hat{b}_I - (g_i - g_I)^2$ and $u_C = \hat{b}_C - (g_i - g_C)^2$, where $\hat{b}_I$ and $\hat{b}_C$ denote the expected per-period payoff under the incumbent dictator and the challenger, respectively. When the incumbent has a regime party, $\hat{b}_I$ will correspond to either $(1 - \delta)u^I_i$ or $(1 - \delta)u^S_i$, depending on citizen $i$’s party rank.

In addition to coopting, the incumbent can also repress. In any period, the cost of
repressing a single citizen is \( r \). I adopt a very rudimentary notion of repression: repressing a citizen prevents her from defecting to the challenger and the cost of repression are constant in a citizen’s ideology.\(^{22}\)

Whom should the incumbent dictator coopt and whom repress? Without a loss of generality, suppose that the incumbent dictator’s ideology is to the left of the challenger’s ideology, \( g_I < g_C \). To keep the analysis interesting, also assume that the benefit from cooptation under the incumbent \( \hat{b}_I \) is large enough so that the citizen whose ideological positions is identical to that of the incumbent would prefer to support the incumbent rather than defect to the challenger, \( \hat{b}_I \geq \hat{b}_C \left( g_i - g_C \right)^2 \). In turn, any citizen whose ideology is to the left of the incumbent will prefer the incumbent dictator to the challenger. Thus, the dictator’s decision of whom to coopt and whom to repress amounts to finding a citizen with the threshold ideological position \( g^*_i > g_I \) such that the marginal cost \( \hat{b}_I \) of coopting this citizen equals the cost \( r \) of repressing her. In other words, the threshold ideological position \( g^*_i \) solves the quadratic equation,

\[
r - (g_i - g_I)^2 = \hat{b}_C - (g_i - g_C)^2.
\]

Because the marginal cost of cooptation are increasing in the ideological distance from the incumbent dictator, the dictator optimally coopts all citizens to the left of \( g^*_i \) and represses of citizens to the right of \( g^*_i \).

A key insight that follows from this simple analysis is that the incumbent regime will tend to coopt those who are ideologically close to it and repress those who are more distant.

\(^{22}\)The latter reflects the idea that, once an individual decides to defect to the challenger, the cost of imprisoning her does not vary with that individual’s ideology. A more realistic model of an opposition resistance might assume that the cost of repression is increasing in a citizen’s ideological distance from the incumbent. The argument below follows as long the marginal cost of repression is increasing in a citizen’s ideological distance from the incumbent at a lower rate that the marginal cost of cooptation.
This corresponds closely to the evidence on party recruitment and repression policies.

### 6.3 Discussion: Why Regime Parties?

*Why then do only some dictatorships establish and maintain a regime party?* [INCOMPLETE]
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